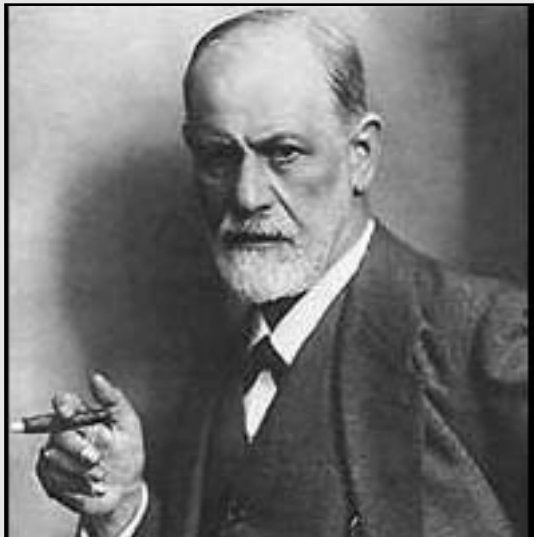


On History and Psychoanalysis¹

Pines, Malcolm (1998)

Summary

This paper presents Freud's own personal history in the context of his family and their cultural and historical era in view of sketching out some enduring personal pattern in Freud's relationship to the socio-political environment of late 19th century medicine and science and how these very subjects themselves were influenced by historical processes. This in turn is to finally argue that Freud, because of the novelty of his discoveries, could not take these historic-political contexts into account and in his interpretations collapses the entire range of allusions to social and political circumstances into his, although revolutionary, conceptual frame of reference focussed on the individual. Now, more than a century afterwards, we need to look anew at Freud's theories and concepts, redress the balance, become aware of the hidden dimensions within our social unconscious, those taboos which limit our ability to see further into our social context. Our ideas of the maturational process of the human beings, of child rearing and family dynamics are in need of urgent revision. There is an urgency of reappraisal of ourselves and society.



¹ Reference of this work:

Pines, M. (1998). On History and Psychoanalysis. In *Circular Reflections. Selected Papers on Group Analysis and Psychoanalysis* (167-182). London: Jessica Kingsley.

Originally given as a Freud Memorial Lecture at the University College Hospital London on June 9, 1986.

ON HISTORY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

An Institution wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson, is the lengthened shadow of one man. And, he also wrote, an individual is always mistaken. In the lecture, I shall be outlining some aspects, of the personal history, of Sigismund Freud, for that is the name that he was given at birth, changed by himself during his adolescence to the more Teutonic form, Sigmund, as by then a character called Sigismund had become the butt of anti-Semitic jokes. It is he who is that Institution in whose shadow psychoanalysis has grown. And, in order to amplify that individualistic vision which, Emerson rightly states, must always be mistaken, I shall invoke a vision of those historians who take Freud and psychoanalysis as the object of their studies. I draw principally upon the work of Hannah Decker on "the History of the Reception of Freud's ideas in Germany", Kenneth Levin on "Freud's Early Psychology", William Johnston of "the Austrian Mind", Dennis Klein on "the Jewish origins of Psychoanalysis", Karl Schorske and William McGrath, the latter's recent book "Freud's Discovery of Psychoanalysis, the Politics of Hysteria", is a very important contribution to this area of study

Psychoanalysts have used psychoanalytic theory as a tool toward the understanding of an individual's history, his-story, and, more ambitiously, towards an understanding of historical eras and the sweep of historical change. That is not the subject I shall be addressing. I shall sketch out for you firstly, Freud's own personal history in the context of his family, set his family in the context of their own cultural and historical era then illustrate some enduring personal pattern in Freud's relationship to the socio-political environment of late 19th century Austro-Germany. How his ideas may have been shaped by the nature of 19th century medicine and science, and how these very subjects themselves were influenced by historical processes, is also my aim.

Gestalt psychology and in Group Analysis we use the concept of figure-ground, that the perception of an object is only meaningful when set against the background, and, further, that we can reverse the perceptual field and make background into foreground and foreground into background; This helps us to see the relationship of a person to his context. The individual's uniqueness is not reduced when we can see that we are all children of our times. As Freud himself in 1897 acknowledged in a letter, "One always remains a child of his age, even in what one deems is his very own".

Sigismund Freud was the fortunate eldest son of a young and beautiful mother. Amalia Freud was the third wife of Jacob Freud and was half his age when they married. Martin Freud described his grandmother as being descended from those Galician Jew who fought the Nazis in the ruined ghettos of Warsaw with legendary courage and stubborn-ness, Nothing is as yet known of Jacob Freud's second wife and what this emptiness of memory represents has yet to be uncovered. Sigismund Freud had two much older half-brothers from his father's first marriage, Emmanuel the elder, and Philipp, the younger, Emmanuel had two children, John and Pauline. John, older than Sigismund by one year, occupied an important and unforgettable place in his unconscious. Freud's nephew John, a year older than himself, was inevitably his superior in strength and skill. In their relationship, Freud inevitably occupied the position of under-dog. Freud wrote, "At the age of three I was in a close relation, sometimes friendly, but sometimes warlike, with a boy a year older than myself. We loved each other and fought with each other, and this childhood relationship...had a determining influence on all my subsequent relations with contemporaries. Since that time my nephew John has had many incarnations which revive now one side and now another, of his personality, unalterably fixed as it was in my unconscious memory" Together with John, his "companion in crime" he began to explore the world of sexuality, together treating Pauline, his niece, in some way 'shockingly'. Thus libidinal ties were formed between him and John, which were played out in common rebellion against paternal authority.

McGrath has elaborated on the development of this relationship with his nephew John in Freud's life, in his relationship with such brother figures as Breuer, Fliess and such lesser known earlier figures of his schooldays as Heinrich Braun, and Victor Adler, which I shall soon discuss. He has drawn our attention to Freud's identification with Hannibal, Semitic opponent of Rome, with whom Freud deeply identified in his adolescent rebellion against his father Jacob. You will no doubt recall that famous incident in Freud's adolescence when, contemptuous of his father's response to the anti-Semite who forced him, as a Jew, to step off the pavement into the muddy street, he swore to himself that he would not follow the model of his father and in his place rose up the image of Hannibal, who made an oath to his father to take revenge upon the Romans and became the first of Freud's ego-ideals, historical figures who later came to include Oliver Cromwell, Napoleon Bonaparte, Garibaldi, Bismarck and much later, the American President, Woodrow Wilson. What united all these great figures in Freud's mind were that they advanced secularism, contested the power of the Catholic Church, and released Jews from oppression.

The only contemporary of Freud's amongst these ego-ideals was, of course, the German Chancellor, Bismarck. When the latter visited Vienna in 1892 when Freud was 36, Freud waited in the street and made several attempts to get a close look at him. From adolescence, Freud closely followed Bismarck's career, apparently fired by his exploits. During the Franco-Prussian war when Freud was 14, he took such an interest in this conflict that he acquired a large map which he dotted with small flags to pursue the campaign and enthusiastically gave lectures to his sisters on the strategies of the respective forces. Bismarck's political and military intrigues directly affected the fortune of Freud and his family. Freud's father admired Bismarck because he brought about German unification and as a token of his admiration, when Jacob Freud had to make a change and adapt his birthday from the Jewish to the Christian calendar, he showed his esteem for Bismarck by selecting his birthday as his own. Bismarck's unification of Germany fired the Pan-Germanic ideals of the generation of Freud's adolescence and early adulthood. Traces of this militant nationalism and of his unconscious conflicts with it have provided Schorske and McGrath with much material for their research. This we shall come to later. Let us now return to Freud's relationship with Heinrich Braun, a greatly admired 'young lion' from his early adolescence, later a leading socialist politician. Braun, though two years older than Freud, was his class-mate for several years. He introduced Freud to politics, to radicalism, and political action. Until his late adolescence Freud himself, like Braun, aspired to a political career, for which the study of law would have qualified him. Freud in his early adolescence apparently was *fearful* of his father, greatly admired Braun's ability to speak to his father as an equal. Together with Braun, Freud took part in a rebellion against an unpopular school-teacher, the results of which led to his being marked down from the highest possible grade of conduct to a grade two lower, from which he only recovered in the final years of his school career after Braun had left. Freud's hero worship of Braun was described when he wrote "I admired him, his energetic behaviour, his independent judgement, compared him secretly with a young lion, and was deeply convinced that one day he would fulfil a leading position in the world... he encouraged me in my aversion to school, and what was taught there, aroused a number of revolutionary feelings within me. It was understood that I would work with him and never let down his side." Later Freud did leave Braun's side, becoming his own man in the field of psychology rather than that of politics in which Braun went on to become a leading figure. However, some deeper personal feelings came into this break in the relationship with Braun. This was through Braun's relationship with Victor Adler, later to be the founder of the Austrian Socialist Party, the first Foreign minister in the first Austrian Democratic Republic's Government, and the originator of May Day as a Celebration of International Socialists.

Alfred Adler, a Jewish Psychiatrist who also worked with Freud's revered mentor, Brücke, aroused Freud's jealousy in many ways. He was a leader in the Reading Circle of young Viennese intellectuals to which Freud belonged for 5 years, which studied the writings Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Richard Wagner. It was Adler who Freud challenged in a debate during his student days, by whom he was

worsted, his self-esteem injured, and in an angry outburst, Freud even challenged Adler to settle their differences in a duel. Adler coolly rejected this notion, but this incident reappeared in one of Freud's revolutionary dreams to which I shall refer later. Rivalry with Adler seems to have intensified when Adler married Braun's sister and thereupon replaced Freud in his close relationship with Braun. This seems to have activated the antagonistic, competitive side of Freud's memories of his nephew John, and there is an interesting sequence to their relationship.

In 1883, Braun had arranged a lunch at Adler's apartment when Freud was still a medical student. Despite the pleasant nature of this lunch Freud went away from it in a melancholy mood. At that time Freud, engaged to Martha Bernays, had no prospect of marrying her because of his poverty. He compared himself with Adler, married, prosperous, already a father, a respected member of the community. Nine years later, Freud looking for a larger apartment to accommodate his growing family, chose one that fulfilled none of the requirements that he and his wife had carefully drawn up: 19 Berggasse... This was Adler's old apartment and Freud rented it on the spot without even consulting his wife. According to the analyst Suzanne Bernfeld, from who this story comes, "with characteristic intuition Mrs. Freud realised that Freud had to have this house, and that no other house would do. They did manage to live in this gloomy and impractical house for 47 years".

I have so far given these vignettes from Freud's youth to illustrate his passionate nature, his radicalism and his strongly vested relationships with brother figures. I hope that they have, so far, breathed some youthful life into the image of Freud whom we usually regard as a stern, ageing patriarch, a Moses. Freud indeed, strongly identified himself with the biblical figures of Josef and of Moses. Shengold points out that Freud makes many references to Josef in the interpretation of his dreams, and himself explained that it was easy for him to identify himself with Josef. "It will be noticed that the name Josef plays a great part in my dreams. My own ego finds it very easy to hide itself behind people of that name, since Josef was the name of a man famous in the Bible as an interpreter of dreams".



The identification with Josef goes far beyond this similarity, however, Josef was the eldest son of Jacob's wife Rachel, and his father's favourite. Note the similarity of the name of the patriarch to that of Freud's own father, Jakob. Josef is envied by his brothers, who band against him, sell him into slavery in Egypt, but in his turn, he has his revenge upon them when he rises to great power and eminence in the land of Egypt. He triumphs over them, brings his father and the whole of his tribe to live in the land of Egypt, has his own children adopted by Jacob. He exemplifies in his life the triumph of a man who is assimilated into a foreign culture, acquires power and eminence within that culture, and who lives the life of a man of peace. Shengold draws the parallel between one aspect of Freud's character in which he wishes to become the assimilated Jew in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with his frustrated political ambitions, to rise to high office: "Every industrious Jewish boy carries a Cabinet Minister's portfolio in his knapsack" wrote Freud, remembering his childhood in the optimistic liberal era of the late 1860's the time of the Burgerministerium, and the Josef identification represents the peaceful achievement of power and strength in a hostile world. Josef the powerful Jew remains in Egypt, the land of the foreign oppressor and to the end of life remains a loving son, respecting paternal authority.

Later in his life, Freud's identification moved from Josef to Moses. He was fascinated by the figure of Moses throughout his middle and later years, and in reverse of his assimilationist identification with Josef, tried to prove that Moses was not a Jew but an Egyptian. In his study of Michelangelo's Moses, he portrays Moses as a powerful man with a passion over which he had to exert immense self-control in order not to erupt into violence against his people. Passionate, proud, powerful Moses never entered into the Promised Land —this was the punishment for his impulsive nature and for his defiance of his God, but he was the leader who took his people out of the land of the oppressors. Freud suggested to Jung that the latter was the Joshua who would take the chosen people into the Promised Land that he

would never reach. But for two years Freud lived almost across the street from the man who, in political reality, did become the Moses of his people the founder of Zionism, Theodore Herzl. Freud's ambivalence to Herzl and to Zionism is starkly illuminated by his word to Herzl's son Hans, in 1913, nine years after Herzl's death. These words illuminate Freud's own views on the inter-relationship between the domains of fantasy, reality and politics. "Your father is one of the people who turned dreams into reality. This is a very rare and dangerous breed. It includes the Garibaldis, the Herzls; I would simply call them the sharpest opponents of my work. It is my modest profession to simplify dreams, to make them clear and ordinary. They, on the contrary, confuse the issue, turn it upside down, and command the world while they themselves remain on the other side of the psychic mirror. It is a group specialising in realisation of dreams; ideal in psychoanalysis they deal in psychosynthesis. He went on to say *"They are robbers in the Underground of the Unconscious world. Stay away from them young man. Stay away even if one of them was your father. Perhaps because of that."* Clearly Freud here is also speaking of his own relationship with his father, man who had failed to realise Freud's adolescent, rebellious ideals, who had apparently given in without struggle to anti-Semitism. Freud himself had become the leader of a great movement but unlike Herzl's political movement psychoanalysis can be termed a "counter-political movement" in that it moves the heart of the matter from politics to the psyche. Thus not only was Herzl the rival who had succeeded in fulfilling Freud's adolescent wishes but he was of that breed of politician who knew how to summon from the depth of fantasy the forces which men blindly follow, leaders who in Freud's own lifetime had led mass anti-Semitic movements and which 20 years on would eventually lead to the ascent of Hitler and Nazism. Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Freud's contemporary, wrote, *"Politics is magic. He who knows how to summon forces from the deep him will they follow"*. Freud had explored the depth in his own intra-psychic journey; but still he feared the forces of the deep when they escaped from the control of the individual's own ego and became subject to the will of a charismatic leader.

When we put together this assemblage of Freud's ideals, his models for identification, we see again some indications of the passionate and proud warlike nature of this man who had the intellectual power and emotional courage to enter alone into the dark ravines of the mind. The conventional history of how Freud began his explorations, his lonely forays into the unconscious, is that it was stimulated by the death of his father in 1896, an event which Freud himself characterised as that great and poignant event in a man's life. Certainly in those years Freud developed symptoms of hysteria which must have driven him to attempt a self cure both through his own investigation and through his passionate relationship with Wilhelm Fliess. Our historians, however, tell a somewhat different story. McGrath writes, *"An examination of Freud's own political and personal history in conjunction with his political dreams, recorded in the Interpretation of Dreams reveals that much of the very psychoanalytic theory to which Freud reduced man's individual and social actions in itself can be seen to reflect historical, socio-political conditions of Freud's time. The assurance with which Freud was able to apply psycho-analytic theory to socio-political problems may thus be as much a reflection of the socio-political origins of psychoanalysis as of the general truth of these theories. In order to trace the ways in which psycho-analytic theory may have been shaped by the historical events of Freud's time, it is necessary to examine the various links tying together in his mind problems of society and politics with those of the individual human psyche. It is necessary to read Freud backwards, to reintegrate the auto-biographical and political fragments he reveals into the personal and social contexts from which they were taken. Once this is done, it becomes possible to see how closely politics and history interacted in Freud's own creative genius and genesis of psychoanalysis."*

Let us now turn to the political context of 19th century medicine and neurology. There was acute political rivalry between France and Germany, a rivalry into which science was drawn. France's brilliant 18th century age of enlightenment and rationality contrasted with divided Germany's romanticism and idealism. Whereas French medicine had advanced brilliantly in the early 19th century, German medicine was far behind. The universities, centres of scientific research were only just developing in Germany in

contrast to the splendidly organised French system. By the mid-19th century, German universities had become much better organised and great advances in scientific medicine were being made and in these academic centres there was a strong reaction against the older system of romantic medicine. Materialistic attitudes triumphed and in psychiatry this manifested through the search for the anatomical basis of mental disorders.

We should never forget that at least 30 % of all mental disorder proved eventually to be due to the ravages of syphilis, of general paresis of the insane, and this finding greatly strengthened the case of the brain anatomists. Eventually, German physicians began to feel much superior to their French rivals and to regard the French as an inferior people, more degenerate, more prone to hysteria, less industrious and less efficient. This seemed to be confirmed by the triumph of Prussia in the war of 1870 against the French, when the Prussian medical forces were far better organised than their opponents, Prussian casualties much lower, and better cared for, their death from Smallpox being ten times less than the French.

However, both French and German psychiatrists were largely united in their belief that more knowledge of the anatomy and pathology of the nervous system was the royal path to progress in psychiatry. Freud's teacher, Meynert, was the leading proponent of German anatomical psychiatry and his pupil Freud was a leading neurologist in his earlier years. Once Freud had dedicated himself to a career in psychiatry he obtained a grant to study with Charcot in Paris for five months. He did not go there to study hysteria and hypnosis. He wrote *"I was bound to reflect that I could not expect to learn anything essentially new in a German university after having enjoyed direct and indirect instruction in Vienna. The French school of Neuro-pathology, on the other hand, seemed to me to promise something unfamiliar and characteristic in its mode of working, and moreover to have embarked on new fields of Neuro-pathology which have not been similarly approached by scientific workers in Germany and Austria."*

Charcot, indeed, was recognised as the leading European anatomist of the nervous system and had occupied a Chair of Anatomy and Pathology at Paris University before a special Chair of Neuro-pathology was created for him. More of that later. It was only when he was in Paris in direct contact with Charcot, that Freud discovered the difference between French and German neurologists, which was that for Charcot, *"the work of anatomy was finished and that the theory of the anatomical diseases of the nervous system might be said to be complete; what next had to be dealt with was the neuroses."* The personal effect of Charcot on him was expressed in a letter to his fiancée, *"Charcot, who is one of the greatest of physicians, is simply wrecking all my aims and opinions. When I come away from him I no longer have any desire to work at my own silly things"*.

Charcot was using hypnosis as his tool to study the working of the nervous system and had clearly established hysteria as a clinical entity that was not based upon anatomical changes in the nervous system.

But Charcot himself has to be seen in his socio-political context. He was a great figure in French intellectual and political life and his school at the Salpêtrière has been regarded as a part of a tight network of Republican politicians and scientist-politicians. His very Chair of Neuro-pathology at the university was created for him by his close political friend, Gambetta, as part of the anticlerical policy of the Republican French Government. The whole movement to establish hysteria as a recognised medical condition was part of an anti-clerical campaign. Medieval Catholic Church culture had included hysteria in the phenomena of witchcraft and new scientific thinking was taking over what had once been the Church's domain. Charcot's disciple, Bourneville, laicised the public hospital in 1883 and the conquests of religion by science in France contrasted with the rise of anti-Semitic Catholic forces in Austria at that same time.

When Freud returned to Austria as a spokesman of Dr. Charcot, whose book he had translated, and after whom he named his second son, Jean-Martin, he was pitched into the rivalry between French and German psychiatry and was, therefore, seen as a deviant from the school to which he had formerly belonged. This in part accounts for the hostile reception of his ideas on hypnosis and on male hysteria. However, Freud was ready to throw down the gauntlet to Catholic Vienna. He announced in the newspapers that he would open his professional office on April 25th 1886, Easter Sunday, the day on which every other office and business in Catholic Vienna would have been closed. Freud the psychiatrist in 1886 is not yet Freud the analyst of 1895 onwards. I want now to sketch in the socio-political background of this next decade and to trace their effect of Freud's psychoanalytic researches.

Freud grew up in the liberal, optimistic 1860's. All restrictions on Jews were lifted in 1867. This happy era was short-lived, for under the Liberal Government's free market policy there was great economic expansion, a Stock Exchange boom culminating in a great financial crash in 1873. The Liberal Government was involved in scandals of corruption, immorality and cynicism (the Ofenheim case) which severely undermined the fragile political prestige of Austrian liberalism. Freud's own letters of that time illustrate his disillusion with political radicalism and his turning to scientific radicalism and from henceforth his interest in political life, hitherto strong, manifests primarily as an undercurrent in his intellectual life, appearing, usually in jokes, allusions, asides and unconscious connections. It is this undercurrent that McGrath has brought to our attention, as I shall now show.

From 1875 onwards, reactionary anti-Semitic forces began to strengthen in Austrian politics. In the 1880's, Georg von Schonerer had forced the pan-Germanic Movement for the unification of Austria and Germany onto an anti-Semitic path. Richard Wagner, a great force in Austrian intellectual life also espoused racial anti-Semitism. Thus, anti-Semitic pressures intensified in Freud's environment. Our historians suggest that these factors played an important role in Freud's turning his attention away from the frustrating external world which blocked his professional advancement and reinforced his underlying sense that it would be through the exploration of his inner world that he would become master of his environment instead of being a helpless pawn in the world of politics.

Freud's self-analysis dates from 1896, the year of the death of his father. But this, and subsequent years, were also a time of great political unrest in Austria and these are reflected in his self-analysis. In 1877 elections were called by the Government of Count Badini the result of which was an increase in the strength of the anti-Semitic Christian Social Party. Badini had hoped to create a coalition of Czechs and liberal Germans to avoid an alliance with the clerical conservatives, but the conservatives outbid Badini in an alliance with the Czechs and established a tenuous Slavic-clerical conservative majority and this tipped the balance of power towards Prague and the Bohemian region of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The tensions around the issue of whether Czech or German should be the official language of the Empire aroused those passions with which we are familiar nowadays in other language disturbances, such as in Belgium and in Sri-Lanka. The streets of Vienna were filled with rioting crowds, the university was closed, and as part of the political deal with the Christian Social Party, the anti-Semitic Mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, was finally confirmed in his post. The Emperor, Franz Josef, had twice refused to confirm him as a sign of his disapproval of his anti-Semitic politics, but in the end he had to give way to politics and to public opinion.

What this political struggle lit up in Freud can only be guessed at and sketched out. In his dreams Freud touches upon the fact that until the age of two he had a Czech nursemaid, Monica Zajic and that through her he knew something of the Czech language. She, Catholic, ugly, fascinating had in some way been his first teacher in the realm of sexuality and had brought him into contact with the mysteries of the Roman Catholic Church. She had disappeared from his life at the age of two, when his sister Anna was born, as she was imprisoned for theft. Thus the issues of Czech versus German had a powerful emotional resonance for him. The whole climate of increasing anti-Semitism and political

unrest stirred up in his anxieties about the fate of his family, reminded him of the wanderings of the Jews in search of their own land, and metaphors of Journeys appeared in his dream and interpretations at the same time as his travel neurosis increased in intensity. In his journeys to Italy and to Greece Freud was going back to a childhood of Western Culture at the same time as he was re-exploring his own childhood in his self-analysis. In this period of great emotional turbulence, reflected in his neurotic symptoms, he establishes a powerful relationship with Wilhelm Fliess who, in a very unrealistic way, he sees as a man who balances harmony with spirit, who represents the harmony and proportions of classical culture which he contrasts with his own erratic moods. It is on one of his Italian journeys that he makes a crucial breakthrough, his concept of the oedipal relationship and conflicts which give him access to a universal and timeless struggle between instincts and repression and for which he is able to find evidence in Greek Mythology. For the first time he feels that he has attained both intellectual and emotional coherence in his life. It is through his recognition of the oedipal struggle that he feels reconciled to his relationship with his father, is now released from the ambivalence of his mourning and immediately after his return from his Italian visit he joins the Jewish brotherhood two days before the end of the 11 months ritual mourning period. He is now able to ignore political uncertainties and dramatic events for he has found safe harbour within the domain of the psyche. Let us look however, at some of the details of his turbulent times as they are alluded to in some of his dreams.

In October 1897 he has a dream, which refers to a Doctor Lecher. "I saw in the window of a bookshop a new volume in one of the series of monographs of great artists, on world history, on famous cities, etc. The new series was called 'Famous Speakers' or 'Speeches' and its first volume bore the name of Doctor Lecher. Of this dream, Freud wrote *"that it seemed to me improbable that I should be concerned in my dream with the fame of Dr. Lecher, the non-stop speaker of the German obstructionists in Parliament. The position was that few days earlier I had taken on some new patients for psychological treatment and was now obliged to talk for ten or eleven hours every day. So it was I, myself that was a non-stop speaker"*.

It is surprising that Freud should speak of himself as a non-stop speaker in his role as an analyst where surely he was in a position of being a non-stop listener. Let us see what was the occasion of this non-stop speech by Dr. Lecher.

The situation was that the Austrian Parliament had to pass legislation by a certain date in order to renew commercial and economic relations between Austria and Hungary, the two halves of the Empire. Because of the fight between the Czechs and the Germans, the German language faction set out to block the passage of this legislation. There is a splendid account of Doctor Lecher's speech and the surrounding political events written by Mark Twain, who was in Austria at the time. In the turmoil of an outraged and noisy Parliament Dr. Lecher spoke non-stop for twelve hours 'without deviance or repetition' for the rules of the Austrian Parliament were strict in demanding that speeches be relevant to the subject under debate. In Mark Twain's words, Dr. Lecher's speech was 'the longest flow of unbroken talk that ever came out of one mouth since the world began' and it was all strictly to the point. "For twelve hours he stood there, undisturbed by the clamour around him, arid with grace and ease and confidence, poured out the riches of his mind in closely reasoned arguments clothed in eloquent and faultless phrasing.' At the end of his twelve hours Dr. Lecher had achieved a personal triumph recognised by all, even his enemies. As McGrath points out, there are many factors which would lead to Freud having a close identification with this famous speaker. He had gained widespread fame and admiration for which Freud longed, and he had won it in a heroic manner, reminiscent of Freud's adolescent fantasies of military glory. He was serene and untroubled in the face of the violent emotional storm raging around him; he was a man of masterful intellect, who displayed a comprehensive understanding of the difficult subject under discussion; he responded like a gentleman to insults; he was a polished and eloquent orator. Nevertheless, Freud's interpretation of the dream brushes aside any possibility that political sympathies could have brought about his identification with Lecher and pointed

rather to professional activities as the real subject of the underlying dream thoughts. McGrath suggests that the dream of Dr. Lecher represented a wish fulfilment that Freud himself could, like the subject of his dream, overcome all those frustrating obstacles that stood in the way of success and fame. Freud, too, had been held down by his contemporaries when he presented unpopular subjects for public discussion and approval. He had not yet succeeded, like Lecher, in getting his opponents to listen to him and to subdue their passion through the skill and power of his language and of his argument. In the dream image he saw Dr. Lecher's oration transformed into a book and having identified himself as the speaker might that book not have been the one that he was working on, "*The Interpretation of Dreams*", which was indeed to become one of the most famous books of our time? And does not that book also contain the results of Freud's self-analysis, his own non-stop speaking?

The crucial point about this dream is that it is the first dream in which Freud gives an open, counter-political interpretation to a political event. The dream interpretation represents a wish fulfilment, the wish to free himself from the power of politics. In giving a political dimension to his scientific work on dreams, he found a therapeutic outlet for his frustrated political drives. He begins to recognise the power of dream censorship and he quite openly recognises that censorship in dreams recapitulates in microcosm the basic structures and dynamics of the political world in which he lived. The dream wish is equivalent to popular opinion and the censor is equivalent to the repressive political authority which has to be evaded so that the opinion should reach some disguised form of expression.

I have time now only to mention one of three political dreams which have been used to illustrate this counter-political stance of psycho-analysis. This is what Freud himself called his 'revolutionary dream' of July 1898. It was provoked by the sight of Count Thun, the Prime Minister of Austria, stalking arrogantly to his special train at the Vienna Central Station, where Freud, the humble possessor of an ordinary train ticket, was leaving for a holiday. Filled with rage and hatred at the sight of the Count, who represented political, Catholic and aristocratic domination, Freud caught himself whistling Figaro's aria 'If the Count wants to dance, then I'll call the tune'. In his dream, Freud has an angry confrontation with the Count at a political meeting as he had once confronted his rival Victor Adler. He felt that he had been carried back to the revolutionary year, 1848, and associated to the unsuccessful attempts of the students to bring about political liberalism. Thus, in the first part of the dream he attempts to satisfy the rebellious feelings excited by the Count. The second scene of the dream replaced revolt by flight. He found himself in the Aula, the great ceremonial hall of the University of Vienna. "The entrances were cordoned off, and we had to escape". Eventually, after passing through a series of beautiful government rooms, he reached a corridor in which a housekeeper was sitting, an elderly stout woman. 'I avoided speaking to her but she evidently thought I had a right to pass.' Here Freud is referring to the dream mechanism of censorship, perhaps of his dream, or perhaps of his book which might be censored on account of its rebellious dream thoughts. In his associations to this second scene Freud writes that, in a boastful way he was proud of having discovered these mechanisms of dream life and thus bypassing the censorship.

In the third scene of the revolutionary dream, there is a tangle of absurdities and Freud is especially proud of his understanding that absurdity in dreams represents an unconscious train of thought involving criticism or ridicule, in this case directed at the Count and also at Freud's brother, who had been included in the associations. Freud reconstructed from this dream the thought "it is absurd to be proud of one's ancestry; it is better to be an ancestor one's self." Thus he triumphs over the aristocracy by becoming a great and famous scientist whose descendents would be proud of him. In the fourth and final scene of this revolutionary dream, Freud finds himself alone at the train station with a partially blind old man who, he understands as being both his father and the Count, He is now in a position of authority over the feeble old man, for whom he has to hold a urinal, Thus he reverses the situation of childhood, when his father tyrannised him for his own urinary incontinence and through psycho-analysis, places himself in a position of authority. Thus, in his analysis, Freud collapses an entire range of allusions to social and political rebellion into the basic psychological relationship with his father. "*The*

whole rebellious content of the dream went back to rebellion against my father, A Prince is known as the father of his country; a father is the oldest, first, and for children, the only authority, and from his autocratic power the other social authorities have developed."

Through psycho-analysis, Freud is able to reduce all environmental conflicts, all situations of helplessness and rage to the terms of a universal, infantile, oedipal phase. Aspects of current reality can be pushed aside and the past takes the place of the present. Thus politics is replaced by Freud's invention of psycho-analysis where he himself is the triumphant leader. *"Psycho-analysis replaced politics and parricide replaces regicide."*

"Psycho-analysis overcomes history, politics is neutralised by a counter-political psychology"

It is time now to conclude this lecture. I hope that I have been able to give you some impression of the great interest that historians now take in psycho-analysis and the important ways in which the understanding of historical context enters into our appreciation and appraisal of the validity of psycho-analytic theory. That we are in a period of re-appraisal is evident. Freud's triumphant discovery that stories of infantile seduction represent fantasy rather than reality is undergoing close scrutiny. Once again we become aware of the frightening power of the environment upon the child. Parental seduction and violence are not situations of fantasy; they are irredeemable reality. We know that Freud was enormously impressed by the incidence of violence towards children that was demonstrated to him during his time in Paris. He never gave up the idea that there were serious emotional traumata inflicted upon children, but we, particularly in this country, have lived through an era where the politics of the family and the exercise of power over children was almost totally ignored by a considerable number of psycho-analysts, who saw all these painful experiences of childhood in terms of the externalisation of the child's own aggressive drives or of the death instinct.

Freud's interpretation of the Oedipus myth entirely left out the filicidal rage of his father Laius and the significance of the oedipal story cannot be fully realised until one takes into account the whole family myth in which the father is a central figure. Tragic events and public opinion is making us look again at the reality of childhood. In today's society we must re-dream our own vision of childhood, a larger vision than Freud's, and see how we have emerged from an era where the violated child has been focussed upon as the source of sexual desire, hatred and envy. What has been ignored is the desire, hatred and envy of the parents. The oedipal theory made it possible to treat the child, now seen as having sexual desire, as an object of adult didactic or therapeutic efforts. The controversial analyst, Alice Miller, has suggested that we ascribe to children what we are ashamed of in ourselves, and would like to be rid of, in keeping with the way in which traditional power structures operate. This is not to deny that children do, indeed, have sexual fantasies and desires. This is Freud's great contribution to psycho-analysis, but now we need to redress the balance, to become aware of the hidden dimensions within our social unconscious, those taboos which limit our ability to see further into our social context. In this urgent and never ending work of re-appraisal of ourselves and society, the work of psycho-analysis and historians can yoke to each other as oxen to a plough, tilling the soil of the unconscious.