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Chapter 3

Freud's Conquest of the Dreamscape: Dynamics of Power in *Dora* and *The Interpretation of Dreams*

Introduction

Beginning with his *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud attempts to make readable what had been to 19th century theorists either seemingly insignificant or stubbornly illegible: the dreamscape.⁴⁴ Freud's turn to the dreamscape to uncover the concealed psychic etiology of mental disorders represents a sharp challenge to 19th century European medical discourse, which presents a strongly materialist view of mental illness (Gay 123).⁴⁵ The move from illegible dreamscape to legible dream-text opens up for Freud a channel by which to connect the conscious with the unconscious and the somatic with the psychic, thereby enabling him to merge two distinct logics of inquiry into a single explanatory structure. Freud's investigation of the dreamscape brings together a type of scientific rationale that depends on principles, hypotheses, and empirical evidence (or the imagining of empirical evidence) with a kind of hermeneutical logic that seeks to discover the deepest recesses of meaning.⁴⁶ Freud's movement between

⁴⁴ As I discussed in the Introduction, the use the term "dreamscape" evokes the notion of the dream as a space or field. The idea of the dreamscape as an alternate world creates a potential distance between itself and the dreamer, thereby questioning the notion of the dream as a projection or expression of the sleeper. When discussing Freud's interpretation, however, I follow his lead and use the word "dream"—defined by Freud as the zone of interaction between consciousness and the unconscious. A version of pp. 97-113 in this chapter appears as an article in *Legibility in the Age of Signs and Machines*. See Rogoff (2018).

⁴⁵ In his *Autobiographical Study*, Freud reflects on the importance of dream interpretation to the development of his topographical mapping of the psyche and its relation to dominant medical discourse: "With the help of the method of free association and of the closely related art of interpretation, psychoanalysis succeeded in achieving one thing which appeared to be of no practical importance but which in fact necessarily led to a fresh attitude and a fresh scale of values in scientific thought. It became possible to prove that dreams have a meaning and to discover it. In classical antiquity great importance was attached to dreams as foretelling the future; but modern science would have nothing to do with them, it handed them over to superstition, declaring them to be purely 'somatic' processes—a kind of spasm occurring in the mind that is otherwise asleep... But by disregarding the excommunication pronounced upon dreams, by treating them as unexplained neurotic symptoms, as delusional or obsessional ideas, by neglecting their apparent content and by making their separate component images into subjects of free association, psychoanalysis arrived at a different conclusion" (*An Autobiographical Study* 81-82).

⁴⁶ The dual nature of Freud's epistemological approach has been discussed by numerous authors, including Paul Ricoeur, who makes the distinction between Freud's positivist "energetics" and his interpretive "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Bernstein 132), Richard Rorty, who claims that Freud was both a "natural scientist" and a "practitioner of hermeneutics" (185), and Peter Loewenberg. The latter emphasizes what he sees as Freud's hermeneutic innovations, writing, with almost triumphant optimism: "Psychoanalysis reduces the lies, disguises, and illusions of consciousness, makes defenses conscious, presents volition and options where previously there was only compulsion, and demystifies idealizations" (qtd. in Brooks 100). Loewenberg's faith in Freudian hermeneutics

scientific and hermeneutic modes of inquiry when discussing the scene of the dream provides him with professional authority and interpretive flexibility—much like the figure of the archeologist to whom he compares himself in his case study *Dora*.

This chapter focuses on Freud's reading of two dreams, the so-called "specimen dream" or dream of Irma's injection in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and Dora's first dream in *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, and argues that Freud's creation and analysis of the dream-text express the developing politics of the dreamscape in the emerging theory and practice of psychoanalysis. Evoking the analogy of late 19th century European imperialism—a movement concurrent with the development of psychoanalysis—I discuss Freud's "colonization" of the field of the dreamscape—the transformation of this field into "territory"—and the importance of this territorial construction and occupation in terms of psychoanalysis' relative position in the medical field and the position of the analyst in relation to the patient.⁴⁷ The occupation of the dreamscape sets the stage for a "civilizing process" by which the analyst attempts to assert order and control over the "sick" psyche. With the specimen dream, Freud maps the general terrain of the dreamscape, understanding it as the site of a complex multiparty contestation between psychoanalyst, patient, medical institutions and discourses, and the social norms governing the public and private spheres. In the case of Dora's first dream, Freud's weaving of scientific methods and hermeneutical analysis aspires to total occupation and control of the territory of the dreamscape and represents a fully articulated expression of the authoritarian structure of psychoanalytic dream interpretation.⁴⁸ In attempts to reanalyze *Dora*, critics of the case study

leaves little room for an exploration of power dynamics. He writes, "Hermeneutics allows the analysand, upon reworking early childhood and present traumas, to make his or her own the meaning that was previously alien to him. The proof Freud seeks for the analyst's offered 'construction' is a hermeneutic proof—the analysand's verification by the production of new corroborative material. The analysand's confirmation is not taken at face value. Only the context of the self-formative analytic process has confirming power: 'The "Yes" has no value unless it is followed by indirect confirmations, unless the patient, immediately after his "Yes," produces new memories which complete and extend the construction'" (101). Ricoeur, significantly, sees dream interpretation as key to the development of psychoanalytic method: "It was in the work of dream interpretation... that the Freudian method was forged" (66).

⁴⁷ Connections between psychoanalysis, colonialism, imperialism and modernism have been made repeatedly. These studies focus largely on how Freudian theory adopts the language of colonial discourse, foremost in Freud's notions of the primitive, the hierarchy of reason and irrationality, and his treatment of superstition and religion (see Khanna; Brickman; Valentine; Frosh).

⁴⁸ In *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (1966), Philip Rieff makes the distinction between "therapeutic systems," like religions, which operate in an authoritarian manner in relation to the individual, and Freud's "analytic attitude," which provides the morally neutral and perhaps even "subversive" alternative of "self control" (28-29). Such a dichotomy, made in defense of psychoanalysis in the moment of the collapse of its hegemonic position, would soon be challenged by the poststructuralist analysis of the discursive construction of selfhood.

have contested nearly all of Freud's conclusions without, however, calling into question the political nature of the structure of his dream analysis. As a consequence of this neglect, the search for dream meaning in contemporary culture remains anchored to professionalized psychological discourse and dependent on the relationship between scientific and hermeneutical logics—a blending that is enacted through the hierarchical nature of therapy and iterated in the story or text of the case study, whether it be in the form of a written report or as an oral construct produced by the therapeutic communication.

The authoritarian nature of psychoanalysis' conquest of the dreamscape precedes and is qualitatively separate from (though intertwined with) Freud's theories of sexuality, including the construct of the Oedipus complex. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari recognize the difference between Freud's topographical imaginings of the psyche and conceptual tools like Oedipus. "The great discovery of psychoanalysis," they write, "was that of the production of desire, of the productions of the unconscious" (24). For Deleuze and Guattari, psychoanalysis, as agent of capitalism, is authoritarian because it attempts to capture or imprison what they call the material force of desiring-production in the nuclear family triangle (mommy-daddy-me). This materialist view leaves Deleuze and Guattari with little incentive for a discussion of dreams, which they either lump together with "fantasy" or ignore as derivative "representations" (*Anti-Oedipus* 54). By focusing specifically on Freud's conquest of the dreamscape, we can trace a type of authoritarianism that runs parallel to that of Oedipus, one that is not contingent on a total, systematic re-imagining of psychological structures or a psychologized philosophy of history in materialist terms, but which instead gains its force through dialogue, interpretation, and the transformation of the dreamscape into text.

The Dreamscape as Dark Continent

In the preface to the fifth edition of his *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud writes, "I have not been able to bring myself to embark upon any fundamental revision of the book, which might bring it up to the level of our present psycho-analytic views but would on the other hand destroy its historic character. I think, however, that after an existence of nearly twenty years it has accomplished its task" (xxix). What does Freud imagine is the task of his book on dreams? On the one hand, the goal of the book is to assert Freud's central notion that dreams have a discernible meaning (wish-fulfillment) and that the precise nature of this meaning can be grasped

through careful analysis and an understanding of the psychodynamic processes that structure the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious. Dreams, Freud argues against the prevailing wisdom of the time, are not (or not only) somatically determined and generally without meaning but are primarily the result of a complex psychological mechanism that ushers potent unconscious material (dream-thoughts) into the dreamer's consciousness in concealed or distorted form. One has to understand this process if one hopes to read or decode a dream (*Interpretation of Dreams* 296). On the other hand, the task of Freud's book is to position the analysis of dreams at the center of psychoanalytical treatment—as the key tool available to the psychoanalyst to disinter the root causes of a patient's disorder. The potential of dream analysis to bring about this complex process of synthesis of the psychic and somatic transforms the patient's dreamscape into the dark (unmapped) continent of the analyst's imagination.⁴⁹ Beginning with *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the analyst's job is to conquer and control the dreamscape, to map, define and occupy it, thereby flushing out the psychological infirmities or sicknesses (147). Thus, Freud's quest to colonize the dreamscape opens up a channel for the assertion of power into the heart of the therapeutic relationship.

Despite its authoritarian structure, the role of dream interpretation in Freudian analysis and the way in which Freudian ideas structure how one interacts with and reads the dreamscape became the dominant paradigm of dream interpretation in the modern era (Ferguson 3). More than that, Freud's medicalization of dreaming decisively defines the dreamscape as medical territory. Dreams, for Freud, become legible as manifestations of illness, as sites of negotiation between the normal and the deviant, the rational and the irrational, the civilized self and its primitive desires.⁵⁰ The explicit goal of reading dreams in Freudian analysis centers on the location and mysterious overcoming of the "lower" impulses that result in sickness and the reestablishment of normal functioning to the ego or self. More immediately, however, the reading of dreams in the analytic process aims at the expropriation of the dreamscape in order to

⁴⁹ In the *Question of Lay Analysis*, Freud explicitly uses the notion of "dark continent" to describe the sexual life of adult women (*Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 20 211). Ranjana Khanna connects Freud's use of the term to the context of African exploration and specifically to Stanley's autobiographical *Through the Dark Continent*, concluding, "The metaphor of the dark continent, then, signals a similarity between these nineteenth-century narratives: psychoanalytic, archaeological, and colonial explorations" (52).

⁵⁰ The centrality of colonial or imperial concepts in Freud's thought and language is demonstrated by Celia Brickman, who writes, "Freud's use of the idea of primitivity, which correlated the infantile stages of the development of the contemporary European psyche with the early stages in the psychological evolution of humanity, made use of this legacy of European theorizing about so-called primitive peoples, drawing on its culmination in the social evolutionism of the nineteenth century" (*Aboriginal Populations* 17).

best serve the textual demands of the analyst's written report, the case study. In this sense, psychoanalytic dream analysis has much in common with the contemporaneous development of ethnology. Early ethnographic studies utilize the subject of the analysis for theoretical and/or political ends. The peoples under ethnographic investigation become characters in the ethnographer's imaginative structure, a structure—now a text—that can be set in relation to the dominant text of civilization—the history of Western man.⁵¹ Like the ethnographer, by purloining restructuring a patient's dreamscapes through the application of psychoanalytic concepts and method, the analyst-as-dream-writer takes control of the dream's narrative and meaning.

Power and Authority in the Dream of Irma's Injection

The centrality of dream interpretation to the development of the power dynamics in the psychoanalytic relationship comes into focus in "Analysis of a Specimen Dream"—Freud's interpretation of his own dream about his patient "Irma" in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. It is through the analysis of this dream that Freud asserts the central thesis of the book, that dreams represent the fulfillment of a wish.⁵² In this case, says Freud, the wishes being fulfilled are Freud's desire to: a) be cleared from blame for any of his failures in Irma's treatment; b) redirect blame onto Irma, his patient, for her refusal to yield to his ideas, thus overcoming her resistance; c) clear himself from blame more generally as a medical practitioner; and d) denigrate the diagnostic and practical capacities of his medical colleagues, especially those at odds with his theories. In other words, according to Freud, the central issues at stake in the dream are his authority over his patient Irma and his power and legitimacy as a medical practitioner in relation to the professional field.

⁵¹ Edward Said argues that in the 19th century a firm imaginative boundary was fixed between the West and the non-West. He writes, "With the rise of ethnography...there is a codification of difference, and various evolutionary schemes going from primitive to subject races, and finally to superior or civilized peoples...Such commonly used categories as the primitive, savage, degenerate, natural, unnatural also belong here" (*Culture and Imperialism* 130). In a fascinating account of how ethnography influenced German colonial policy in Samoa, George Steinmetz writes, "But unofficial European observers in the precolony typically shared the colonizers' desire to control the contact situation and stabilize the Other. This is why they gravitated towards portrayals of non-European cultures as unchanging and internally uniform" (254). Steinmetz's discussion of Augustin Krämer is perhaps most relevant here, as Krämer's ethnography *Die Samoa-Inseln* was in part an attempt to record the culture of a "natural people" in contrast to the hybridization caused by the natives' contact with European civilization. This points to the inverse narrative to the narrative of evolutionary progress, which comes to dominant the post-Darwinian era—the notion of degeneration (Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*).

⁵² Freud goes on to nuance his thesis, stating: "a dream is a (disguised) fulfillment of a (suppressed or repressed) wish" (*Interpretation of Dreams*, 183).

Freud's emphasis on issues of power and authority in his analysis of the dream of Irma's injection elevates the importance of a successful outcome of the analytic process as a reflection of the relative merits of psychoanalytic theory. Freud is anxious about success, whether this success happens in the actual analytic process (curing the patient) or in his narrative recreation of it, in other words as a successful articulation and demonstration of the correctness of his theories. In the dream, Freud reproaches Irma, "If you still get pains, it's your own fault." He goes on to add in his analysis, "I might have said this to her in waking life, and I may actually have done so" (133). The pressure Freud directs at Irma, he confesses, is at least in part a redirection of the social and professional pressures he brings into his practice: "I was expected to produce therapeutic success" (133). The notion of success or lack thereof becomes central in Freud's analysis of the dream.⁵³ When describing the realization in the dream that Irma's problems were organic and not psychic, Freud concludes, "It occurred to me, in fact, that I was actually wishing that there had been a wrong diagnosis; for, if so, the blame for my lack of success would also have been got rid of" (134). For Freud, the analysis points to a concern not necessarily with being correct or incorrect about Irma—at least not in the first instance—but with being viewed as above reproach and as authoritative by his patient and by the broader community of his friends and colleagues. It is interesting in this regard that Irma, at once patient and friend, blends these two categories; implicit in Freud's analysis of his "specimen dream" is the merging of public and private life. The making-public of the private, the erasure of privacy (despite claims to the contrary), is a precondition of psychoanalysis, which from the beginning contains the promise of transmuting the therapeutic relationship into the written case study. It is not coincidental that Freud makes clear that his "specimen dream" comes on the night after he commits Irma's case to paper.

Individual relationships in Freud's analysis of his dream of Irma's injection are presented as contested and ultimately hierarchical pairings or triads (these binary or tripartite conflicts are, of course, ubiquitous in Freud's thought). The primary relationship is between Freud and Irma. This relationship contains the most important conflict in the dream, the struggle over the diagnosis of Irma's hysteria—represented by dream-Freud's utterance "it's your own fault." Irma is then compared and conflated with her friend—whose chief feature in the dream is

⁵³ This focus on the status of the outcome—and the need to frame this status through writing—is a consistent presence in the case studies.

recalcitrance.⁵⁴ This pairing of Irma with her friend opens up a secondary front in Freud's attack on Irma as patient, allowing him to definitively attribute the characteristic of recalcitrance to Irma (134). Irma's assigned position deteriorates even further when Freud reads characteristics of his wife onto Irma. "She again," Freud writes about this wife, "was not one of my patients, nor should I have liked to have her as a patient, since I had noticed that she was bashful in my presence and I could not think she would make an amenable patient" (135). Despite the condensation of negative characteristics of three women into Irma, Freud speculates that at least the friend would have made a better patient, reinforcing Irma's lowly position by subordinating her first to Freud and now the friend:

Perhaps it was that I should have *liked* to exchange her: either I felt more sympathetic toward her friend or had a higher opinion of her intelligence. For Irma seemed to me foolish because she had not accepted my solution. Her friend would have been wiser, that is to say she would have yielded sooner. (135)⁵⁵

In other words, to be recalcitrant is to be foolish; to yield quickly (to be submissive) is to be wise. Foolishness threatens the psychoanalytic process; submission increases its chances for success—success, that is, for the analyst. The triad of Irma-friend-wife results in the condensation of negative qualities onto Irma and the subordination of Irma to an idealized perfect patient—a forthcoming and submissive woman who would yield readily to Freud's ideas.

Analysis of the medical practitioners appearing in the dream affords Freud another chance to imagine contestation and establish hierarchies. Here, it is Freud who is being represented by stand-ins and compared to others. Initially, Dr. M.'s appearance in the dream provokes feelings of insecurity in Freud. Just as quickly, Dr. M. is transformed into Freud's brother. This move allows Freud to read M. as his opponent, for "they [M. and his brother] had

⁵⁴ Recalcitrance or resistance is a recurring presence through *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Frieden 37-44). At each stage of presenting his argument, Freud revels in the conflict between him and his doubters. Most commonly, these doubters are his patients—and most of his patients are women. Not surprisingly, the relationship between Freud and female patients—between male analyst and female resistance—has been the subject of intense scholarly inquiry (see Decker; Katz; and Bernheimer and Kahane).

⁵⁵ While in the first (and longest) analysis of the dream Freud spends most time on the triad Irma-friend-wife, later on in *The Interpretation of Dreams* he argues that the dream-Irma is a condensation of additional individuals, including his daughter. This expansion does nothing to change the central point here, and, in fact, reinforces and deepens it; Irma is reduced through the act of analytic condensation.

both rejected a certain suggestion I had recently laid before them” (136). The move from Dr. M. to the brother happens through the symbolism of a physical weakness—in this case a limp caused by the brother’s arthritis. The attribution of the limp to Dr. M. marks him as old and infirm, and helps Freud overcome the insecurity Dr. M. causes by reminding Freud of the time when he (Freud) killed a patient. The dream spotlight then turns to Freud’s friends and fellow physicians Otto and Leopold. Immediately, it is clear that the relationship between the two is fraught with tension and competition.⁵⁶ Freud sides with Leopold over Otto and forms the third part of this triad—using his alliance with Leopold to subordinate Otto and to challenge Dr. M. With renewed confidence borne out of the Freud-Leopold-Otto triad, Freud then makes his final and victorious assault on Dr. M., the paragon of the medical profession. In the dream, Dr. M. proposes an absurd prognosis for Irma, claiming that an infection in her shoulder will be cured through dysentery-induced purgation. Dr. M.’s prognosis shatters his legitimacy and allows Freud to vanquish him with ease. Freud’s victory over Dr. M. is the symbolic victory of psychoanalysis over medical orthodoxy: “I could no longer feel any doubt...” Freud concludes, “that this part of the dream was expressing derision at physicians who are ignorant of hysteria” (139).

Freud’s dream of Irma’s injection displays the core dynamics related to dreams and power that structure the development of psychoanalysis from its inception. The fact that Freud focuses on these power dynamics as opposed to the many alternative ways in which he could have read his “specimen dream” points to their importance for his nascent “science” of dream analysis and its role in the broader psychoanalytic movement. Many readers have pointed out, quite rightly, the gaps, oversights, and blind spots in Freud’s analysis, showing how Freud’s analysis diverges in critical ways from his own theories.⁵⁷ The striking fact that sexuality is relatively absent from Freud’s analysis indicates just how central these dynamics of power are for the structures of psychoanalytic thought. The hierarchy of analyst and patient, nakedly

⁵⁶ Freud develops this notion of competition when he postulates that Leopold and Otto represented competing circles of colleagues. The “Otto Group,” for Freud, was comprised of those “who did not understand me, who sided against me,” while Leopold represented “the group of ideas attached to my friend in Berlin [Wilhelm Fliess], who *did* understand me, who would take my side.... point by point, I called up a friend against an opponent” (*Interpretation of Dreams* 312).

⁵⁷ Alternate readings of Freud’s “specimen dream” based on an elaboration of the neglected sexual threads proliferate in the literature on Freud, especially from within the psychoanalytic traditions (see, for example, Sprengnether, “Mouth to Mouth”; and Lotto).

displayed in Freud's dream of Irma's injection, will become theorized as the therapeutic techniques mature.

The Dream as Contested Space

If it seems clear from the discussion of Freud's dream of Irma's injection that one of the primary concerns of the dream and the analysis is the articulation of a series of power dynamics, then the following question arises: what is it about the dreamscape that provokes Freud to consider it such a critical space to contest and control? Three factors are important to consider when evaluating the importance of the politics of the dreamscape to the development and coalescing of Freudian theory. First, in the context of 19th century thinking the dream is a fertile yet open concept. This is clear from the first part of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, a 100-page gloss of the highlights and perceived shortcomings of the era's literature on the topic. Although the 19th century literature on dreams is sizable and heterogeneous, there does not emerge—at least according to Freud—a convincing and universalizable approach to dream interpretation. As a result, the notion of a dream's meaning is largely in doubt—or dismissed. Freud is able to recover the notion of dream meaning through his imagination of the dynamic interplay between consciousness and the unconscious. The dream becomes the principle host of this interplay. Second, one of the central questions concerning the dream in the 19th century literature is whether it should be considered a physical (somatic) phenomenon, a mental phenomenon, or a combination of both.⁵⁸ This ambiguity locates the dream on the border between the body and the mind—the physical and the mental—a perfect position to link physical symptoms with psychic etiologies. Finally, third, the dreamscape, reconstituted as dream-text and its corresponding analysis, provides narrative structure and expository power to the emerging literary genre of the psychoanalytic case study.

The opening chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams* allows Freud to build a context for his dream theories. With this section, Freud compiles a literature—even establishing the very discipline of “dream studies” that the rest of the book is intent on overcoming. This tactic enables Freud to set himself within and against this literature, thereby giving his theories the qualities of synthesis and innovation. Freud believes that his analysis of the “specimen dream”

⁵⁸ A clear representation of this somatic/psychic dilemma occurs in Henri Bergson's 1901 essay “The World of Dreams.” Bergson concludes, “When this union of memory and sensation is effected, we have a dream” (39).

accomplishes this task. As his famous opening to the book's chapter three puts it, after this analysis he has "emerge[d] upon a piece of high ground" (121).

Freud's seizure of the "high ground" of the dreamscape enables him to position dreaming precisely on the border of the psychic and the somatic. In so doing, Freud makes the dream a phenomenon of medical interest and one beyond the scope of traditional psychiatric practitioners—at once, in other words, a site of scientific investigation and hermeneutical interpretation. This position on the frontier between the psychic and the somatic (and this is a central issue of Freud's dream of Irma's injection) is precisely the space that Freud needs to occupy if he is going to demonstrate the truth of his hypotheses concerning the ways in which an individual's psychodynamics crisscross the boundary of body and mind, somatic and psychic. It is ultimately the link between these two interconnected but dissociated spheres that provides Freud with professional stature. One cannot ignore that most of Freud's therapeutic targets are the explicit physical manifestations of a patient's illness—a "nervous" cough, constipation, headaches, dizziness, shortness of breath, etc. For psychoanalysis to prevail, interpretive hermeneutics must lead to a shifting of physical forces.

Equally important for the power dynamics embedded in Freud's approach is the narrative potential of the dream. Once the dreamscape becomes a narrative, a story, a text, it opens itself up to interpretation. *The Interpretation of Dreams* outlines the basic rules governing the narrativization of the dreamscape, with the "specimen dream" as the key example or template. The first aspect of this transformation is the presentation of the dream-text, a supposedly objective account of a dream. The dream-text is given special status—scriptural status—in the broader account by dint of it being set off typographically from the remainder of the work. In the translated versions of Freud, this typography takes the form of an italicized text, indicating that something special is being conveyed to the reader. The dream-text is distinguished in other ways as well, for example by the frequent use of dashes and ellipses. Analysis of the dream-text proceeds in an exegetical fashion—focusing on individual elements, etymological connections, and context to discover hidden meaning. Like scriptural analysis, Freud brings a box of clearly articulated exegetical tools to the dream-text, including the dichotomy of manifest and latent dream content, the mechanism of distortion that changes the latter into the former, the link between latent (hidden) content and memory, specifically early childhood memory, the pervasiveness of sexuality in the dream-thoughts, the idea of condensation or the grouping of a

multiplicity of dream-thoughts around a particular manifest symbol (over-determination), the notion of a censoring or repressive mechanism that not only distorts and redirects latent thoughts but has the power to transform them into their opposite, and total, unfiltered access to a patient's thoughts in order to apply the associative method of decoding the dream. The creation and exegesis of the dream-text allow Freud to control the dreamscape, thereby advancing the status of psychoanalysis as both a traditional scientific discipline and something beyond ordinary science. This potent combination of scientific methods and imaginative interpretation allows the analyst to emerge as the conqueror of the dreamscape and the patient as a submissive, defeated, occupied indigenous inhabitant of the space—or, perhaps in the best case, as a patient in exile from both treatment and text.⁵⁹ Lauren Berlant captures the political ramifications of the move from singularity (the dreamscape) to exemplary (dream-text) in her description of the “case study”:

As genre, the case hovers about the singular, the general, and the normative. It organizes publics, however fleeting. It expresses a relation of expertise to a desire for shared knowledge. It could be casual expertise, deliberately cultivated, licensed by training—no matter; deciding what defines the surplus to singularity is now the province of the expert, the expert who makes the case. But who counts as expert is often an effect of the impact of the case the expert makes. Therefore the case is always pedagogical, itself an agent.
(664-665)

The dream-text as “case study” becomes a pedagogical tool and tool of power. In his analysis of the dream-text of his specimen dream, Freud makes his key theoretical intervention into medical discourse, precisely at a point—the dreamscape—that was beyond the “gaze” of clinical medicine.⁶⁰ From this point on, control of the dreamscape becomes a central battleground in the history of medicine, including and especially psychology, psychoanalysis, and (later) neuroscience (see Chapter 6). It is no surprise, therefore, that reformers in the psychoanalytic tradition aim to capture Freud's specimen dream in order to establish their own genesis

⁵⁹ For connections between Freudian interpretation and religious hermeneutics see, for example, Handelman.

⁶⁰ With the concept of the medical gaze, I follow the argument made by Michel Foucault in *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception*.

moments.⁶¹ Jacques Lacan, for example, seizes on Freud's dream-text of Irma's injection to propose the primacy of discourse in the construction of the unconscious—what he calls the “symbolic.” Lacan writes,

What gives this dream its veritable unconscious value, whatever its primordial and infantile echoes, is the quest for the word, the direct confrontation with the secret reality of the dream, the quest for signification as such. In the midst of all his colleagues [in the dream], of this consensus of the republic of those who know—for if no one is right, everyone is right, a law which is simultaneously paradoxical and reassuring—in the midst of this chaos, in this original moment when his doctrine is born into the world, the meaning of the dream is revealed to Freud—that there is no other word of the dream than the very nature of the symbolic... 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 decentered 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 subjects of speech once speech exists, and there is no before. (*Seminar II* 159-160)

Interestingly, in his “conclusion” to his reinterpretation of the specimen dream Lacan creates a new quasi-dream-text (note the italicization), assuming the voice of a Freud who now understands his own dream in a Lacanian manner:

I am he who wants to be forgiven for having dared to begin to cure these patients, who until now no one wanted to understand and whose cure was forbidden. I am he who wants not to be guilty of it, for to transgress any limit imposed up to now on human activity is always to be guilty. I want to not be (born) that. Instead of me, there are all the others. Here I am only the representative of this vast movement, the quest for truth, in which I efface myself. I am no longer anything. My ambition was greater than I. No doubt

⁶¹ Erik Erikson captures the sense of the revolutionary act of re-reading Freud's specimen dream, stating, “To reinterpret the dream means to reinterpret the dreamer” (7).

the syringe was dirty. And precisely to the extent that I desired it too much, that I partook in this action, that I wanted to be, myself, the creator, I am not the creator. The creator is someone greater than I. It is my unconscious, it is the voice which speaks in me, beyond me....

That is the meaning of this dream. (*Seminar II* 170-171, italics in text)

For Lacan and others, power and legitimacy in the psychoanalytic community run through the meaning of Freud's foundational moment of dream interpretation. If his dream of Irma's injection enables Freud to create, control, and utilize the territory of the dreamscape to assert his theoretical paradigm, it also beckons future challengers to invade it and establish alternative regimes of meaning.

Dreams and Power in *Dora*

The political nature of Freud's treatment of the dreamscape emerges strongly in Freud's *Dora*, which Freud calls *A Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*. This is the first case study Freud wrote after *The Interpretation of Dreams*.⁶² Issues of power and authority in *Dora* have been the subjects of analysis for decades.⁶³ Such focus has led to multiple waves of revisionist attempts to re-analyze the case with a mix of tools drawn from Freud's later writings, feminist theory, Lacanian and other branches of psychoanalysis, literary theory, and post-structuralism. While these revisionist analyses have successfully shattered an adherence to an orthodox understanding of the case as Freud presents it, they have also reinforced some of the core principles of Freudian psychoanalysis. The three most important principles the revisionist accounts have reinforced are the faith in the sexual etiology of the neuroses (though often read in reverse or divergent ways), the prime therapeutic importance of the dialectical relationship between the patient's transference and the analyst's counter-transference—embedded, of course, in the libidinal forces flowing between them—and Freud's merging of scientific and hermeneutical modes of inquiry. Ultimately, therefore, these revisionist accounts do not break the authoritarian structure of Freud's original study, because their authors endeavor to assert a reinterpretation of the case by playing the role of a superseding analyst. The result is regicide

⁶² *Dora* was written in 1900, but Freud delayed publication until 1905.

⁶³ Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane have collected and anthologized numerous critiques of Freud's case study of *Dora* (*In Dora's Case: Freud—Hysteria—Feminism*). I refer to many of these essays in what follows.

instead of revolution. Though the expressed desire of many of these revisions is to liberate or reclaim Dora—or (more problematically) the real-life Ida Bauer (Dora is a pseudonym)—in the end they accomplish the opposite. The revisionist author as new Freud or anti-Freud is increasingly empowered while Dora recedes into deeper abstraction. The fact that complex sets of jargon and interpretive tools are deployed to wrest Dora away from Freud adds to the dynamics of what becomes a multi-layered authoritarianism. In the end, the political nature of *Dora* is reanimated as a site of contestation between various psychoanalytic and postmodern paradigms vying for power.

Freud writes in his introduction to *Dora* that he originally planned to title the work “Dreams and Hysteria,” a fact pointed out by most of the revisionist authors. The draft title and the prominent role of dream analysis in the text (the interpretation of dreams takes up about 50% of the case study) indicate the centrality of dream interpretation in *Dora*. This is no big surprise, given that Freud wrote the case study directly after finishing *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Despite this prominence, the role of Freud’s analysis of dreams in the construction of the power dynamics in the case has either been neglected or subordinated to other considerations. When subordinated, it becomes a matter of reinterpreting the dreams along the lines of new theoretical impulses, a process that leaves the basic structure of the analytical model intact. The strange aversion to the politics of Freud’s interpretation of Dora’s dreams in the revisionist accounts has two key results. First, it perpetuates the authoritarian politics of the dreamscape as developed in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and deployed in *Dora*. Second, it contributes to what has become the much-repeated view that Freud’s analysis of Dora and his subsequent case study are failures, thus underestimating the authoritarian power of the dream interpretive process. By reframing the discussion around the politics of the dreamscape, I contend that *Dora* is better understood as an authoritarian success. In the analysis of Dora’s first dream, Freud attempts to assert a total understanding of Dora’s psyche by joining his theory of dreams with his nascent theories of sexuality. This joining requires Freud to fully merge what Paul Ricoeur calls a “hermeneutics of suspicion” with the logic of scientific investigation.

The Triumphs and Limits of the Feminist Critiques of *Dora*

Philip Rieff, in his 1962 introduction to the English translation of *Dora*, presents Freud's case study in terms of power. What made the case study provocative, Rieff thinks, is the struggle between analyst and patient:

Interpretation involves indoctrination; the two cannot be separated in the psychoanalytic combat between therapist and patient. For the therapist is engaged in the effort to change his patient's mind by an exemplary deepening of it. In this case, Dora refused to change her mind and suddenly quit as a final act of denial against the truth of Freud's insights...Because Dora's insights are part of her illness, Freud had to hammer away at them as functions of her resistance to his insight. (xi)

Rieff's disdain for the patient is mirrored by David Sachs's reflections on encountering the case study for the first time as a student of psychoanalysis in the early 1960s. "My candidate colleagues did not express compassion for Dora when she tried to offer alternative understandings of herself to Freud, because we accepted his conviction that her objections were without merit" (Sachs 47). Felix Deutsch reinforces the pro-analyst perspective in "A Footnote to Freud's 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria,'" which he published in 1957 after learning about Ida Bauer's life from "an informant." "It is striking," Deutsch says, "that Dora's fate took the course Freud had predicted" (39). He concludes his short article by aiming the authority of two male analysts and another unnamed source (Freud, Deutsch, and the "informant") at the patient. Ida Bauer's death "from a cancer of the colon, which was diagnosed too late for a successful operation seemed a blessing to those who were close to her. She had been, as my informant phrased it, 'one of the most repulsive hysterics' he had ever met" (43). It is telling that for Deutsch, as for Rieff, no distance exists between the literary character Dora and the flesh and blood Ida Bauer—a grievous error that will be repeated by other critics.

Beginning in the 1970s, feminist critiques of *Dora* start to challenge the decidedly pro-Freudian reading of the case study as well as earlier revisionist accounts like those by Erik Erikson. Of central importance to the feminist perspectives are the theories of Jacques Lacan, especially his analysis of *Dora* in "Intervention on Transference." In the article, Lacan stresses the importance of the relationship between analyst and patient, describing it as "constituted

through a discourse,” and as a “dialectical experience” (93). Lacan understands this dialectical experience in relation to issues of transference—the notion that the patient redirects libidinous energy from another sexual object (father, mother, lover, etc.) to the analyst. The analyst, according to Lacan, must be aware of the nature of the transference in order to pose a dialectical reversal and to aspire to a new development of truth. For Lacan, however, there is also an issue of transference in the other direction—a countertransference of the analyst’s libidinous energy to the patient. Flows along this two-way conduit need to be mastered if the dialectical movement of the analysis is to function as it should. In *Dora*, Lacan argues, Freud fails to manage the flows of libidinous energy and thus is led astray from his role as disinterested (neutral) and rational dialectician who can provoke the patient’s movement from the imaginary to the symbolic.

Lacan’s emphasis on the dynamics of transference in the analytical process and his identification of several moments when it seems to him that Freud’s failure to master the dynamics lead to analytical mistakes provide starting points for feminist critiques of *Dora*, namely the turning of the interpretive microscope away from Dora and onto Freud. This turn of focus trains its sight on a constellation of key issues with regard to Freud’s approach—his understanding of female sexuality, his inability to escape from patriarchal social and cultural norms, and (related to the issue of norms) his reliance on Victorian literary constructs to make his case. While these impressive critiques of Freud’s approach move away from strict Freudian theory—and strict Lacanianism—they still operate in a psychoanalytic manner with psychoanalytic tools buttressed by elements of psychoanalytic theory. The mission seems to be to capture territory within the psychoanalytic tradition for a new articulation of feminism. Suzanne Gearhart expresses the tensions in this quest—even while participating in it:

Thus it is not out of fidelity to any truth of Freud or his work that I have traced the *mise en scene* of the problems of (counter) transference and bisexuality to the point at which no synthesis of these two themes is possible. The conflict between them—and *Dora* itself—can no longer be innocently assigned a place in a dialectic that would guarantee their synthesis, nor can it be reduced in the name of a totality that, as a tool of a critical strategy, would itself escape criticism. Even after the death of Freud, a “return to Freud” will not reveal only one Freud and one scene of sexual difference. Insofar as the themes of bisexuality and transference cannot be brought into play without fundamentally

implicating psychoanalysis in a whole history whose sense it cannot neutralize, insofar as the handling of these themes cannot but reveal the derivation of the scene of psychoanalysis with respect to a series of conflicts that both define and put into questions its limits, *Dora* can only reopen the questions concerning sexuality and Freud's understanding of it that a "return to Freud" has tended to close, and that, in fact, it too reopens. (125-126)

Freud's attempt to assert his "superior" version of the truth (as Rieff puts it) over *Dora* has provoked critics to reassert *Dora*—or in some cases the real person behind the literary creation, Ida Bauer—back into the forefront in order to re-analyze the case. The results of the re-analysis have generally taken two directions: *Dora/Ida Bauer* has either been portrayed as a victim of Victorian patriarchy—a woman crushed by the sexual politics of *fin-de-siècle* Viennese society, family, and the theory and practice of psychoanalysis in its orthodox Freudian form—or as a heroine, a woman who went toe-to-toe with Freud and in the end defeated him by refusing his interpretation and terminating the analysis on her terms. Maria Ramas, for example, paints the portrait of a tragically heroic *Dora*, a young woman who desires "to escape heterosexuality and annihilation" (168). This is not to say that feminist discussions of *Dora* are reductive. Far from it, they open up important debates about the status of femininity, homosexuality, and bisexuality for psychoanalysis while adding detailed evidence for the interweaving of sexual politics with issues of culture and class.

The critical literature on *Dora* has, however, largely neglected Freud's presentation and interpretation of *Dora's* dreams. In part, this is understandable. In terms of the content of the case, nothing extraordinarily new is revealed in the dream analysis that is not already covered in the preceding pages. The critical attention to issues of sexuality contributes to the general lack of attention to the dreams. As many have pointed out, *Dora* is a transitional text between Freud's work on dreams and the development of his theories of sexuality.

Still, the dreams do come up in ways that reinforce the key concerns of the authors. For example, psychoanalyst Erik Erikson argues that *Dora's* first dream, the dream of the jewelry box, represents a crisis of adolescent identity formation rather than a disguised sexual wish, thus asserting his form of ego-psychology over the orthodox Freudian view as well as a host of other competing revisionist theories (50-51). Jacqueline Rose interprets *Dora's* second dream through

a Lacanist prism to emphasize what she sees as Dora's difficulties of asserting a positive femininity:

...in the second dream, in which Dora's desire could be defined as the desire for self-possession, her position as subject is at its most precarious. The dream most clearly articulates the split between the subject and the object of enunciation at the root of any linguistic utterance (the speaking subject and the subject of the statement), here seen in its relation to the question of sexual difference. Thus, if Dora is there to be possessed, then she is not there as a woman (she is a man), and if she is not there to be possessed, her place as a woman is assured (she remains feminine) but she is not there (Lacan's lethal *vel*). (137-138)

Maria Ramas is more explicit in her reassessment of Freud's interpretation of Dora's dreams. "A reconsideration of this latent content," she writes, "even as Freud influenced it, reveals other possibilities. It is not difficult to find in Ida Bauer's two dreams the crystallization of her oedipal struggle: disavowal of the 'primal scene' and the breakthrough of repressed lesbian desire" (165). Ramas draws this into a contextual argument. "At the deepest level of the meaning in the dream," she writes, "Ida's father is represented as the enforcer of the (hetero)sexual laws and fantasies of Ida's Bauer's culture" (168). Madelon Sprenghofer follows a similar path when critiquing Freud's use of the dream-texts:

The interpretation of Dora's two dreams serves at least two functions, that of oedipal camouflage for a preoedipal fantasy based on the figure of the nurse and that of revenge. It is the combination of these two elements that accounts, I believe, for the coercive quality of Freud's interpretations and for the uneasy tone of the narrative. In his relentless pursuit of heterosexual interpretation of Dora's desire, Freud often substitutes his own train of associations for hers, a tactic that reveals the extent to which he idealizes the figure of Herr K. in order to blame Dora for her refusal. On an interpretive level, he subjects her to a process of defloration, impregnation, and parturition in an aggressively oedipal fashion, at the same time that he invalidates her rejection by naming it hysteria. (263)

Rather than concluding with Dora's sexuality, Sprenghofer is more interested in analyzing Freud, but her conclusions are still interesting in relation to her critique of his interpretation of Dora's dreams. She writes:

Freud's own anxieties and confusions regarding the nonreproductively oriented nature of female sexuality, although not unusual for the time, provide, however, an insuperable barrier to a noncoercive representation not only of heterosexual intercourse but also of any kind of adult sexual encounter. What he repeatedly misses is the other clue tantalizingly offered in his choice of a name for Dora, a clue that haunts and eludes him throughout his distraught narrative—the vision of sexual relations as open to vulnerability and to risk. If the indeterminacy of sex roles, like the indeterminacy of narrative form, represents a state of not being in control, then it is no surprise that Freud is unable to imagine love as something not taken but given. (271)

The feminist critiques of Freud's interpretation of Dora's dreams make lasting and important contributions by challenging not only the specific arguments Freud makes in the case study but, more broadly, Freudian theories of sexuality and the art of the psychoanalytic process. The re-analyses of Dora's dreams have been useful in both of these critical projects. And yet, while these critiques offer—at times radically—divergent political positions from the normative patriarchal position occupied by Freud, they leave the basic structures of power in place. The analyst—now the critic who stands beyond the original coupling of Freud/Dora—still speaks with the authoritative voice. Concepts are deployed that drive the hermeneutic process without questioning or overcoming the foundational merging of hermeneutical and scientific modes of inquiry. Perhaps most glaringly, there is a constant and deeply troubling elision between information that is considered evidentiary and the recognition of the information's fictiveness within the narrative construction.⁶⁴ The critics' struggle to separate Freud's character Dora from

⁶⁴ Perhaps the most interesting and sophisticated moment of this elision can be found in Susan Katz, "Speaking out against the 'Taking Cure': Unmarried Women in Freud's Early Case Studies." Katz writes, "Dora is a fiction for Freud before her appearance in his text; consequently, throughout the case history Freud's characterization of Dora wrestles with Dora's independent personality. This struggle between Dora herself and Freud's ideal for her is experienced by the reader as narrative tension, an irresolution despite the firm narrative closure. The tension arises from Dora's intractability—her insistence on preserving her self—despite Freud's medical skill and literary talent.

the historical flesh-and-blood Ida Bauer is only the most obvious manifestation of this problem. While various political agendas are advanced by the critical literature, the political structure of the case—the “combat,” as Rieff puts it, over meaning—remains unchallenged.

Toril Moi offers a way to make the transition from the contest over meaning to the dismantling of the structures of power. The central issue for Moi is not that Freud gets the sexual dynamics of the case wrong (though she certainly believes this) but that he aims for a type of total or complete understanding of his patient. Freud wants to know everything—and in knowing everything, he can claim complete power. Moi writes of Freud:

First, because he himself desires total knowledge: his aim is nothing less than the *complete elucidation* of Dora, despite his insistence on the fragmentary nature of the material... But such a desire for total, absolute knowledge exposes a fundamental assumption in Freud’s epistemology. Knowledge for Freud is a finished, closed whole. Possession of knowledge means possession of power. Freud, the doctor, is curiously proud of his hermeneutical capacities. (194)

Moi links this insight to sexual politics. “Freud’s epistemology,” she writes, “is clearly phallogentric. The male is the bearer of knowledge; he alone has the power to penetrate woman and text; woman’s role is to let herself be penetrated by such truth” (198). For Moi, this epistemological trap is one of the greatest limitations to Freud’s thinking. She asserts, “It is politically important, however, to point out that this pathological division of knowledge into masculine totality and feminine fragment is completely mystifying and mythological” (198). The irony that Moi is able to convey the mythological nature of Freud’s epistemology only by applying Freudian concepts like castration anxiety, countertransference, unconscious wish, repression of desire, etc. is not lost on her:

The attack upon phallogentrism must come from within, since there can be no “outside,” no space where true femininity, untainted by patriarchy, can be kept intact for us to

Dora’s voice breaks the sound barrier of the text, as her accusations of falseness and treachery reverberate beyond the postscript” (321).

discover. We can only destroy the mythical and mystifying constructions of patriarchy by using its own weapons. We have no others. (198)

While Moi might be right that Freud's patriarchy can be strongly challenged from within the psychoanalytic tradition, the nature of power at work in Freudian interpretation—and specifically in Freudian dream interpretation—requires a step beyond psychoanalytic concepts. The quest for wholeness in Freud's interpretation of Dora's first dream, I argue, is not first and foremost psychological, sexual and patriarchal—it is spatial/colonial, textual, and authoritarian.

Dora's First Dream

Moi and others have pointed out how concerned Freud is with issues of completeness and incompleteness in his analysis of Dora. This is most clearly indicated by his inclusion of the word “fragment” in the title—“fragment of an analysis.” The title can refer either to Freud's analysis of Dora in their analytic relationship or to his analysis of the results of that analysis in the case study he presents. This distinction is important. While Freud might have felt anxiety about the incompleteness of the text he is presenting, the opposite can also be asserted. Freud is boasting of his ability to take the fragments presented to him in the analysis and to create a whole out of them. It expresses not only anxiety, then, but also confidence:

In the face of the incompleteness of my analytic results, I had no choice but to follow the example of those discoverers whose good fortune it is to bring to the light of day after their long burial the priceless though mutilated relics of antiquity. I have restored what is missing, taking the best models known to me from other analyses; but like a conscientious archaeologist I have not omitted to mention in each case where the authentic parts end and my constructions begin. (*Dora* 7)

Many critics, Moi included, productively analyze this passage using psychoanalytic concepts. This diverts attention from the question of how, precisely, Freud works as an archaeologist in the text. The metaphor is useful on a number of levels. First, as Freud points out, the archaeologist (at least the 19th century one) attempts to create a sense of wholeness out of fragments. To do this, the archaeologist utilizes a complex body of historical, geographic, and material knowledge:

in other words, a combination of interpretive hermeneutics and “scientific” inquiry. But there is another important piece—the archaeologist in Freud’s imagination is also an explorer of distant lands. He has gone far from home—to Near or Middle East, East Asia, Africa, etc.—and has located, dug out, and brought back archaeological material. In this sense, the archaeologist is the companion of the colonizer or ethnographer (Khanna 33-65). The archaeologist is not only supposed to be a possessor of a type of complete knowledge that allows for the reassembly of an ancient object; he is also a conqueror of space. When the reassembled object is displayed—and there must be display—the viewer of the object is meant to see, feel, and possess the authenticity of the foreign domain. Even if the object is in large part fabrication, the viewer’s belief in the conquest of the foreign space imbues the object with authenticity. Had the archaeologist never stepped foot in those distant regions, had he simply applied his knowledge to generate a possible likeness of an ancient object, the mythos would be shattered and the audience would reject the thing as fake. Halfway through *Dora*, Freud confronts just this issue. He wants to assemble a complete object, but he has not yet traveled into distant realms—the realm of Dora’s deep unconscious. In order to achieve completeness, Freud must conquer the dreamscape—for it is only through the dream that those “mutilated relics” can become whole.

At first glance, it seems strange that Freud would break off halfway through his story to dedicate most of the rest of the case study to Dora’s dreams. What makes it particularly puzzling is that he has already arrived at his major conclusions before he begins the investigation of the dreams. Freud has already “discovered” that the primary cause of Dora’s illness is the suppression of her natural libidinous desire for Herr K., which is achieved by the conjuring up and subsequent repression of her earlier love of her father. As a secondary cause, Freud images Dora having “masculine” or “gynaecophilic currents of feeling” for Frau K. (55). The move into the dreamscape offers Freud two important possibilities. First, it presents the pathway for Freud to unfasten the analysis from the timeframe of Dora’s adolescence and young adulthood, and to move it back into her early childhood. Second, and related to the first, it creates the space—the exhibition space—for Freud to assemble all the pieces, to imagine the whole, a whole that connects past and present symptoms with their multitude of perceived causes. The application of an array of analytic tools—scientific and hermeneutic—to achieve this assemblage strengthens Freud’s position immeasurably. Outside the dream, Freud appears a frustrated combatant. Inside the dream-text, he is the master.

Freud attempts to make a smooth transition into his analysis of Dora's first dream, but the move instead performs the *deus ex machina* function of allowing him to shift the terms of the study from the present-day or recent past into the depths of Dora's childhood. Freud opens the section on the first dream by saying, "Just at a moment when there was a prospect that the material that was coming up for analysis would throw light upon an obscure point in Dora's childhood, she reported that a few nights earlier she had once again had a dream which she had already dreamt in exactly the same way on many previous occasions" (56). After spending the next few pages remaking the case for Dora's repressed sexual attraction to Herr K., and meeting the same resistance from Dora he had faced all along, Freud pivots to the past. This pivot allows Freud to open up multiple fronts against Dora by incorporating in the analysis a fresh set of psychoanalytic concepts concerning the role of childhood sexual dynamics in the formation of one's mature psyche, including in cases of so-called hysteria. Equally as important, Freud is able to move away from a presentation of the case based on a relatively strict adherence to the material provided by the analytic conversation in order to give free reign to his own hermeneutical maneuvers.

The move into Dora's childhood is a vital element of Freud's strategy for total elucidation of the dream. "A regularly formed dream stands," Freud writes, "...upon two legs, one of which is in contact with the main and current exciting cause, and the other with some momentous occurrence in the years of childhood. The dream sets up the connection between those two factors—the event during childhood and the event of the present day—and it endeavors to re-shape the present upon the model of the remote past" (63). This logic propels Freud into the most hermeneutically sophisticated and convoluted section of the case study, the discussion of the meaning of the jewel-case in the dream-text.

Freud has already asserted that the jewel-case symbolizes the female genitals. On the superficial level, according to Freud, the dream represents a scenario in which Dora's "jewel-case" is being threatened and her father is protecting it, a scenario in parallel with Freud's previous interpretation of Dora's Oedipal reaction to her supposed sexual stimulation by Herr K. This scenario points to Freud's secondary theory that Dora is not first and foremost afraid of Herr K. asserting himself sexually onto her, but that she fears the temptation she feels within herself to "yield to him." "In short," Freud tells her, "these efforts prove once more how deeply

you love him” (63). Dora, as she has done earlier when Freud has advanced this theory, refuses to validate it. It is at this point of resistance that Freud makes his move into the past.

To fully grasp the shift in tactics from a relatively straight-forward and easy to follow discussion to the type of intense hermeneutic probing that merges Freud’s theories, wild interpretive associations, elements of the analytic material, and impulses from Dora into an overwhelming *tour de force* of speculation, it is important to follow in detail how Freud builds his case. He begins with a string of tenuous connections that comes out of folk wisdom—the notion that the “fire” in the dream-text relates to matches, that matches relate to the prohibition of children playing with matches, and that this prohibition conjures a fear in children that if they play with matches they will wet their beds. Through this circuitous route, Freud is able to make the claim that when the dream speaks of “fire” it is at the same time conveying its opposite, water or wetness:

But I notice that the antithesis of water and fire has been extremely useful to you in the dream. Your mother wanted to save the jewel-case so that it should not be *burnt*; while in the dream-thoughts it is a question of the “jewel-case” not being *wetted*. But fire is not only used as the contrary of water, it also serves directly to represent love (as in the phrase “to be *consumed* with love”). So that from “fire” one set of rails runs by way of this symbolic meaning to thoughts of love; while the other set runs by way of the contrary “water,” and, after sending off a branch line which provides another connection with “love” (for love also makes things wet), leads in a different direction. (64)

The “different direction” is that of masturbation through the way station of bed-wetting. The masturbation “set of rails” opens up fertile ground for Freud. On the most superficial level, it allows him to make the connection between Dora’s vaginal discharge and her masturbation. This connection then opens the door to exploring links between masturbation, discharge, and the secrets about venereal disease that swirled through Dora’s family—her father’s syphilis and her mother’s vaginal discharge and abdominal pains. Still on what we might call the rail of masturbation, Freud posits that Dora’s deep antipathy toward physicians (and thus toward him) stems from her impulse to conceal her vaginal discharge in order to prevent an examining doctor from finding out that she wets the bed, which in turn would point toward masturbation. This

shame eventually causes Dora to suppress her desire to masturbate—and it is this first act of sexual suppression that provokes the hysterical symptom (and here we see an analysis based on a scientific mode or, as Ricoeur would say, an “energetics”), in this case her “nervous asthma.” Why does it result in this particular symptom? Freud is able to make the move to the “primal scene,” a scene in which a child is exposed to parents having sex:

Dora’s symptomatic acts and certain other signs gave me good reasons for supposing that the child, whose bedroom had been next door to her parents’, had overheard her father in his wife’s room at night and had heard him (he was always short of breath) breathing hard during their coitus. Children, in such circumstances, divine something sexual in the uncanny sounds that reach their ears. (71)

Freud is able at this point to assert the basic sexual nature of Dora’s (physical) hysterical symptoms by referring to his expertise—in other words by bringing in non-theoretical, empirical material that does not depend on hermeneutical logic:

I maintained years ago that the dyspnoea and palpitations that occur in hysteria and anxiety-neurosis are only detached fragments of the act of copulation; and in many cases, as in Dora’s, I have been able to trace back the symptom of dyspnoea or nervous asthma to the same exciting cause—to the patient’s having overheard sexual intercourse taking place between adults. The sympathetic excitement which may be supposed to have occurred in Dora on such an occasion may very easily have made the child’s sexuality veer round and have replaced her inclination to masturbation by an inclination to morbid anxiety. (72)

By continuing down the “rail of wetness,” Freud expands the discussion to include another of Dora’s symptoms: her nervous cough or “catarrh.” The word “catarrh” becomes for Freud a “switchword,” a term that forges the connection between the origins of the hysterical reaction and the symptom that comes to house the hysterical response. In this case, the catarrh or build-up of mucus connects the cough with thoughts of vaginal discharge, and the vaginal discharge, as we have already seen, is connected to both venereal disease and to masturbation—

and through masturbation to sexual desire. This web of connections moves Freud to assume the voice of Dora's unconscious: "I am my father's daughter, I have a catarrh, just as he has. He has made me ill, just as he has made Mother ill. It is from him that I have got my evil passions, which are now punished by illness" (74). These imaginary unconscious thoughts then cement the chain of associations between the hysterical symptom and hysterical thoughts—all of which are tied back through "wetness" to the word "fire" in the dream:

We will now attempt to put together the various determinants that we have found for Dora's attacks of coughing and hoarseness. In the lowest stratum we must assume the presence of a real and organically determined irritation of the throat—which acted like a grain of sand around which an oyster forms a pearl. This irritation was susceptible to fixation, because it concerned a part of the body which in Dora had to a high degree retained its significance as an erotogenic zone. And the irritation was consequently well fitted to give expression to excited states of the libido. It was brought to fixation by what was probably its first psychological wrapping—her sympathetic imitation of her father—and by her subsequent self-reproaches on account of her "catarrh." The same group of symptoms, moreover, showed itself capable of representing her relations with Herr K.; it could express her regret at his absence and her wish to make him a better wife. After a part of her libido had once more turned towards her father, the symptom obtained what was perhaps its last meaning; it came to represent sexual intercourse with her father by means of Dora's identifying herself with Frau K. (74-75)

In the above passage, Freud has brought together a host of diverse modes of inquiry into a salient explanation of Dora's cough. The cough becomes more than just an expression or physical manifestation of a hysterical thought; it becomes a story, a history embedded in the subtext of the dream-text, a history that creates a foundation for the dream-thoughts.

The discussion of the "catarrh" as cough leads Freud into his analysis of Dora's genital catarrh. Freud moves immediately to connect the genital catarrh to the notion of disgust, which in turn connects to the feeling of disgust Dora experiences in reaction to Herr K. earlier in the case study. The central element of this disgust is the wetness, which is, as we have seen, rooted in the dream-text coded as "fire." "The pride taken by a woman in the appearance of their

genitals,” writes Freud, “is quite a special feature of their vanity; and disorders of the genitals which they think calculated to inspire feelings of repugnance or even disgust have an incredible power of humiliating them, of lowering their self-esteem, and of making them irritable, sensitive, and distrustful. An abnormal secretion of mucous membrane of the vagina is looked upon as a source of disgust” (75). This disgust is key for Freud, because it helps him imagine the end station on the rail of wetness. The rail of fire leads to Dora’s love of Herr K. and her suppression of that love by conjuring her father out of fear of succumbing to it. On the rail of wetness, however, the love of her father and thus the love of Herr K. is “wet” because all sexual relations for Dora contain what Freud sees as the hysterical element of disgust. The disgust causes Dora “the tendency to a repudiation of sexuality which was already present in her and was based upon the story of her childhood” (80).

Freud amplifies the equation of wetness with a disgust and fear of sex by relating Dora’s dream to her family history, specifically to her mother. The wetness of sex comes not only through Dora’s sexual stimulation but also by being wetted by male semen “*in the form of drops*” (82). The word “drops” then calls to Dora’s mind the memory of her mother requesting pearl “drops” from her father—thus connecting the ideas of father, mother, and drops. “Wet,” then, read through the parental relationship with its history of venereal disease, also comes to mean dirty. In the dream-text, the drops become jewelry. The “jewel” of the composite word “jewel-case” contains this whole web of associations. Finally, Freud brings the two rails of “fire” and “wetness” together. It is the fire of love for Herr K. that provokes Dora into transforming the “drops” into the “case”—the dirtied into the immaculate. The “jewel-box” as genitals, as both immaculate and the receptacle of the drops—as sullied—becomes the symbol of Dora’s entire neurotic persona, a symbol “calculated both to betray and to conceal the sexual thoughts that lie behind the dream” (83). With this, Freud arrives at the conclusion of the hermeneutic process. He has constructed a whole from the fragments:

“Mother’s jewel-case” was therefore introduced in two places in the dream; and this element replaced all mention of Dora’s infantile jealousy, of the drops (that is, of the sexual wetness), of being dirtied by the discharge, and, on the other hand, of her present thoughts connected with the temptation—the thoughts which were urging her to reciprocate the man’s love, and which depicted the sexual situation (alike desirable and

menacing) that lay before her. The element of “jewel-case” was more than any other a product of condensation and displacement, and a compromise between contrary mental currents. The multiplicity of its origin—both from infantile and contemporary sources—is no doubt pointed to by its double appearance in the content of the dream. (83-84)

It would be ridiculous to claim that, however full this analysis of the dream is, it achieves completeness. There are certainly paths not followed, parts unexplored, and alternative interpretations available. Many of the critics take up these alternatives. Yet, the fullness of Freud’s interpretation of this dream is politically meaningful. It allows him to bring together a wide array of investigative tools and strategies—everything from his dream theories to his notions of childhood sexual development to material generated by the analytic relationship to “common” sense and folk wisdom. In other words, we see a blending of theory, culture(s), and individual(s) into a composite structure, a synthesis that carries with it a logical force strong enough to overcome the questionable nature of its creation. A glance at the “rail of wetness” captures the strangeness of Freud’s trajectory. An example of a chain of associations Freud makes could run as follows: fire/water/wetness/bed-wetting/masturbation/catarrrh/nervous asthma/primal scene/morbid anxiety/cough/vaginal discharge/drops/dirtied/jewelry /immaculate/jewel-case. The movement from one link in the chain to the next and the mode of inquiry required to make such concatenations become less important than the composite structure.

Freud’s analysis of Dora’s first dream is the heart of the case study. It compresses the entirety of his interpretation of the case into an exposition of a single dream element, the jewel-case, using Freud’s full set of analytic tools. In the analysis of the dream, Freud’s theory of dreams is blended with his emerging theories of sexuality, allowing him to move from present to past, past into present, thus forging a psychodynamic history of the patient. Dora’s physical symptoms and their related “neurotic” thoughts are woven into the dream-text and, as a consequence, with each other. It is noteworthy that although in the rest of the work Freud is usually quite ready to talk about Dora’s resistance to his ideas—even at times in response to elements of this dream interpretation—at the end of the analysis of the first dream Dora remains silent. Her silence—or rather her disappearance from the text—implies a victory by the analyst

over the patient's recalcitrance. Freud makes a number of comments to tidy up the discussion—but does so in a calm, confident tone.

Many critics claim that Dora's terminating of her analysis with Freud after he interprets a second dream indicates that the analysis has failed. Janet Malcolm takes this notion of failure even further, asserting that it is not only the analysis that failed but the entire genre of the case-study (321). The notion of "failure" is so pervasive in discussions of *Dora* that it has become a commonplace assumption. As I have shown, however, the accomplishments of Freud's analysis of the first dream tell a different story.

Conclusion

Freud's psychoanalytic dream interpretation reflects important features of other 19th century modes of inquiry. Like archaeology, Freudian dream theory imagines that some sort of complete or whole object can emerge from the fragmentary. The analyst-as-archeologist is tasked with setting out into wild or foreign realms (the dreamscape) in order to bring back the raw material to construct an "authentic" display—the fully articulated dream interpretation. Like 19th century ethnography, Freudian dream theory assumes a hierarchical relationship between the primitive/savage and the civilized, between nature and culture, and between the irrational and reason. Ethnography, like archeology, aspired to wholeness—the complete mapping of the "other's" society, culture, geography, and history, a mapping that went together with the actual cartographic work of soft-imperialism throughout the world. An aspiration to wholeness—the whole object, the whole people, the whole geography—dominates the spirit of the age of Freud and is reflected in a type of hermeneutic quest to capture the whole meaning of a text, a central example of which is Julius Wellhausen's attempt to prove the origins and existence of the four discrete authorial voices that eventually were redacted into the Pentateuch—the so-called "documentary hypothesis." Wellhausen, reaching beyond the text and into speculative regions of the past, sought to explain every moment of illogic and textual rupture, and by so doing to make the text whole again: whole as a synthesis, an assemblage of pieces—not the ontological or imaginary whole of medieval scholasticism or protestant dogmatism.

For Freud, the dreamscape is vital space to occupy because it offers the possibility of wholeness. It is the staging ground for the assemblage of the total person, merging psychology with physiology, the unconscious with consciousness, and past and present. To produce such a

merging requires the deployment of a diverse set of modes of inquiry. Using these tools, Freud transforms the dreamscape into the dream-text, thereby taking possession of the oneiric space and enabling him to use it to serve his interests. As we can see, issues of power and authority were at the very heart of Freud's development of his theory of dreams.

This concept of wholeness or total analysis of the dream does not imply that Freud denies the partial or fragmentary nature of his interpretations. The most poignant example of this recognition comes in *The Interpretation of Dreams* when Freud posits the existence of what he calls the dream's navel. The first appearance of the concept of the navel comes as Freud discusses the convergence of Irma, Irma's friend, and Freud's wife in his analysis of the "specimen dream." Freud adds the following footnote:

I had a feeling that the interpretation of this part of the dream was not carried far enough to make it possible to follow the whole of its concealed meaning. If I had pursued my comparison between the three women, it could have taken me far afield.—There is at least one spot in every dream at which it is unplumbable—a navel, as it were, that is its point of contact with the unknown. (135)

Later in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud returns to the concept of the dream's navel:

There is often a passage in even the most thoroughly interpreted dream which has to be left obscure; this is because we become aware during the work of interpretation that at that point there is a tangle of dream thoughts which cannot be unraveled and which moreover adds nothing to our knowledge of the content of the dream. This is the dream's navel, the spot where it reaches down into the unknown. The dream-thoughts to which we are led by interpretation cannot, from the nature of things, have any definitive endings; they are bound to branch out in every direction into the intricate network of our world of thought. It is at some point where this meshwork is particularly close that the dream-wish grows up, like a mushroom out of its mycelium. (528)

The idea of the navel seems to offer a way beyond wholeness and a denial of the finality of hermeneutical investigation. Is the navel, then, an emancipatory or even anarchic concept—one

that denies the authority of interpretive regimes? In terms of the broader construct of Freud's theory, the answer seems to be negative. Freud fails to return to the concept of the navel in his subsequent psychoanalytic work, including in his interpretation of Dora's first dream. There is no navel identified in Freud's investigation of the dream-image of the jewel-box. Beyond this neglect of the concept, Freud explicitly deemphasizes the navel's importance for the work of analysis. The navel, the "tangle of dream thoughts," Freud says, "adds nothing to our knowledge of the content of the dream." Beyond Freud, the navel seems to be something of a trap. On the one hand, the sheer mysteriousness of it invites exploration, the same type of mapping impulse that motivates Freud's conquest of the dreamscape. On the other hand, and perhaps more significantly, Freud's notion of the navel cannot be separated from the broader Freudian system of psychodynamics with its understanding of the mechanisms of dreaming.

Shoshana Felman takes up both of these implications of the navel in "Postal Survival, Or the Question of the Navel." The concept of the navel first leads her to a feminist critique of what she interprets as the meaning of the navel of Freud's dream of Irma's injection. Felman posits that the navel of Freud's "specimen dream" forms a "knot" of female resistance, and that this resistance points to a deeper "inexhaustibility, the unaccountability of *female difference*" (64, italics in text). Felman broadens this conclusion to encompass the relationship between the "specimen dream" and the entirety of Freudian dream theory:

The genius of Freud's dream is to have...situated both the psychoanalytic lesson of the feminine resistance, and this unspeakability of the feminine complaint within his own male dream, this differentiability of the female knot of pain with respect to his own theoretical solutions, as the very nodal point of his specimen-dream, and as, indeed, the very navel of his dream understanding. (67)

After introducing a challenge to these conclusions by Paul de Man, Felman posits a more generalized image of the navel. The navel shifts from being the location of "sexual difference" to being concerned with "the identity of a self-difference (of a difference from ourselves), out of which we can, indeed, listen to each other, hear each other, resonate with each other's work" (70). These connective implications of the navel, for Felman, are paired with the notion that the navel is fundamentally about disconnection—it is a "knot that's cut" (72). This disconnection,

Felman argues, indicates the navel as a point of self-resistance, which can be allegorically represented by reading and, more specifically, by rupture in the process of reading. Felman writes, “But this wound which summons and which breaks the reader at the very level of the navel, this break-up, or this breakdown, of the reading is, precisely, what demands, compulsively and endlessly, to be re-read . . .” (72).

Felman’s notion of the navel as a “breakdown” of reading implies an inherent illegibility at the heart of the process of reading or as fundamental to text and language. However, that this “illegibility” cannot stand as illegible, but must to be “compulsively and endlessly” re-read points to the political dimension of the process of making legible. To be “re-read” in Felman’s sense is to be re-inscribed within a system of psychoanalytic meaning. Paradoxically, the inherent “illegibility” of text, for Felman, seems to instigate its journey to legibility as a “province of the expert,” whether psychoanalyst or (in her case) literary critic. The concept of the navel, understood as a catalyst for making-legible, can be used to break down structures of power only, it seems to me, in the service of erecting others. On the other hand, if the concept of the navel can be ripped from the “mycelia” of Freudian theory and understood as the contact point between the known and the unknown, the knowable and the unknowable, the legible and the illegible, in other words if that which is illegible and unknowable can somehow be permitted to remain illegible and unknowable, an opening might exist to posit anti-authoritarian conceptions of the dreamscape and even the dream-text or text in general. In the two chapters that follow, I chart the divergent pathways in modernism for the narrativization of the dreamscape. The dominant modernist mode, represented here by Jung and Roth, seeks to banish or write out the dream’s unknowable center or “navel.” The other path, exemplified by Rhys and Kafka, attempts to preserve the “negative capability” of the dreamscape as a site of radical critique.