

ing) repressed, forbidden thoughts. And once again it is a question of what the innocent might be guilty of (and of the Jews, like sexuality itself, representing unacceptable sociability; profane sexual pleasure-and-power-seeking). It seemed clear at least to the Dreyfusards, that the only thing Dreyfus was guilty of was being a Jew; and being a Jew meant being, essentially, a saboteur of the nation-state, a person whose allegiances could not, by definition, be patriotic (and a person whose writing couldn't be trusted; who, perhaps by the same token, associated with others in unpredictable ways); and could only, by definition, be nefarious, and unfathomable to the non-Jews. We will find, perhaps unsurprisingly in Freud's work this nexus of associations of guilt, betrayal, sexuality, and Judaism; each of these having to be concealed or disguised or disowned. And each associated with dangerously unknowable affinities and allegiances (the modern question is always, who do people want to be with, and what do they want to do together?). The dream, like the joke, reveals people, from a psychoanalytic point of view, to be in hiding; consciously in hiding from the disapproving others, but unconsciously in hiding from themselves. Or rather, in hiding from the part of themselves that has wanted to fully identify with the hostile, oppressing voices in their culture (Freud was beginning to describe how our cultures live inside us more than we live in our cultures). This too Freud was beginning to discover: how thorough and destructive socialization can be, as was clear from the casualties of the particular forms of socialization that consulted him for treatment. The double meaning of innocence, Freud intimates, shows us that there is no such thing as innocence. We are always being accused, or accusing ourselves, of something. We are always guilty, which means we are perpetually self-hating.

What the Dreyfus case had made all too vivid was the precariousness of democratic liberalism; of its being haunted by its past illiberalism (by what Freud was beginning to refer to as

“the return of the repressed”). And, of course, the precariousness of the modern Jews whose very assimilation was evidence, to their enemies, of their duplicity, their cunning. The Jews, like any previously excluded minority, were vulnerable to a false sense of security, out of dread and wishfulness. What Freud's writing in these years exposed was the ways in which modern people created a false sense of security for themselves. Something Freud was to do himself towards the end of his life (like the Dreyfusards he saw the Catholics as his real enemy, rather than the Nazis). In our dreams, in our jokes, in our sexuality, in our slips—and especially in our so-called symptoms—our real insecurities are exposed. Psychoanalysis was becoming in Freud's writing in these years the artful science of our false senses of security. Freud was discovering how modern people endangered themselves by the ways in which they protected themselves. Each of the so-called mechanisms of defense was an unconscious form of self-blinding: ways of occluding a piece of reality. It was this that Freud was describing in a book about dreams, a book about mistakes, a book about sexuality, a book about jokes, and a book about a psychoanalytic treatment. Five books that in a real sense make up one book, albeit an often repetitive one. If Freud had died, at the age of forty-nine, having completed these five books, psychoanalysis would have been very different, but it would have been sufficiently complete.

The reason so much psychoanalytic writing is so dispiriting is because it is all written by older people. Freud in his forties was a younger man than he had ever been: less cautious and more boldly and brahshly speculative. And the writings of this period have a corresponding sense of exhilaration and possibility. If Freud had died in 1906, there would have been no structural theory of the mind, no elaborated metapsychology (the “witch metapsychology,” as Freud once referred to it), no speculation about what, if anything, was beyond the pleasure principle, no sweeping critique of religion, and no death-drive. There would just have been a theory of

dreams, of sexuality, of jokes, of mistakes, and an intriguing clue about the practice of psychoanalysis, which would have been more than enough. And there would have been no real psychoanalytic movement over which Freud would have to preside. His work would have become what his followers made of it, unsupervised by a Master. It would always have been too early to tell what psychoanalysis really was. Indeed the subsequent history of psychoanalysis can be divided, in a sense, into those who, as it were, wished that Freud died in 1906, and those who did not.

If he had died in 1906 we would have been left just with his sophisticated account of the working of the unconscious. A fascinating and self-contradictory developmental account, in the *Three Essays*—that is both rigorously Darwinian and counter-Darwinian. A sexuality described as beginning in infancy, as essentially perverse, insatiable, unstable, excessive, endangering, ubiquitous, and therefore and thus far, in Freud's shocked and cautious view, fundamentally unintelligible; a sexuality astounding ingenuity and inventive in its pleasure-seeking, in which cruelty is the heart of pleasure, and in which pleasure is at its most pleasurable when it is most painful; a sexuality, that is to say, which is essentially sadomasochistic and in which reproduction is both incidental and essential. But also, and more radically, an account of sexuality as sociability, as a way of living—and a way of describing—what modern people most want and fear doing together; a sexuality always normative because always subject to controlling norms, but norms modifiable not least by psychoanalysis itself. And once forms of sexuality are seen as forms of sociability it is possible to see psychoanalysis as a politics, as one modern way among many others of thinking about new styles of relating and new versions of group life. And psychoanalysis, of course, as a new discipline within medicine, was on the verge of its own group life as an international "movement," with its own terrible and salu-

tary consequences. Psychoanalytic groups would quickly become notorious for their lack of civility and kindness. Freud initially having to write *Totem and Taboo* in 1912, and ultimately *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* in 1921, in an attempt to "work through," as he would put it, the virulent intolerance of these psychoanalytic groups.

And, if Freud had died in 1906, we would, finally, have been left with—explicitly in the *Studies on Hysteria* and the Dora case, and implicitly in Freud's other writings—the rudiments of, rather than the prescriptions for, the practice of psychoanalysis. The very few case histories would have made the potential pitfalls of psychoanalysis more than obvious: its potential misogyny, dogmatism, and proselytizing: the analyst's temptation to speak on the patient's behalf, and to know what's best for the patient: the cultism of the analyst and patient as a couple. At this time psychoanalysis as both a theoretical and clinical practice was not yet stifled and stultified by its always anxious institutionalization. Indeed Freud's writing between 1898 and 1905, as it exposed repressed, forbidden forms of sociability—the buried-alive lives of modern people, the inextricability of their ambitions and their sexuality—created a panic that psychoanalysts, beginning with Freud, could only recover from, ironically, through repressing the discoveries of psychoanalysis itself. It would need something as strong as a putative Death Instinct—first mooted in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in 1920—and a daemonic repetition compulsion to counter and condemn the extravagant vital energies, the sexual energies, Freud was finding in his most disturbed patients. So much aliveness in modern individuals—and in psychoanalysis itself—required its antidote. On the one hand there was neurosis, but on the other hand there could be psychoanalysis, especially in its overinstitutionalised forms. After 1906 it became increasingly clear that psychoanalysis, ironically, was to be a profession more obsessed

by enforcing its own rules of theory and practice than by wondering what rules are being used for. In the traditional Jewish way, desire for the law would trump all other desires. It was not clear initially—and not only to Freud's critics—which side of the law psychoanalysts were on; it soon would be. After Darwin human beings seemed to be the only animals whose sexuality was a problem. Freud was to describe what kind of problem it was. The young Freud had realized—though he was not keen to fully acknowledge the radical implications of this—that problems about sex were problems about the law. By redescribing sexuality you could change the norms that governed it.

In retrospect we can see Freud hawking in these years as to whether people were suffering from their sexual desire or from their self-cures for their sexual desire. Whether neurotic symptoms were, as he put it, a poor "compromise" for the neurotic, between his sexual desire and his defenses against it, and better compromises were required. Or whether, as the sexual liberators among his later followers believed—Wittels and Reich being the most insistent—psychoanalysis was a freeing up of desire (a proving that the inhibition was irrelevant, as one prominent psychoanalyst would later say). Freud's emphasis on sexuality—and on sexuality as a language game—in other words, in these formative years of psychoanalysis, was as much a working out of what (modern) sexuality might be—what the word was about—as it was a defining of what sexuality essentially was; and we see Freud doing both things in his writing.

But Freud had not, of course, discovered sex, he had added something to the long cultural conversation about it. Something about sexuality as the material of sociability; sexuality as what we make our sociability out of. Sexuality as something we make, but like political writers who have to keep their eye on the authorities.

So Michel Foucault was doing no more than stating a plain truth when he wrote of the celebrants of Freud that,

what they had attributed solely to the genius of Freud had already gone through a long stage of preparation; they had gotten their dates wrong as to the establishment in our society, of a general deployment of sexuality . . . they believed that Freud had, at last, through a sudden reversal, restored to sex the rightful share which it had been denied for so long; they had not seen how the good genius of Freud had placed it at one of the critical points marked out for it since the eighteenth century by the strategies of knowledge and power, how wonderfully effective he was—worthy of the greatest spiritual fathers and directors of the classical period—in giving a new impetus to the secular injunction to study sex and transform it into discourse.<sup>20</sup>

It would be easy (and instructive), in the light of this, to see Freud's early life as, say, simply a modern parable of the rediscovery of sex by an unusual individual in a particular culture at a particular time; akin, say, to the life of Havelock Ellis, or D. H. Lawrence, or Wilhelm Reich. But what Freud was interested in in these crucial years was not just the all-too-familiar, all-too-human imperious urgency of sex, but how the body becomes (in both senses) its languages; how culture is the transition, to use one of Freud's favoured analogies, of the body's unconscious, forbidden desire, the desire a person believes he can't afford to acknowledge. Freud was not returning sexuality to its "rightful share," but working out what that share might be.

Freud, at the turn of the century, did not have the language to see this process of ineluctable acculturation by which he was increasingly fascinated, as embedded in "strategies of knowledge and power" (this would be Foucault's contribution; and it is a useful way of reading the subsequent history of psychoanalysis). But the real scandal of Freud's work at this time—displaced, to use one of his terms, onto the idea of infantile sexuality—was his discovery of just how ingenious and disturbing modern people had become as the unconscious artists of

their own lives. It was their capacities for representation—for finding ways and means for making their desires known in however disguised or self-defeating forms; as dreams, or slips, or perverse and neurotic symptoms—that had impressed Freud. What could be done with—how something is made out of—the virtually unassimilable material of sexual desire and aggression. His patients, Freud realized, were working on and at their psychic survival, but like artists not like scientists; and their material was their personal history encoded in their sexuality. They were not empiricists, or only fleetingly; they were fantasists. Their adaptations were ingeniously imaginative, however painful; but they were stuck. Their symptoms were the equivalent of writer's block, or rather, speaker's block. Indeed, Freud was becoming their new kind of good listener, and their champion; someone who could get, who could make something of, their strange ways of speaking. Someone who, like a good parent, or a good art critic, could appreciate what they were up to, what they could make, and make a case for it.

Freud coined the term "dream-work" in *Interpreting Dreams* because the dream was, in his view, something the dreamer made. Through what he called, in Chapter 6 of *Interpreting Dreams*, the four "mechanisms" of the dream-work, condensation, displacement, considerations of representability, and secondary revision—mechanisms because they were the virtually automatic unconscious skills of the dreamer as artisan—the dreamer "wove" out of the perceived materials of the day (the "dream day") what Freud called a "disguised fulfillment of a childhood wish." Through<sup>1</sup> the materials of the present, recruited by the repressed desires from the distant past, the dreamer formulated what he wanted, but in disguised form to get round the censor. In our dreams, Freud proposed, we are the historians—if not the archivists—of our own desire, making something to look forward to, something to want, out of the desires of the

past. Reminding ourselves of what we might want from what we once wanted.

What we can't help but do, though often unbeknownst to ourselves and to others—at least, consciously—is make our unacceptable desires known, is make them public. This, in Freud's view, is what dreams, and jokes and slips, and neurotic symptoms all do, because they are essentially similar kinds of artifacts, structured according to their function; each of them uses the mechanisms of the dream-work to transform unconscious desire into acceptable forms of knowledge and action. And these artifacts make us wonder, by the same token—as Freud would wonder later in his more sociological works like *Civilisation and Its Discontents* of 1930—what kind of societies we have created that require these kinds of suffering, this kind of art, this frustrating adaptive inventiveness. All these artifacts reveal, above all for Freud, people's unacceptable intentions; like the president of the Austrian parliament whom Freud cites in the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, opened a session by saying, "Gentleman: I take notice that a full quorum of members is present and herewith declare the sitting closed,"<sup>21</sup> Freud is always showing us how much more people are always saying—to themselves and to others—than they consciously intend. Wanting to stop things before they begin, and not knowing when to stop were, for Freud, an emblem of the modern person's predicament. Freud is not showing us merely that we are unacceptable to ourselves, but that we are more complicated than we want to be. And more wishful. And more frustrated. And more and less divided against ourselves than we may need to be.

It was unconscious "making" that Freud had become interested in in these early years; how our desires were made into wishes and our wishes were made known (it is not incidental that the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*—Freud's most widely read work, published in eleven editions and translated into

twelve languages in his lifetime—is a psychopathology of making, of making slips). Perhaps it is not surprising that Freud, in the process of making himself the psychoanalyst he was becoming, wrote his five key books about making—about the making of dreams, the making of mistakes, the making of sexual preferences, the making of jokes, and, above all given his nominal profession, the making of symptoms. And in the case of “Dora” he would also give us a glimpse of what a doctor had to do to make himself a practicing psychoanalyst, for better and for worse. Though Freud, as a scientist, claims to be discovering and describing “natural” processes—in the language of biology he is giving an account of structure according to function—he is, without saying so, in these years, describing the dreamer, the bungler, the sexual person, the joker, the neurotic, and, indeed, the psychoanalyst, as artists (sometimes slapstick, sometimes not); as people with remarkable gifts for creating elaborate and subtle, intriguing, and amusing artifacts, with proliferating meanings and uses, in the service of psychic survival. The Romantic myth of the suffering artist has been transformed, by Freud, into the story of everyone. With the publication of these five extraordinary books Freud was about to discover what people made of what he had made. Which would become, at once, the history of psychoanalysis, and the history of the second half of Freud’s life. Years in which Europe would disintegrate into two cataclysmic world wars, and psychoanalysis would begin to flourish as a revolutionary new science. There were many talented eccentric people drawn to Freud and his work, waiting in the wings of what would become an international psychoanalytic movement.

After the age of fifty Freud’s life, not unlike his earlier years, will be a series of meetings with remarkable men, and of fewer meetings with remarkable women (two of whom, Sabina Spielrein and Lou Andreas-Salome, would make decisive contributions to psychoanalysis). It will be a life of what became

known as psychoanalytic politics, as Freud revises and refines—and occasionally turns against and betrays—his first real psychoanalytic writing of these crucial years amid the collapsing politics of central Europe. Above all, at least from Freud’s own point of view, it will be a life of prolific and remarkable writing. Writing done, in a very real sense, in the aftermath, in the fallout, of the great five books he wrote at the turn of the century. And in anticipation, we might be tempted to think now, of the catastrophes to come.

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*Epilogue*


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... once doctrine is sighted and is held to be the completion of insight, the doctrinal note of thinking seems the only one possible. When doctrine totters it seems it can fall only into the gulf of bewilderment; few minds risk the fall; most seize the remnants and swear the edifice remains, when doctrine becomes intolerable dogma.

—R. P. Blackmur, *The Double Agent*

“WHEN WE SCRUTINISE the personalities who, by self-selection became the first generation of psychoanalysts,” Freud’s daughter Anna wrote in 1968 in her Freud anniversary lecture “Difficulties in the Path of Psychoanalysis,”

we are left in no doubt about their characteristics. They were the unconventional ones, the doubters, those who were dissatisfied with the limitations imposed on knowledge; also

among them were the odd ones, the dreamers, and those who knew neurotic suffering from their own experience. This type of intake has altered decisively since psychoanalytic training has become institutionalised and appeals in this stricter form to a different type of personality. Moreover, self-selection has given way to the careful scrutiny of applicants, resulting in the exclusion of the mentally endangered, the eccentrics, the self-made, those with excessive flights of imagination, and favouring the acceptance of the sober, well-prepared ones, who are hard working enough to wish to better their professional efficiency.<sup>1</sup>

Freud himself has warned us of the dangers of nostalgia. And Anna Freud, who became a psychoanalyst herself, having been analysed by her father—one of the ultimate taboos of latter day psychoanalysis—became a key player in the institutionalization of psychoanalysis after the war. And yet what she is lamenting is a part, at least, of the history of psychoanalysis, a history that began, effectively, towards the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. As Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, Sándor Ferenczi, Otto Rank, Wilhelm Reich, Karl Abraham, Paul Federn, and Ernest Jones—the most prominent, among many others—came to meet and work with Freud during this time, national and international psychoanalytic societies sprung up, journals were published, rules for membership and clinical practice were drawn up. Though Freud’s actual working practices were often far removed from his (relatively few) strictures on psychoanalytic technique, he had published guidelines on psychoanalytic practice: though interestingly they were never as extensive, it should be said, as his colleagues, particularly Ferenczi and Jones, had wished (there can be no technique for improvisation, only techniques that make improvisation possible). By the time Freud died in 1939 there was a thriving new profession when thirty years previously there had been no such profession, and psychoanalysis had been, until around 1906, a

subspecialty within the contemporary medicine of the time. And yet its rigorous institutionalisation would come at some cost. As the anthropologist Mary Douglas pointed out—and it is of a piece with Anna Freud's plea—"Any institution that is going to keep its shape needs to control the memory of its members." It was soon forgotten that psychoanalysis was a profession for dreamers.<sup>2</sup>

What Anna Freud fails to mention is that her father in his youth had himself, in his own respectable way, been one of "those who were dissatisfied with the limitations imposed on knowledge . . . the odd ones, the dreamers, and those who knew neurotic suffering from their own experience." He was, if not obviously one of the "mentally endangered, the eccentrics," he was one of the "self-made," a person with "excessive flights of imagination" even if he preferred to think of them as more pronounced in other people than in himself. It would always be people with these supposedly excessive flights of imagination that he was drawn to, as both patients and colleagues. The bourgeois caricature of the sober Freud—the "Doctor," "the Master" with the beady eye—we need to remember, is largely the product of the iconography of his middle and late years.

And we need to remember that the older Freud, presumably with retrospective misgivings about his own early training, was always a champion, against much opposition within the profession he had invented, of what was called, in an unfortunate phrase "lay analysis," the training of nonmedical psychoanalysts. Freud, in other words, did not believe that a training in medicine, or even in the sciences, was a prerequisite for the work of a psychoanalyst. And he believed this to the end of his life: "I have never repudiated these views," he wrote in 1938, "and I insist upon them even more intensely than before."<sup>3</sup> Though he always held to the value of science as self-correcting and consciously empirical, his new science of psychoanalysis had also

shown him the limits of scientific method. Science abstracted and overgeneralized the singularity, the profounder eccentricity of human character that psychoanalysis revealed. Indeed in its description of character psychoanalysis often seemed to begin where science left off—that is, with the irreducible uniqueness of individual temperament and history. Psychoanalytic case histories sounded like short stories, in Freud's formulation, because they were short stories; they were strikingly unlike the medical writing of the times. When Freud eventually referred to the instincts, the fundamental building blocks of Darwinian biology, as his "mythology"; when he proposed the instinctual dualism of life as a battle between the life instinct and the death instinct in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), and gave these instincts the mythological names of Eros and Thanatos, he was making scientific method compatible with mythmaking. We need to see Freud's abiding fascination with the making and consuming of fictions beginning in his youth, as he taught us to do in his own idiosyncratic way. His medical training, he thought of, ironically, as part of his misspent youth. An eccentric and, as it turned out, a remarkable dreamer, he had by his own account temporarily lost his way by studying medicine.

It is worth noting that the whole subject of lay analysis made Freud uncharacteristically autobiographical. In his *Postscript to the Question of Lay Analysis* (1926), at the age of seventy and so free of the constraints of his youth, he wrote:

After forty years of medical activity, my self-knowledge tells me that I have never really been a doctor in the proper sense. I became a doctor through being compelled to deviate from my original purpose; and the triumph of my life lies in my having, after a long and roundabout journey, found my way back to my earliest path. . . . In my youth I felt an overpowering need to understand something of the riddles of the world in which we live, and perhaps even to contribute some-

thing to their solution. The most hopeful means of achieving this end seemed to be to enroll myself in the medical faculty. . . . I scarcely think, however, that my lack of a genuine medical temperament has done much damage to my patients.<sup>4</sup>

It seemed to be but it was not. Freud intimates, without quite saying so, that lacking “a genuine medical temperament” might have done more than merely not harmed his patients. “Indeed,” Freud goes on, “the words, ‘secular pastoral worker’ might well serve as a general formula for describing the function which the analyst, whether he is a doctor or a layman, has to perform in his relation to the public.”<sup>5</sup> In the really very difficult task of finding analogies for the practice of psychoanalysis Freud always needed it to be not only a rational account of the irrational, but also a reputable account of the disreputable. More ambitious than Oedipus, the young Freud had wanted to understand the riddles of the world; it was a quest for knowledge, as we saw at the beginning, that Freud was inspired by, but on a grand scale. Medicine turned out to be a wrong turning, a deviation. Through psychoanalysis he found a different kind of riddle—a riddle from ancient myth—and different solutions; his preferred phrase for the psychoanalyst—not doctor but “secular pastoral worker”—sounds like a new version of a very much older, more traditional role. But psychoanalysis, Freud is clear is, above all, neither a medical treatment, nor a conversion experience:

We do not seek to bring [the patient] relief by receiving him into the catholic, protestant or socialist community. We seek rather to enrich him from his own internal resources, by putting at the disposal of his ego those energies which, owing to repression, are inaccessibly confined in his unconscious, as well as those which his ego is obliged to squander in the fruitless task of maintaining these repressions. Such activity as this is pastoral work in the best sense of the words.<sup>6</sup>

Freud, who conspicuously doesn't mention Judaism (or Zionism) certainly uses the idea of pastoral work in the most ironic of senses; the pastoral work of psychoanalysis is about liberating energies, allowing the individual access to his inner resources, irrespective, at least in the first instance, of their moral value. Psychoanalysis, then, is neither a science in the usual sense, nor a religion in the traditional sense; he wants it to be an unusual science, and somehow akin to a secular religion. Freud writes that he wants “to feel assured that the therapy will not destroy the science,”<sup>7</sup> knowing that it might, but wanting to have this both ways. Psychoanalysis had helped Freud understand his ambivalence about science (ambivalence was Freud's self-cure for fanaticism). He wanted, and found through psychoanalysis, freedom from some of the limitations imposed upon knowledge by both science and religion.

Psychoanalysis then, Freud's life's work—that in one sense was finished and in another sense just beginning in 1906—invites us to imagine, in his daughter's words, what “those who were [then] dissatisfied with the limitations imposed on knowledge,” might want knowledge to be and to do for them; to imagine, that is to say, what satisfactions these dissatisfactions might lead to. Anna Freud was not a bohemian herself, nor was she given to glamourising the rebellious, but her message was clear in that fateful year 1968—psychoanalysis was originally a science for outsiders.

But we need to remember, by way of conclusion, that despite Freud's equivocations about science and his essential and constitutive uncertainty about what kind of thing psychoanalysis was, Freud—who had no truck with the supernatural—believed in telepathy much to the dismay of his first official biographer and disciple, the Welsh psychoanalyst Ernest Jones. “There is no doubt,” Jones wrote in his chapter in his official biography of Freud on occultism,



that [telepathy] is by far the most "respectable" element in the field of occultism, and therefore the one that has gained the widest acceptance. In Freud's opinion it probably represented the kernel of truth in that field, one which the myth-making tendencies of mankind had enveloped in a cocoon of phantastic beliefs. The idea of a "kernel of truth" specially fascinated Freud and cooperated with more personal motives in his unconscious to incline him towards accepting a belief in telepathy. He had more than once had the experience of discovering such a kernel in the complicated beliefs of mankind, beliefs often contemptuously dismissed as superstition; that dreams really had a meaning was the most important element. So he felt intuitively that telepathy might be the kernel of truth in this obscure field.<sup>8</sup>

The question to be asked of every biographer is, what does he want to guarantee that his subject is not? Freud's biographers have wanted to assure their readers that Freud is not a charlatan; a spurious version of a real thing: Freud as the arch unmasker that needs to be unmasked himself (of course the Jews of Freud's generation, like all second generation immigrants, were struggling to be, or to seem to be, the real thing, as defined by their host cultures). Jones is clearly bending over backwards to defend Freud's credibility and his credibility here, as if he doesn't want us to get the wrong idea (that Freud was also a crank); as if, like all biographers, as I say, there are things he is trying to stop us thinking about his subject (only Freud's noble passion for truth could have made him take this stuff seriously). Though he noticeably tells us nothing in this passage of what Freud's unconscious personal motives might be, thus casting some suspicion, Jones wants to reassure us with the "kernel of truth" idea. As long as Truth is being pursued, as long as the quest for true knowledge, however misguided, is in play, we can go on taking Freud seriously (the question about psychoanalysts has always been whether or in what way to take

them seriously). What, we might wonder, has the biographer—especially the biographer of a psychoanalyst, and of *the* psychoanalyst—got to be defensive about? Why shouldn't, why wouldn't the founder of psychoanalysis be interested in telepathy? And, what, say, from a psychoanalytic point of view, might this tell us about his character? When Jones began to question Freud about this Freud replied in a letter of 7 March 1926:

If someone should reproach you with my Fall into Sin, you are free to reply that my adherence to telepathy is my private affair like my Jewishness, my passion for smoking, and other things, and the theme of telepathy—inessential for psychoanalysis.<sup>9</sup>

It is a strikingly subtle and complicated sentence. Freud immediately suggests that it is Jones's amour propre that is at stake not his own ("if someone should reproach you . . ."); Jones is dearly worried what it might say about him to be the follower (Jones's word) of a man interested in telepathy. It is, Freud asserts his "private affair"—though known to many of his colleagues—and thereby "inessential" for psychoanalysis, Freud thus disidentifying himself from psychoanalysis, and saying that some things are private, i.e., exempt even from psychoanalysis (he was showing us that you can love psychoanalysis and love other things more). He has a private life that is not relevant to psychoanalysis—there is more to him than psychoanalysis could or should encompass—and psychoanalysis (and psychoanalysts) must leave some things alone. They mustn't attempt to colonise people's privacy. And then there is Freud's list of his private affairs. Sexuality, perhaps unsurprisingly, is not mentioned; and the two other things mentioned—and linked to telepathy—could not be more public, Jewishness and smoking.

The psychoanalyst can't help but ask why these three things, and what links them? They are all, perhaps, intimate unspoken pleasures; forms of community or communion smoking, say, as

self-communicating, and so on, a private, mostly unconscious, sociability. All of them, of course, are disapproved of by the authorities: it is not good to believe in them. And then, or rather, right at the beginning of the sentence, there is Freud comparing his "adherence to telepathy" (different from the "theme of telepathy") to the Fall into Sin; that is, as a desire for forbidden knowledge. As if telepathy, like smoking and, indeed, Jewishness, give Freud access to a forbidden, fateful knowledge that he shouldn't want, but can't resist. And enjoys despite their consequences. And in the original story this knowledge was provided by a woman.

Judaism, the genesis myth tells us, was the consequence of the Fall, but in this letter telepathy is Freud's original sin; his descriptions of the unofficial ways in which people communicate with themselves and each other, a sin that Freud equates with the profoundest pleasure, as he would with all sins. People are reading each other's minds all the time whether they realize it or not; Freud's psychoanalysis just follows on from there. That is what Freud wants to keep private; this acknowledgment is his private pleasure. What people did without realizing, without noticing what they were doing; the secular description of transgression, and the link between transgression and knowledge; people's ineluctable sociability, despite their determined attempts to isolate themselves; the relentless inventiveness of conscious and unconscious communication between people. These, after all, were the themes of his psychoanalysis. The unofficial, the unspoken, the disapproved of, the disreputable, all as somehow essential for a kind of sociability Freud had intimations of, and that psychoanalysis would begin by describing. But the psychoanalysis that the young Freud invented—emblematically represented here as telepathy, Jewishness, and cigars—was, like its younger founder, something of uncertain status. Something it was difficult to know what to make of. Something for those eccentrics and dreamers who don't know what to make of themselves.

## NOTES

S.E. citations refer to *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Standard Edition), 24 vols. (New York: WW Norton, 1976). All other quotations from Freud, including titles, are from the New Penguin Freud Translations.

## 1. Freud's Impossible Life

1. S.E. XVI, 300.
2. S.E. II, 160.
3. S.E. VII, 243.
4. S.E. VII, 149.
5. S.E. XXI, 231.
6. S.E. XX, 8.
7. S.E. XVIII, 59.
8. Sigmund Freud, *The Sigmund Freud-Ludwig Brunschwiger Correspondence, 1908-1938*, ed. Gerhard Fichtner, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans and with introduction, editorial notes, and additional letters translated by Tom Roberts (London: Open Gate Press, 2003).