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Traumatophilic Subjects. Psychoanalytic Case Studies.

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Data

Podpis autora (autorów) pracy
# Table of Contents

## Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lyricism of Case</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case and Classification</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality and Quantity</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature and Power</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytic Suspicion</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuality of Signs</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A case of petite hystérie&quot;</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Resistant heroine...&quot;</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question of knowledge</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freud's Hysteria</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oedipus and Overdetermination</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Hysteria as Mass Hysteria</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Phantasies of Hysterics</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obsessive Religion</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parodic Religions - I know very well, but</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A protest against symbolic debt...&quot;</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Lacanian Oracles - Oracle One</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oracle Two - Medusa</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jouissance of Punishments</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rat Man and Mirbeau</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Conclusions .................................................................................................................... 144

IV .............................................................................................................................................. 145

1. Freud’s discussion of psychosis ..................................................................................... 145
2. Love your artificial neighbor ......................................................................................... 153
3. Lacan’s view of psychosis ............................................................................................... 164
4. Lacanian inspirations ....................................................................................................... 171
5. Friend, enemy, neighbor ................................................................................................. 183
6. Psychosis and invasion of mythical violence ................................................................. 188
7. Conclusions ..................................................................................................................... 193

Conclusions .......................................................................................................................... 194

References ............................................................................................................................ 197

Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................... 205
Introduction

The story of psychoanalysis begins with case studies. Freud’s first scientific contributions were his case studies. Case studies transmit some specific type of experience. This experience revolves around the figure of traumatophilic subject. The concept is created by Walter Benjamin in an essay about Charles Baudelaire. Benjamin focused his attention on theory of trauma as a breach of protective layer of consciousness, he reads Freud’s “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” and argues that Freud's work can help us understand modern subject's love of shocks, his fixation on trauma. The main thesis of this essay states that abundance of shocks is caused technological and cultural changes. These changes creates a particular type of subject, subject of traumatophilic poetry. Love of trauma, trauma philia is connected with gradual atrophy of experience. Benjamin distinguishes between isolated experience (Erlebnis) and long experience (Erfahrung), and argues that isolated experience replaces modern experience:

“The greater the shock factor in particular impressions, the more vigilant consciousness has to be in screening stimuli; the more efficiently it does so, the less these impressions enter long experience [Erfahrung] and the more they correspond to the concept of isolated experience [Erlebnis]. (...) This would be a peak achievement of intellect [Reflexion]: it would turn the incident into isolated experience” ¹

In other words traumas and shocks lead to fractured, divided, split experience of the world and others. Long experience on the contrary is a source of unity, it anchors us in social or cultural reality. Isolated experience is tied with intellect, it involves analysis

of data. Long experience can be associated with memory, especially unconscious memory:

"Experience [Erfahrung] is (...) a matter of tradition, in collective existence as well as private life. It is the product less of facts firmly anchored in memory [Erinnerung] than of accumulated and frequently unconscious data that flow together in memory [Gedächtnis]" ².

As we see this division between long experience and isolated experience resembles psychoanalytic distinction between consciousness and the unconscious, between ego and id.

Psychoanalytic subject - hero of case study is precisely a subject who has been deprived of his biography, someone whose experience is lost and for this reason has to be carefully reconstructed. This isolation of experience typical for psychoanalysis has many aspects, in a nutshell this is an isolation of unconscious, isolation of what is repressed. I think that Freud's case study describe the process of emergence of subjectivity from traumatic encounter. They explain the beginnings of traumatophilic subject.

For Freud the emergence of subjectivity is a process similar to a railway accident, – in one of most interesting fragments of “Moses and Monotheism” we read:

"It may happen that a man who has experienced some frightful accident- a railway collision, for instance - leaves the scene of event apparently uninjured. In the course of the next few weeks, however he develops a number of severe psychical and motor symptoms which can only be traced to his shock, the concussion or whatever else it was. He now has 'traumatic neurosis' ³.

Traumatic neurosis can be this compared to a railway accident. Traumatic encounter is a collision of two machines, it happens at the crossroads, at a point where two tracks meet. I think the story of Oedipus revolves precisely around a shocking encounter or accident which, just like most railway accidents, takes place at a place where tracks or roads meet:

² Ibid., 172.
³ SE 23, 67-68
“Now Laius--so at least report affirmed--

Was murdered on a day by highwaymen,

No natives, at a spot where three roads meet”

The murder of Laius takes place at the crossroads - psychoanalysis is clearly focused on various types of crossroads, nodal points, points-de-capitons. It focuses on places of collisions and crashes. It assumes that those collisions give specific dynamics to individual lives - they create particular fixations or philias, subjects are thus tramatophilic in that they gravitate forever to their own divided origins.

Traumatophilic subject is the main hero of case study. The whole genre of case study, as we will see in first chapter, is build around desire to isolate experience, to create laboratory of human behavior, to describe individual symptoms in such a way that they become representation of abstract classifications. At the same time case studies represent long experience as well, Freud case studies can be viewed as literary works, and as such they are trying to create coherent and unified narrative of each patient's disturbance. They can be viewed as specific types of Bildungsroman, and in this sense they clearly transmit some form of Erfahrung, they represent desire to find wisdom.

What shocks and traumas are present in case studies? In what way they represent traumatophilic subjectivities of patients? The question of traumas leads to question of politics. I think that there is politics of some sorts in case studies. This politics of should be carefully distinguished from Freud's views on party politics (his liberal leanings, skeptical view of communism, opposition to fascism etc)\(^5\) or his social or political theory (as presented for example in "Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego" or "Totem and Taboo")\(^6\). Freud's personal views should be left to his biographers. We can learn from them what newspapers Freud read or what parties he supported. Social or political theory, on the other hand, should be the object of study for political philosophers or historians of philosophy.


If there is some politics in case studies it is politics of a different kind. It is politics of trauma, politics of cultural experience. Case studies expose social and cultural problems (gender inequality, economic anxieties, degradation of religion, fear of technology), that were not necessarily seen as problematic or political at the time. Today, thanks to Michel Foucault or Judith Butler, we may see politics in gender definitions that play some role in Dora's symptoms, we may see politics in struggles about debt that are so important to Rat Man or we may see politics in madness which is the topic of Schreber's "Memoirs". In other words we may see political aspects of those traumatic encounters that formed the unconscious of Freud's patients. The type of politics that is displayed in those disturbances involves what Foucault called "microphysics of power"\(^7\), it involves dynamics of interpersonal relations, relations of power between specific individuals. In Freud's time those issues were not seen as political problems. When viewed from perspective of today, politics of case studies is clearly visible. We may see that case studies act as nodal points, they bundle a bunch of thorny difficult issues within framework of narrative about mental disturbance of specific patient with specific nickname.

My dissertation is focused on three case studies - Dora, Schreber, Rat Man. Each of those cases revolves around some central trauma or shock. Dora is traumatized by her encounter with Herr K, but this single event is just a nodal point, as usual in case of hysteria, this event is over-determined, there are other events, and more importantly other social, cultural, and political processes to which Dora responds in her symptoms. Rat Man's subjectivity, on the other hand, is formed by personality of his father, especially his economic struggles. Freud's patient's trauma is a trauma of economic exchange, it represents painful recognition of violence involved in different types of economic cooperation. Schreber's case on the other hand can be seen as reaction to technological changes, I think that trauma is related to changes in technologies of communication. In this respect Schreber's psychosis can be seen as meditation on culture of communication.

I have chosen these three cases because of a number of reasons. I feel that these cases posses not only passing academic, so called historical relevance, but they are directly relevant for our own culture and society. In case of Dora there is an interesting

problem of political aspects of knowledge, knowledge that resides in unconscious that is not recognized as legitimate by social environment but that nevertheless poses a threat to social order, knowledge of those who are deprived of power. Rat Man's case throws interesting light on mechanics of social exchange - especially on problems of debt and exchange of gifts, issues which are of vast importance in modern world. Schreber disturbances on the other hand seem to display a interesting relationship with others, fascinating deformation of love of neighbors, deformation which appears really interesting today if we consider it in context of modern technological changes.

On the other hand it is worth noting that chosen cases represent three clinical units, hysteria, obsessive neurosis and psychosis. It is true that hysteria was sometimes viewed as one form of neurosis (dialect of neurosis), but the differences between the two are so marked that they may be just as well be seen as different disturbances. In this respect Jacques Lacan's interpretation of psychoanalysis appears correct - Lacan distinguishes between three fundamental positions towards the Other - hysterical, neurotic and psychotic. My choice of Freud's case studies is motivated by my belief in general validity of this classification. Choosing one patient from each category allows me to connect my dissertation with Lacan, we may see how seemingly abstract concepts of Lacan's theory explain very real disturbances of Freud's patients. My allegiance to this particular classification also expresses my conviction that one cannot ignore Lacan's when writing about psychoanalysis.

I believe that cases I have chosen demonstrate with particular clarity some perhaps less well known aspects of psychoanalysis. One interesting aspect is an element of uncertainty inherent in Freud's interpretations. There is a tradition of seeing Freud as dogmatist, someone who subscribes blindly to his theoretical claims, and is committed to his theory despite all contrary evidence. I would like to revise this misunderstanding by

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pointing at all doubts, nuances and diversity of interpretative approaches that we may find in Freud's actual clinical practice, this is especially visible in Dora's case, but it also plays some role in case of Schreber or Rat Man. In Dora's case we may see Freud's own doubts about efficiency of his method, his uncertainty over and his fascination with overdetermination which at times tends to contradict theory of Oedipus complex. In Schreber on the other hand we may see how Freud notes similarities between his own theory and Schreber's strange psychotic system.

The dissertation will have following structure. In the first chapter I would like to outline briefly the context for my study of Freud's case studies. I'd like to focus there on literary and cultural background to case studies, and the role they played in the beginnings of psychoanalysis. I would like to discuss psychoanalytic interpretation in context of medical knowledge of its time. I think that political ambitions of psychoanalysis and its literary leanings are not opposed to medical interpretation but rather develop some elements of clinical tradition. There is an interesting continuity between case studies of psychiatrist and neurologists and Freud's case studies. As Foucault claims medical gaze is lyrical in a way and it plays vital role in our own culture. If we put psychoanalysis in this context we can see interesting continuity between Freud and medical teaching. I develop this point by pointing at interesting similarities between medical hermeneutics, psychoanalysis and detective novels. The analogy between psychoanalysis and detective novel, especially analytic detective novel of Edgar Alan Poe or Borges, is presented in influential text of Lacan. One important element that connects both clinical writing and Freud's case studies is their literary nature. Authors of clinical case studies are aware that their writings constitute literature.

In the second chapter I move to actual investigation of case studies. I start with case of Dora. This case is often read from perspective of gender studies. Dora is presented as "resistant heroine". Her resistance to psychoanalysis is seen as "silent revolt against male power over women's bodies and women's language", "radiant

\[\text{and Sonu Shamdasani, The Freud Files : an inquiry into the history of psychoanalysis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).}\]

example of feminist revolt”\textsuperscript{11} or "attempt to deny patriarchal sexuality”\textsuperscript{12}. In my discussion of case study I will develop this reading and present other dimensions of this case. I will be mainly interested in the interesting definition of "innocent" knowledge that emerges from the case. Other aspect that is perhaps left unnoticed in many commentaries is the role of "overdetermination" in Dora's case. This concept became popular thanks to Louis Althusser reading of Marx, while I'm not interested in Marxist resonances of this concept I would like to investigate how this concept works in Freud's analysis and how it enables us to see social processes in hysterical symptoms.

In the third chapter I'm discussing Rat Man's case. This case has not been so popular among commentators. Dora or Schreber inspired tens or even hundreds of articles and books. Rat Man provoked much less lively interest. I would like to give justice to Freud's patient and recognize some interesting topics at the heart of his obsessional neurosis. The central role in Rat Man's neurosis is played by debt, Rat Man's symptoms begin with bizarre attempts pay back debt that he never really made. In my interpretation I will treat this case as an interesting performance of conflicting nature of social exchange, Rat Man's symptoms disclose how closely unconscious is tied with mechanisms of exchange of gifts, it also demonstrates changes in religiosity. The case involves specific type of religious ethics which degrades into fetishism of "I know very well but all the same”.

The case of Schreber will be the subject of fourth chapter. This specific case is particularly prone to cultural theoretical readings, it is impossible to ignore all the richness of commentaries that circle around fascinating "Memoirs of My Mental Illness", I would like to read Schreber's symptoms as reaction to technological change, response to transformation of inter personal relationships at the dawn of the era of technologically mediated communication. Schreber's artificial neighbors, machines that track his steps,


\textsuperscript{12} Maria Ramas, "Freud's Dora, Dora's Hysteria," in In Dora's case : Freud--hysteria--feminism, ed. Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 149.
whole system of technological writings that are deployed to record and provoke every thought of his, seems to constitute a reaction to technology.

I think that all analyzed cases can be seen as nodal points - diverse themes and meanings converge in their structure. In this respect they require interdisciplinary approach. Psychoanalysis clearly cannot be easily assimilated to one specific academic discipline. Traces of psychoanalysis are diffused in cultural theory, literary studies, psychoanalysis also has deep impact on philosophy. My approach is closest to perspective of broadly defined cultural theory, but I am fully committed to the idea of interdisciplinary. I strongly believe that psychoanalysis as such in general, and psychoanalytic case studies in particular simply demand interdisciplinary approach. They demand this approach because, as we will see in following chapters, Freud's patients' unconscious is formed by works of literature or art it is also responsive to wider social and cultural processes such as changes in perception of gender difference, changes in capitalist ethics or technological progress. Unconscious does not respect disciplinary borders. For this reason any works that deals with unconscious processes, as they are recorded and represented in Freud's case studies must remain interdisciplinary.
1. Lyricism of case

In next chapters I will concentrate on a series of psychoanalytic case studies and variety of interpretations to which they gave rise. But before moving to case studies I would like to reflect on the specific meaning of this interesting concept: 'case study'.

Case study is a discursive structure typical for XIX century psychiatry. Some authors tend to underscore the discontinuity between psychoanalysis and psychiatry but I think that it similarities and common themes between those two disciplines are much more pronounced then it is usually recognized.

Despite all the differences between psychiatry and psychoanalysis (psychological approach of Freud versus purely neurological approach of psychiatry, quantitative vs qualitative perspective, authoritarian relationships between patient and doctor in the clinic, more or less symmetrical in therapy etc) one thing that remains central for both discourses is their focus on individual personality of the patient. Case studies grows out of recognition that individual case can provide some evidence for theory, or alternatively, it can provide a springboard for theoretical considerations. This concentration on individual, this specific passion for detailed narrative about intimate personal life, makes both psychiatry and psychoanalysis close to literature (this is recognized by both authors of case studies and writers, Balzac was fascinated by Pinel, Zola or Mirbeau by Charcot etc etc). Both disciplines belong to humanities in many respects.

Both disciplines share fascination with the individual subjectivity of the patient. They are build around encounter with patient, they attempt to form scientific claims about each individuals, but at the same time they cannot avoid falling into long digressions and
tangential discussions of purely subjective contexts. The fact that case study can be considered a "genre" just like a novel or essay may appear surprising, yet this seems to follow from its inherently literary character recognized not only by contemporary scholars, but by authors of case studies themselves. Perhaps the lack of epistemological or disciplinary "clarity" which surrounds psychoanalysis is to some extent typical for the whole genre of clinical case studies at the end of XIX century.

Clinical gaze produces its own literature about its objects. One can compare doctors to writers or poets. Michel Foucault tells us that:

"The importance of Bichat, Jackson and Freud in European culture does not prove that they were philosophers as well as doctors, but that, in this culture, medical thought is fully engaged in the philosophical status of man. This medical experience is therefore akin to a lyrical experience that his language sought, from Holderlin to Rilke"¹³

Can we really place the experience of doctors at the end of XIX century along poetry of Rilke and Holderlin? Can we really find some similarities between diagnostic notes and verses? The claim may appears surprising for those who tend to believe in a sharp line between literature and science. It is rarely claimed that the influence of medicine on European culture occurs through means communication typical for poetry. The division between Freud the philosopher and Freud the physician appears to be very fragile from this point of view. The statement may appear paradoxical but it makes sense in context of XIX century psychology, psychiatry and neurology - all disciplines which influenced the beginnings of psychoanalysis.

This interesting connection between Bichat, Jackson and Freud proposed by Foucault revolves around pain. All three philosophers-doctors attempt to put into words the experience of suffering, something they have witnessed in their medical practice. This may appear to be a very metaphorical., maybe even idealistic or naive, description of their writings. This interpretation of Freud and medical thought suggests the desire to communicate with others, desire to propagate medical knowledge, to spread Enlightenment brought about by means of medical diagnosis, plays a central role in

clinical discourse. This will to appeal to the public makes philosophical impact of medicine possible.

There are some interesting side effects of this perspective. Psychoanalysts often attempt to distinguish their discipline from clinical psychology. Paul Verhaeghe for example, to take one recent examples underscores the difference between primarily visual approach of Freud's teacher Jean Marie Charcot and psychoanalytic focus on listening to the patient.\textsuperscript{14} The idea of lyrical experience seems to point in different direction, it highlights literary element of medical discourse, it suggests that perhaps we should see Freud as someone who continues some aspects of medical tradition, rather than leads a revolt against it. We may well oppose Verhaeghe and suggest that Freud is most of all a writer, his work fulfills itself in his writings. Without writing Freud's work would not become popular and influential. Perhaps then not hearing but rather writing should characterize psychoanalytic work. This task of writing down disturbances seems to be very close to tasks of medicine to which Freud is often opposed.

The role of writing in creating medicine is an interesting topic in itself. Doctors of Freud's generation were aware of literary aspects of their scientific productions. The connections between literature and psychiatry dates back to famous Philippe Pinel whose medical works were widely read and admired by most writers, for instance Balzac had very high opinion about them. Some writers of case studies were struck by literary qualities of their productions, one author of case studies observed in 1887 that a certain patient “savored a novel”, other remarked that a report on his patients could become “a novel of manners and morals”\textsuperscript{15}. Although Charcot and his pupils belonged to a different tradition (they were skeptical about possibilities of moral treatment advocated by Pinel), they were still fascinated by arts and humanities.

It may be argued that Freud surpassed all of his fellow physicians in the literary qualities of his writings. As early as in “Studies on Hysteria” he noted:


“Like other neuropathologists, I was trained to employ local diagnosis and electro-prognosis, and it still strikes me as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of science”\textsuperscript{16}.

Note that Freud makes this remark in “Studies on Hysteria” which in comparison with later case studies such as Dora or Ratman are still fairly close to medical reports.

This tendency to create novels certainly went against positivistic ideology associated with medicine in XIX century. From positivist point of view literary qualities of case studies could only be seen as aberration or perversion of medical or clinical gaze. The normative ideal here was simple, doctors should simply note his observation, they should not write novels. Although we may find traces of this positivist ethos in Freud’s case studies, we can safely assume that Freud was aware of limitations of this approach.

“ I am aware that- in this city, at least-there are many physicians who (revolting as this may seem) choose to read a case history not as a contribution to the psychopathology of neuroses, but as a roman a clef designed for their private delectation”\textsuperscript{17}

The element of creation so interesting in the process of writing case studies is mirrored in creativity of patients. Case study is not only a creation of a writer, it is also created by its protagonist, who sometimes demonstrate a great degree of creativity. Patients are seen as creators of their symptoms. Illness and suffering may be perceived as peculiar work of art.

Take the case of Blanche Wittman, who was one of the most famous patients from the Salpetriere Charcot used to say that his hospital, populated with hysterical women was a true "museum of pathology", in this museum Blanche was a masterpiece that attracted admiration of all visitors. Blanche's symptoms were so theatrical, refined and well suited to Charcot symptomatology that he often presented Blanche's symptoms as typical for hysteria during his public presentations attended by Parisian intelligentsia.

\textsuperscript{17} SE 7, 9.
The patient became a public figure, columns were written about her in daily Parisian newspapers, her symptoms were widely analyzed and discussed. The theatricality of her hysterical attacks fascinated viewers, some of journalists compared Blanche to Sarah Bernhard.

"Never has an actor or a painter (...) never a Rachel or a Sarah Bernhardt Rubens of Raphael, arrived at such powerful expression. This young girl enacted a series of tableaux that surpassed in its brilliance and power the most sublime efforts of arts. One could not dream of a more astonishing model"18

Curiously Sarah Bernhard herself confessed in an interview which she gave to one of medical journals that she has spent some time in Salpetriere cell in order to prepare herself for one of her roles. It was said that opera divas who were to play roles of heroines in Wagner's works strived imitating hysterical girls.

The concept of hysteria as peculiar theatre, hysterical woman as an actress plays an interesting role in Freud's work. In one article he argues that this theater resembles pantomime. e reflects on a hysterical attack which consisted of two seemingly contradictory gestures, the patient represented an intercourse by tearing off her own dress with one hand (imitating man), and at the same time pressed her dress up against her body (imitating more female behavior)2. Sexual phantasy here is played out by double identification, with an identification with both sides of the scene. The patient engages in curious type of pantomime. Freud seems to refer here to an original meaning of pantomime: pantos mimos in greek means imitating all. Hysteric is not just imitating her father or mother, but she imitates both, and she may well imitates others, who are around, and this imitation is to some extent an act of creativity.

All this leads to emergence of curious type of subjectivity that characterizes Freud's patients. This very notion 'subjectivity' may appear puzzling in this context. After all Freud attempted to keep their identity hidden, he wanted them to remain anonymous, devoid of their own name. In this we may see analogies between his discourse and neurology, psychiatry or criminology of the time. All those disciplined dialed with nameless subjects, their true heroes were usually never mentioned by their real names,

authors attempted to keep the privacy of their cases secured. This desire to turn patient's suffering into object may appear threatening. We may see in it an attempt to reduce other to a status of thing, an object, something that can be manipulated by means of medical technology. And this is indeed how neurology of XIX century is perceived, for instance by Didi-Huberman. Nevertheless this repressed subjectivity of the patient returns with interesting intensity. It returns in theatrical, exaggerated performances of hysterical patients of Charcot, returns in bizarre obsessions, tics, hallucinations of Freud's patients. Subjectivity here appears precisely as excessive difference from the environment, as manifestation of theatrical otherness.

2. Case and classification

This juxtaposition of literature and medicine and art may be seen as something of a scandal for positivistic philosophers of science. The difference between literature and science is very important for thinkers of this time. Modern case study should not be just a collection of random observations, according to this view. Collections of observations about individuals were probably always published in scientific and medical literature. Renaissance authors were active in cataloguing different forms of pathological individuals. What distinguishes modern clinical case studies from those collections of observations is the presence of some particular classification (so called nosography or nosology). This element of systematic classification distinguished case studies from mere anecdotes, in other words they distinguished science from literature.

In this respect case studies are closely tied with discursive edifice of clinical medicine which is based on a close connection between observation of individuals and classification and description of illnesses. The project of classifying all diseases emerged quite late in western thought, and we can probably associate it with the names of doctors and philosophers (the distinction was not clear at the time) such as Thomas Sydenham (1624 - 1689), Herman Boerhave (1668 - 1738) or Giorgio Baglivi (1648 - 1701). This project relied on a belief that through observation of individual instances one can create disjunctive units of classification, each representing particular illness. It stood in marked contrast to Hipocratic notions of disease, and indeed to holistic notions of disease
cultivated in non-western cultural circles. According to Hipocrates a disease is a result of imbalance of natural elements (humors) in one particular person, therefore chief attention should be paid to holistic balance of humors, particular symptoms have only secondary value, they only manifest humoral imbalance. In other words we don’t need to study this or that patient, this or that illness, we should rather focus on humors themselves and look for the right balance of them. Paradoxically Sydenham's opposition against classical approach was based on general skepticism about perspectives of understanding causes of diseases. A doctor cannot know why particular cure work, he also does not know why the patient is sick, but this is not the most important thing, he should only strive to give as detailed description of the disturbance as possible, and of course as detailed description of effects of cure as possible19.

This skepticism led to increased attention to particular, individual conditions, it led to the birth of famous medical gaze, invoked by Michel Foucault. Foucault is obviously right when he claims that this return to singular beings, this desire to describe individuals in all their peculiarities is based on rejection of Aristotle's classical distinctions:

“"The gaze is no longer reductive, it is, rather, that which establishes the individual in his irreducible quality. (...) It is this formal organization, in depth, rather than abandonment of theories and old systems, that made clinical experience possible; it lifted the old Aristotelian prohibition: one could at last hold a scientifically structured discourse about an individual”20

The "prohibition" that Foucault has in mind here is a reference to Aristotle's "Posterior Analytics" where the philosopher claims that knowledge must always be concerned with the universal and therefore, since perception deals only with particulars, descriptions of individuals is not a science of knowledge. Also in "Metaphysics" Aristotle claims that the only experience that matters is the experience of that which is "always or

20 Foucault, The birth of the clinic; an archaeology of medical perception: xiv.
for the most part”\textsuperscript{21}. In opposition to Aristotle some modern philosophers, and, what is probably most important in our context, some modern doctors, assumed that particular experiences, some singular events, could acquire the status of scientific evidence. As Peter Dear puts it:

"The singular experience could not be evident (...) but it could provide evidence"\textsuperscript{22}.

In case studies the evidence is provided by experience of one singular suffering, which is raised into the level of idea (to use Hegelian term) when it finds a place within general nosology.

Case is only a case of some general rule, patient becomes a symbol or representative of general, abstract category of illness. He can become a canonical example in a way, he can be a paradigm of some form of suffering, a manifestation of idea of illness.

At the same time this tendency to create classification was highly contested. Large group of those who were expected to produce this knowledge about individuals - directors of the asylums, doctors, scientists - had serious doubts about its possibility. In some areas such as psychiatry, which will be our chief object of interest, the possibility of structured knowledge about singular individuality, the possibility of scientifically valid case study was always debatable. Mental illnesses were included in the first modern nosologies, Linnaeus's "Genera Morborum" (1763) includes disorders of nerves, as does Sauvages' classification (1761). William Cullen's classification (1778) first proposed the term "neuroses" as an umbrella term which covered all disturbances of nervous system\textsuperscript{23}. The proposed classifications were not accepted by most practitioners. If there was any consensus among them it referred only to the insufficiency of all nosologies. As one

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. 9.
\textsuperscript{23} Bynum, "Nosology," 347.
doctor put it in the middle of XIX century there were as many classifications as there were practitioners\textsuperscript{24}.

Moreover, apart from debates about the value of one particular classification (should we accept classification of this or that doctor?) one can point at vibrant discussions about the very need for classification. In 1860-ties there were still psychiatrists who opposed all projects of classifying mental symptoms. Heinrich Neumann for instance argued that one cannot distinguish discrete and disjunctive classificatory units of mental illnesses, one should rather focus only on particular cases and treat all psychic disturbances as one illness, which he called “unitary psychosis” \textit{(Einheit psychosis)}\textsuperscript{25}. Neumann views provoked some controversy, they met with opposition, but he certainly could count at some supporters, especially among administrators of asylums, who were generally skeptical about possibilities of creating the knowledge about mental illness.

On the other hand the existence of discursive edifice which one may call "psychiatry" was itself problematic. The terms itself was coined at the beginning of XIX century, the first chair in psychiatric medicine was held by J.C.A Heinroth from 1811 in Leipzig, but it wasn't very popular outside Germany. In France Pinel's followers who advocated moral treatment considered themselves to be 'alienists', the term suggested that madness is most of all a mental alienation\textsuperscript{26}. They were soon criticized by those who underscored biological basis of mental disturbances. The first chair of psychiatry in France was opened only in 1878 at Paris Faculty of Medicine\textsuperscript{27}. Psychiatry had complicated ties with neurology, there was a wide fusion between the two disciplines (most psychiatrists agreed that mental illness may have neurological basis), but the relationship was not free from tensions.


\textsuperscript{25} Ibid. 27


\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 1364.
3. Quality and Quantity

Sometimes the division between medicine and literature is presented as opposition between quantitative and qualitative approaches, this conceptual divide returns in various forms (humanistic psychology vs materialistic psychiatry etc). If we apply this divide to the period of interest for us, namely to a time when Freud writes his case studies, we may be puzzled by uncertainty it produces.

One may of course say that those two approaches were present in the thought of the time. One school of thought treated individuals as elements that acquire their value when they are amassed. This perspective expresses itself in very brief reports, laconic descriptions, which often only note elements which are deemed relevant. Emil Kraepelin is perhaps the exemplary representative of this approach. Kraepelin's research depended heavily on steady supply of new patients, in order to track and analyze briefly each of them he introduced an institution of diagnostic card. The idea of diagnostic card was inspired by statistical cards used by Bavarian local government. It played an important role in Kraepelin's own work, for his Psychiatrie (1896) he gathered about thousand patient histories, and he still thought that it is not enough. Richard Krafft von Ebbing adopted similar approach, for his "Pschopathia Sexualis" he amassed about 400 hundred cases. This is the type of discourse that attracted attention of Foucault and his followers. It is closely tied with the development of state bureaucracy and various methods of administration and control.

On the other hand we have other approach which tends to display an extensive focus on pathological individuals, an extensive interest in all details of patients life. Here the story of a patient is told at length, it takes one full long article of even a whole book. Usually this excessive and broad attention is justified by the claim about patients exemplarity. It is assumed that the patient is somehow typical for the disease. In many cases this leads to curious feedback loop. The patient's typicality encourages imitation, and all of a sudden other patients display similar symptoms to the ones of exemplary and

28 Engstrom, Clinical psychiatry in imperial Germany : a history of psychiatric practice: 143.
famous case. This extensive focus on the individuality was probably possible because of lack of established classifications of mental symptoms. Since there was no clear guidance the attention of doctors was not fixed on decisive elements, the writer of case study was taking into account elements which were not tied with a clear causal link. Authors of reports written in this style were often very good writers and their books were sometimes immensely popular. There is a multitude of examples of this approach, early ones include a book on a psychotic James Thilly Mathews written by John Haslam\textsuperscript{30}, the case of Nanette\textsuperscript{31}, then we have an abundance of famous cases at the end of the century, including Charcot hysterics, who acquired the status of celebrities\textsuperscript{32}, a lantern lighter from Bordeaux who travelled compulsively\textsuperscript{33} etc etc. Pinel's moral treatment with its vivid descriptions of disturbed individuals who can be cured only by means of moral treatment are probably also crucial for this tradition.

It is sometimes claimed that Freud belonged to this second, humanist tradition, his work is opposed to materialist neurology of Charcot or normalizing psychopathology of Krafft von Ebbing. But there are good reasons to be skeptical about such clear cut divisions. I am skeptical not because I think that Freud was materialist, that his thought was filled with admiration for positivist accounts of science. In simply think that neurology and psychiatry, two disciplines from which psychoanalysis was born, never really lived up to positivistic or materialist standards. They were never real hard science, they were filled with literature and interpretation. What is more authors of clinical writings were partly aware of this, their understanding of their own activity involved consciousness and perhaps even appreciation for literature and interpretation. As Foucault puts it, their experience was lyrical in a way, and they accounted for it in a lyrical style. We certainly shouldn't confuse the matter by thinking in terms of dialectical: division between "humanist psychology/psychotherapy" and "materialist/neurological

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\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{31}] Goldstein, Bertrand, and Despine, \textit{Hysteria complicated by ecstasy : the case of Nanette Leroux}.
\item[\textsuperscript{32}] Hustvedt, \textit{Medical muses : hysteria in nineteenth-century Paris}.
\item[\textsuperscript{33}] Ian Hacking, \textit{Mad travelers : reflections on the reality of transient mental illnesses} (Charlottesville ; London: University Press of Virginia, 1998).
\end{itemize}
psychiatry". This distinction hardly applies to fin-de-siecle discussions of mental disturbances.

The nuances of the work of Freud's professor - Jean Marie Charcot illustrate this lack of clear division between "scientific" and "humanist" approach to mental disturbances. On the one hand Charcot was a neurologist, he is widely recognized as one of the founders of the discipline\(^{34}\), from 1882 until his death in 1893 he held the chair of the first department of neurology in the world (the second chair in neurology was created in Sweden in 1887\(^{35}\)). He made important contributions to research on multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease. Together with his student he discovered and explained one syndrome, that still bears his name today (Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease). In his understanding of hysteria, and indeed, in his understanding of psychic disturbances in general, he subscribed to materialist view which stated that all mental illnesses are caused by disturbances of nervous system (organic lesions).

Aside from his materialist leanings Charcot had a different interests. He became famous mostly through his experiments with hypnosis. Moreover he believed in therapeutic and clinical use of photography, he inspired the enterprise to create highly stylized and aesthetically refined series of photographs of his patients, and is convinced that this is a real contribution to the development of knowledge. Aside from this he edits a book about representations of madness in fine arts. Even more interestingly he experiments with some surprisingly strange, innovative and highly refined therapeutic techniques, which today would bring attention of art house cinema directors such as Peter Greenaway. Charcot experiments with literally writing on the body of his patients in Salpetriere. He encourages in practice of inscribing and words and sentences with blunt stylus on naked body of female hysterics. This is based on the assumption that skin of hysterical women is highly sensitive so that even the slight touch of stylus leaves a trace. Therefore interns and doctors in Salpetriere actually wrote different things on backs or chests of their patients, photographed those writings and discussed the strange hysterical

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\(^{34}\) Julien Bogousslavsky, Following Charcot : a forgotten history of neurology and psychiatry  (Basel: Karger, 2011).

\(^{35}\) Petteri Pietikäinen, Neurosis and modernity : the age of nervousness in Sweden  (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2007). 42.
sensitivity of their skin in scientific papers. Some argued that writing on the body can be a form of hysterical suggestion, by writing some phrases the doctor can influence the patient just like a hypnotist.

As Georges Didi Huberman notes, hysteria in Salpetriere appears most of all as particular form of spectacle, a spectacle of pain. The figure of great psychiatrist Charcot to a stage director. The spectacle is most of all visual and it turns case into an element of *tableau* (tableau in French both a painting and a scene and a table which organizes data). As Didi-Huberman notes:

> “Not a single biographer of Charcot fails to insist on his artistic competence” and “taste”, nor on his vocation as a painter”.

Huberman argues that case studies in XIX century tend to turn knowledge of the world into a picture. The crucial role in the process is played by photography, which accordingly to the directors of the clinic registers the objective, neutral external reality.

At the same time all biographers agree that Charcot’s approach to medicine was influenced most of all by Claude Bernard’s treatise on clinical observation, a book which also played a decisive role in the philosophical turn to positivism.

Charcot's complicated personality, divided between neurology and arts and philosophy is by no means untypical for the century. Pierre Janet for instance wrote philosophical treatises and he was a close friend of philosopher Henry Bergson. In this context Freud's progression from neurologist through electrotherapy and hypnosis to his own unique method of treatment appear less surprising then it may seem. They appear to be a part of wider search for identity within newly created disciplines of neurology and psychiatry. Neurology was not yet materialist strict science, it wasn't clearly defined and divided from arts and humanities. Neither Charcot, Janet nor Freud can be easily ascribed to humanist psychology or neurobiological psychiatry. The knowledge about pathological individuals that is produced in clinics and private practices of XIX century cannot be limited to scientific neurology, it is closely tied with art and literature.

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38 Ibid.26
Now, this is not how things are presented in typical histories of the clinic. Received view on the question and normal and pathological (I'm thinking about perspective elaborated by Georges Canguilhem and later developed by Michel Foucault) tends to assume that the establishment of medical norms leads to repression of pathological. According to this understanding of case studies invention of madness in modern age led to foreclosure of everything that appeared different to western reason. Mentally ill subjects were closed in totalitarian institutions, which closely resembled prisons. From this perspective writing of case study may only appear as yet another attempt to define the other which has to be marked as deficient and excluded. It may only serve to reestablish the division between normal and pathological and exclude the latter. If someone is reduced to being a case he is reduced to the status of pathological passive being, he loses his own will, and is objectified by medical discourse.

This view seems to omit all the complications, nuances and paradoxical effects of clinical discourse on mental disturbances. Yes, doctors assumed that the subjects of case studies were pathological, but within pathology itself one could distinguish different grades of norm. The most typical pathology, a pathology which displayed symptoms in a most refined and clear manner, was indeed raised to a status of specific perfection, it represented an idea of disturbance, it was presented as true approximation of concept of illness.

Clearly then the distinction between normal and pathological, and the social political implications of this distinction, should be reconsidered. One may suggest that some patients established norms of pathology and as such they acquired an exceptional status which distinguished them from others.

39 Typical Foucauldian account of the birth of psychiatry goes as follows: "Early- to mid-twentieth-century efforts to understand and engineer the mind to prevent social defiance (and to shape and elicit the desires of potential customers) led to popularization of psychology and psychiatry beyond the bounds of the institution of the clinic. New technologies of the self emerged as individuals were instructed in, and readily adopted, the practices of mental hygiene. (...) psychiatric institutions and prisons remained important disciplinary spaces for enclosing those deemed incapable of criminal tendencies. Sovereign power was exercised by psychiatrists, judges, and medical practitioners in their diagnoses, judgments and treatments of such individuals". Majia Holmer Nadesan, Governmentality, biopower, and everyday life (London: Routledge, 2008).
4. Literature and power

If doctors produce some form of literature about their patients this production often takes place in context of specific relationships of power between parties involved. There is no doubt that case study as such grows out of particular techniques of observation. The modes of production of knowledge about individuals are clearly unique and are closely tied with the development of bureaucracy and particular techniques of power. At some point in history writing of case study simply became a requirement. The movement of "moral treatment" of mentally ill patients inaugurated by Pinel played an important role in this process. Of course specific date of introduction of this requirement differs across European countries. In Great Britain, to take only one example, the most important legal act which transformed case study into a requirement was accepted by parliament in 1845\textsuperscript{40}. The so called “Lunacy Act” was a result of public indignation at miserable and shocking conditions in asylums. “Lunatics Act” officially obliged all asylum physicians to keep case studies of all patients. It specified an exact format of the case study and even determined a fine for all asylums keepers who did not kept the records in a form specified by the authorities\textsuperscript{41}.

Requirement to keep detailed records on each individual patient were introduces together with institution of mental asylum. Asylums were introduced in order to improve conditions of mentally disturbed individuals. The epoch before asylums is sometimes presented in a somewhat idyllic terms. The idea of "great confinement" may trick some students of history of madness into thinking that this period was preceded by some form of freedom or opening. Of course first psychiatrists and administrators of asylums had other perspective on this problem. They were concerned about potential for abuse of mentally ill patients. Chief of psychiatric hospital in Würzburg in Germany, for instance, relates that before getting to asylum, one of his patients was kept in pigpen for years, he was given a food for pigs and lost the ability to use his limbs. Still other patient had been chained by his wife to a wall for years on end, and as a result was paralyzed from waist down. When some of patients of Würzburg returned from the hospital they were publicly

\textsuperscript{40} In France similar role was played by the so called "Law of 30 June 1838". Goldstein, "Psychiatry."

\textsuperscript{41} Berkenkotter, Patient tales : case histories and the uses of narrative in psychiatry: 74.
ridiculed, youths were running around them spatting on them and yelling and laughing. As Edward Shorter relates in Ireland in 1817 one of the members of Irish parliament gives an account of treatment of mentally ill in Irish villages at the time. According to his relation it was customary to dig a large hole beneath the floor of the cabin, not big enough for the person to stand inside it, and covered with large crib, someone who was considered mad was simply thrown into this hole, tied, and forced to spend his life there\(^2\).

Beginnings of asylums and requirements to keep notes on each patient led emergence of official practice of regular examination of each individual. One may say that precisely this official and obligatory examination accompanied by different procedures for keeping records about given pathological individual is the beginning of real case study.

“The examination, surrounded by all its documentary techniques, makes each individual a ‘case’: a case which at one and the same time constitutes an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power. The case (...) is the individual as he may be described, judged, measured, compared with others, in his very individuality.”\(^3\)

An individual then becomes an element of knowledge and a unit of power. This is closely tied with the growth of discursive network about mental pathologies.

How did those examinations look like? In Salpetriere Jean Marie Charcot:

"would seat himself near a table and immediately call for the patient who was to be studied. The patient was then completely undressed. The intern would read a clinical summary of the case, while the master listened attentively. Then there was a long silence, during which Charcot looked, kept looking at the patient while tapping his fingers on the table. (...) After a while he would request the patient to make a movement; he would induce him to speak; he would ask that his reflexes be examined (...) This type of meticulous


clinical scrutiny, particularly of visual type, was at the root of all Charcot's discoveries. The artist in him, who went hand in hand with the physician, played an interesting part in these discoveries.”

One can hardly imagine more cruel and objectifying form of diagnosis. Why did Charcot expected to see his patients, most of them women, naked? Neurologists today probably don't ask their patients to undress at the beginning of examination. It is difficult to understand what kind of knowledge about neurological disturbance can one gather from viewing naked body of the patient. Organic lesions, which according to some doctors of the time, were the cause of hysteria were most of the time considered to be related to brain and nervous system, it is obvious that they could not be detected by the examination of the body. How were they undressed? Were they asked to undress or were they undressed by interns? The report is obviously pointing at differences between medical ethics of today and the one of XIX century.

But again let's note the accent on art which is placed by Charcot's pupils who write memoirs about those unforgettable examinations. "The artist in him who went hand in hand with the physician, played an interesting part in these discoveries" - quite a surprising reminiscence about neurologist. As we have noted the artists expressed himself through his projects of taking photographs of patients. A journal - *Photographic Iconography of Salpetriere* was published between 1877-1880, it was solely devoted to visual appearance of hysterics, we owe George Didi-Huberman a fascinating study of this subject.

It is probably not surprising that in most cases the subjects who were photographed were women, most of them came from working class, almost all of them experienced extreme forms of violence (e.g. Blanche was raped when she was thirteen, her siblings died when she was a child, her father suffered from schizophrenia). Starting from this recognition it is easy to argue that photography was simply one of those oppressive practices, which made clinical psychiatry of nineteenth century such a dangerous and grim institution. Some have drawn such a conclusion. Georges Didi-Huberman for instance notes analogy between practices of Salpetriere and police (which

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44 This is a relation of witnesses of Charcot's examinations, his pupils A. Souques and Henry Meige, quoted in Georges Guillain, *J M Charcot 1825-1893 : his life - his work* ([S.l.]: Pitman Medical, 1959). 22.
at this time was working on developing techniques for identifying individuals), as he says both “were sustained by the same hopes”\textsuperscript{45}. The desire to turn case into an element of tableau is related to striving to master, to subsume it under general categories, reduce it somehow to two-dimensional place of Cartesian space.

If we now compare Freud's own therapy with practices of Salpetriere the difference appears striking. The oppressive setting of the clinic is replaced with apparently tranquil and comfortable environment of analyst office with the famous couch at its centre. This difference in setting seems to justify partly the claim that Freud actually began to listen instead of simply investigating the naked body of his patients looking for some almost mythical lesion that causes mental disturbances. At the same time Freud's office is structured around rather different vector of power - money. In fact when Freud reflects on his abandonment of neurology he invokes exactly this financial aspect:

"[abandoning neurology] was of little importance. For on the one hand the prospects in the treatment of such disorders were in any case never promising, while on the other hand, in the private practice of a physician working in a large town, the quantity of such patients was nothing compared to the crowds of neurotics, whose number seems further multiplied by the manner in which they hurried, with their troubles unsolved, from one physician to another"\textsuperscript{46}

Two things are important in this quote. First of all there is the relation of continuity/discontinuity between neurology and psychoanalysis. Freud claims that he abandoned neurology and began to engage in psychoanalysis as if psychoanalysis were a totally separate pursuit, which does not have anything in common with neurology. Secondly Freud claims that there was a great crowd of people in Vienna who thought that they suffered from a new form of mental disturbance, they probably considered themselves to be neurotic or neurasthenic. We may add to this, that this newly emerging market of mental illness appeared profitable to private practitioner so he took the chance and responded to popular demand. Freud was not the only one who recognized this trend, it was perceived by contemporaries of Freud. Otto Biswanger, confirms that the situation


\textsuperscript{46} SE 20, 28-29.
looked very similar in Berlin, he stated that doctors offices were virtually packed with "veritable army of neurasthenic city dwellers"47.

The presence of this crowd of neurotics seem to justify Foucault's claim about philosophical aspirations of medicine (neurology, psychiatry). In a way this social group was a product of specific culture created around mental disturbances at the end of XIX century.

First thing to note here is that the emergence of neurotic patient who wanders around on streets of large city is closely tied with the development of out-patient psychiatric clinics. When the category of neurosis was first invented by William Cullen it was of course considerably vague but it didn't really refer to relatively mild disturbances that were considered to be neurotic at the end of XIX century. Psychiatry was for the most part of its history concerned with violent outbursts and serious disturbances, Pinel's case studies are almost invariably concerned with what we would today call full-blown psychoses or schizophrenias. At some point tough psychiatry opened itself up to lighter forms of mental disturbances. Beard's invention of neurasthenia or as it was otherwise called "American nervousness" or simply "Mental exhaustion" was one of the crucial points here. This disturbance became one of the first mental categories which were widely diffused and popularized by mass media.

At the same time despite different dynamics of power at play - marked by authority of clinical context in one case and implied privacy and social contract of analytic therapy in the other - psychoanalysis retains its links with clinical discourse. In a way it grows out of this discourse raises it to a different level, as one contemporary analyst puts it psychoanalysis grows of experience of encounter with the patient (and this encounter is central for clinic as well):

"The clinic of out of which psychoanalysis has developed, the crucible for its concepts and its practices, is thus a metaphorical space surrounding live encounter. This liveliness is necessary for it and integral to the process that go

on within it. Anything else, therefore, is not psychoanalysis, however much appeal there is to the language or theoretical constructs of psychoanalysis.\footnote{Stephen Frosh, \textit{Psychoanalysis outside the clinic: interventions in psychosocial studies} (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). 4.}

According to this view, expressed by Stephen Frosh all political, literary or cultural uses and abuses of psychoanalysis should be carefully distinguished from psychoanalysis itself. At the same time Frosh does not deny that psychoanalytic ideas have been taken outside of the clinic, he also does not question in any way the fruitfulness of such transfer. He simply claims that all cultural consequences of psychoanalysis are somehow related to clinical encounter with the individual, an encounter which is typical for clinical medicine.

The presence of money changes the balance of power between the two sides of the process. Charcot was able to objectify his patients because most of them came from lower classes and his hospital was offering them free treatment. In this setting he had almost absolute power. Families of patients usually did not interfere in any way with therapy. This kind of setting made different types of abuse possible, and indeed historians of Charcot report multiple cases of sexual harassment of inmates.

Obviously therapy with patients who came from middle or higher classes and were able to offer a substantial remuneration to doctor was regulated by different balance of power. Competition between different forms of therapy, different schools and methods, enhanced position of the patient. The emergence of market for psychotherapy takes place at the end of XIX century. Patients had the right to choose therapy which suited them and they made frequent use of this right.

5. Analytic suspicion

We see therefore that case studies can be seen as specific type of writing, writing that emerges in some specific cultural, political, social conditions. Freud's case studies are of course different from case studies written by administrative staff of asylums yet they both grow from similar tradition, they participate in a cultural current common to their time. Psychoanalytic case studies are an act of writing, but most of all they involve an attempt at understanding. They are exercises in interpretation. Now, what kind of
interpretation is it? What are the defining features of this types of interpretation? In the following section I would like to investigate the specific type of hermeneutics that is at play in analytic case studies.

Case studies are novels about an act of analysis, they are stories about adventures of interpretation. In this respect they resemble detective novels, or more specifically analytic detective fiction. The term is used by John T. Irwin in a fascinating book on Poe, Borges and Lacan to refer to specific type of detective fiction which focuses most of all on processes of analysis by means of deduction and inference. Analytic detective fiction is different from those types of detective fiction in which the central point is love and adventure. The classic examples of analytic fiction are Dupin novels by Edgar Alan Poe or well known Sherlock Holmes Novel by Arthur Conan Doyle. As Irwin notes in many of those novels the detective is not involved in any form of dangerous and risky endeavors. He does not face cruel and powerful villains nor does he meet beautiful women. Most of the time he analyzes traces, the activity of thinking and investigating is the main object of the novel. In this respect we may say that analytic detective novels are stories about interpretation.

The links between analytic fiction and the clinical gaze are close and interesting. The most famous author of detective novels Arthur Conan Doyle was a practicing physician, he modeled the figure of Sherlock Holmes on his teacher Joseph Bell, a surgeon from Edinburgh Hospital. Bell had the habit of making particularly acute remarks about his patient, he was able to infer multiplicity of details about people from tiny details of their behavior.

The parallels between detective novels, clinical medicine and psychoanalysis are interestingly analyzed by Carlo Ginzburg. Gizburg actually draws a broader parallel demonstrating the analogies between Sherlock Holmes, Giovanni Morelli and Freud. Giovanni Morelli was an Italian physician pseudonymously published a highly influential

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and controversial article on identification of paintings\(^5\). Morelli's method, employed by historians of art throughout XX century, attempted to identify painting by most minor details, which were executed by a painter almost by force of habit, without conscious effort. His article about identification of paintings was full of images of hands, ear lobes, fingers, and all other small details of paintings. All those elements were different in different painters, yet most viewers did not pay attention to them, they were too minor to be spotted by most viewers. At the basis of his method Morelli correctly identified many paintings in European collections. It turned out that one can really identify a painting by Rafael by very attentively analyzing fingertips or even nails. For instance some Renaissance painters had the tendency to paint fingernails in particular style, they left traces of dirt on the fingers, or the fingers had particular shape. Morelli's method was shocking for most XIX century art lovers because it presupposed that an artist's personality expresses itself precisely in those minor, apparently unimportant elements which can go completely unnoticed. Most art historians of the time were furious that an amateur lover of art without formal degree in humanities (not even masters!) is able to identify a painting by looking at dirt between a fingernail of a famous painting. Morelli argued that a talented forger is able to imitate the general tone and most characteristic elements of a painting of great master, but he can't imitate triviality. Therefore, surprisingly and shockingly for most historians of art, it is triviality of unnoticed details which gives the most secure, certain way of determining the influence of a hand of great artist.

There is little doubt that Morelli’s method resembles clinical gaze. The viewer of the painting (of a detective) is expected to examine the smallest details of the outward appearance of the subject in order to detect signs of some inner process. At the same time Morelli’s method is clearly a particular perverse displacement of clinical gaze. It is terrifying that that medical gaze can be applied even to objects which appear completely remote from its range. One can easily understand how threatened and horrified art historians must have felt. Physicist looking at paintings appears to be a bizarre and

perverse creature; his interest in fingertips and earlobes appears completely strange and at odds with the true value of art.

Now what is crucial for our analysis is the link between Freud and Morelli. We owe to Carlo Ginzburg the recognition of this link. Both authors share not only the love of art, but a desire to transmute or pervert clinical method in order to raise it to the level of art. Freud openly recognizes his debt to Morelli in his essay on Michelangelo:

"It seems to me that his method of inquiry is closely related to the technique of psychoanalysis. It, too, is accustomed to divine secret and concealed things from despised or unnoticed features, from the rubbish-heap, as it were, of our observations (...) The passage quoted above assures Giovanni Morelli of a special place in the history of psychoanalysis."

To detect individuality from some scattered details. To raise individual pathology to the status of art. This is perhaps the most interesting definition of case study. It aims precisely at this: to describe an individual by means of thick description of unnoticed traits.

From this point of view Freud appears to be a student of Charcot - Charcot was most of all an artist, his examinations were examinations of painter observing his models. Visual metaphor, so important for Charcot, is equally important for Freud. Not only hearing but also gaze plays a crucial role for psychoanalysis.

We should also note that Freud was probably just as ashamed of this attempt to apply clinical gaze to great painter such as Michelangello, as Morelli was ashamed of his own method (at least at the beginning). Both authors have published their works on art under different names, and it was only later discovered that the essays belonged to them.

At the same time it appears clear that this approach resembles hermeneutics of suspicion, especially in its motivation to unmask, uncover, reveal the deep causal links. As Ginzburg interestingly points out Morelli and Freud assume that:

"Reality is opaque; but there are certain points-clues,symptoms-which allow us to decipher it. This idea, which is at the heart of semiotic paradigm, has made itself a place in a wide range of intellectual contexts, most deeply
affecting the human sciences. (...) The discipline of psychoanalysis, as we have seen, is based on the hypothesis that apparently negligible details can reveal deep and significant phenomena.\textsuperscript{52}

Clinical gaze, which expresses itself in Morelli is thus governed by particular attention to signs. Actions and behaviors are significant, everything has a meaning, even the most trivial facts. Just like Sherlock Holmes finds a murderer by means of careful investigation of tiny observation so does a doctor and an analyst infer some conclusions about disturbance from tiny perceptions.

Ginzburg associates psychoanalysis with semiotic paradigm, this may appear misleading, perhaps we should clarify the meaning of signs here. I'd like to turn to Jacques Lacan for a brief moment and investigate his fascination with Edgar Allan Poe's "Purloined Letter", which gave rise to famous "Seminar On Purloined Letter".

We should note that in his presentation of specific traits of psychoanalytic understanding of language Lacan turns precisely to a literary genre that we have discussed so far - he turns to a classic work of analytic detective fiction, a work in which the whole action revolves around the act of thinking and analyzing. Moreover he turns to a writer who is fascinated with epistemology. Dupin's adventures can hardly be compared with what we usually consider to be a detective fiction. As a matter of fact there is hardly any adventure in them. They are instead filled with elaborate epistemological reflections on the process of thinking, understanding and identification with the other.

Dupin is a master investigator, he is able to determine the associations of his friend with utmost accuracy. Poe illustrates his point with the following story. Dupin and his friend walked around Paris at night. At some point Dupin expressed a comment about their common friend: "He is a very little fellow, that's true, and would do better for the Theatre de Variete"\textsuperscript{53}. At first sight: nothing surprising. Yet narrator is greatly surprised since this is exactly the thought that he had in mind at the moment. It seems then that Dupin had guessed his thought. How was that possible? Dupin simply was able to divine his thoughts by observing carefully his friend's face, the events that were happening during the walk and the influence of their last conversation. Dupin simply traced

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 109.

associations and related simple, apparently chance events of their walk to their past talks. Quite importantly for Lacan, Dupin focused mainly on consonance between words, he focused on signifiers, for instance the word “stereoscopy” which his friend muttered quietly with regard to pebbles led his to infer that he thought about Epicurean doctrines.

This strategy of tracing associations in a rigorous way constitutes “acumen” which is distinguished by Dupin from mere cunning or intelligence. Parisian police, so able in searching the house of minister in “Purloined Letter”, has cunning but does not have this acumen. Acumen relies precisely on an assumption that truth is superficial,

"There is such thing as being too profound. Truth is not always in a well. In fact as regards the more important knowledge, I do believe that she is invariably superficial. (...) by undue profundity we perplex and enfeeble thought” 54.

says Dupin. It seems that this ability to trace associations is precisely something that Freud recommends as his method of analyzing free associations by focusing precisely on surface of consciousness. What Dupin calls "acumen" is called "evenly suspended attention" by Freud.

"Experience soon showed that the attitude which the analytic physician could most advantageously adopt was to surrender himself to his own unconscious mental activity, in a state of evenly suspended attention, to avoid so far as possible reflection and the construction of conscious expectations, not to try to fix anything he heard particularly in his memory, and by these means to catch the drift of the patient's unconscious with his own unconscious" 55.

Analyst then strives to catch the drift of his patient, he attempts to follow his associations and understand their direction and origin. This attempt at identification resembles Dupin's strategy of following his friends thoughts. Let’s also stress this enigmatic formula “the drift of patient’s unconscious” – this seems to give an image of desire or drive as a sort of fluid being which moves on the threshold of visibility, it seems to be a kind of tune, mood to which analyst should attune to. Perhaps we can illustrate

54 Ibid., 178.
55 SE 18, p.239.
this driving force of the real with a short story of Kafka, invoked by Judith Butler\textsuperscript{56}. In it the hero is condemned to death by drowning by his father, and he feels himself compelled to follow this command. Kafka’s expresses this impersonal necessity by means of curious formula “trieb es ihn”, translated as he was “driven toward”. According to Lacan’s formula we may well understand this as an essence of drive (Trieb). A drive appears to be a force, which directs and forces us to into some direction; this force is created by some impersonal constellation which “presided over” our birth or early life. The “he was driven to” expresses perfectly well the compulsive and uncontrollable force, which led Ratman to attempt to pay back his debt.

Poe's detective stories elaborate on this attempt to identify with the Other. The narrator provides us with a whole theory of how this process is possible and how one can develop one's skills in it. Poe's stresses that Dupin is fond of whist: “proficiency in whist implies capacity for success in all those more important undertakings where mind struggles with mind”\textsuperscript{57}. Whist requires one to guess what kind of cards an opponent has, and this is can be gauged by attentive observation of all, even the most trivial, apparently accidental, details of behavior of other players. Now this seems to be directly relevant for Lacan, who compares psychoanalysis with bridge\textsuperscript{58}. As as we know whist was a prototype of bridge. What is typical for bridge is also typical for whist and it consists of the necessity of guessing the cards of other players. How can player guess those cards?

Of course only on the basis of what is thrown on the table and on the basis of trivial, apparently minor details of face expressions, gestures and so on. Cards thrown at the table may appear to be purely a result of chance, just like the symptoms. Yet to attentive eye of the analyst it is clear that it is an element of game, that there is certain strategy hidden beneath a chance move. It seems that one may understand this particular concept of chance emerging from bridge and applied to psychoanalysis by taking an analysis of bridge from von Neumann "Game Theory and Economic Behavior", one of the works which was quite relevant for Lacan at the time of seminar on “Purloined Letter”.


\textsuperscript{57} Poe, \textit{Selected writings}: 163.

According to von Neumann and Morgenstern the necessity of communication in bridge is a result of a structure of the game in which one player is in fact "split" into two (this is exactly a term that von Neumann uses). Of course bridge is always played by four persons A,B,C,D, yet they always form alliances: A with C, and B with D. A cannot by any means cooperate with B or D but it must cooperate with C. Yet A and C do not know their cards they can only sends signals to each other. If no knowledge of cards of A is available at C, but if C can in principle observe move x made by A, and this move x has been influenced by cards of A then x is really a signal from A to C, it is a device which relays information. Therefore splitting the player up in bridge leads to "forgetfulness of that player" and it also leads to communication by means of obscure signals. Something which looks like chance for eyes of external observer is an element of strategy. This analysis of chance in bridge seems to prove that psychoanalysis, just like conjectural sciences, relies on an assumption that there is a “sacred geometry of chance, the hidden law of probable outcome” (o use Sting’s words); and one indeed should treat the game of psychoanalytic bridge as a meditation played in order to “find the answer”. As a matter of fact Sting’s song deals exactly with this Lacanian problem of identification which consists of masking oneself by means of “apparent chances”, concealing cards in a hand “while the memory of [them] fades”. Memory of chances fades precisely because of constant repetition of actions which are effected by primal scene, or the decisive event, decisive chance. In this way unconscious becomes a part of something which is ineffable in our daily life, something prehistoric which gives shape to our individual histories.

In any case bridge and whist are all attempts to master signs, to give meaning to what is apparently meaningless, to infer some far reaching consequences from tiny details. One aspect of Dupin's mode of investigation which appears relevant in his context involves his critique of depth and defense of attention to surface. Poe's does not believe that truth is profound, he argues that it is superficial, visible to everyone who is able to see. This may appear to contrast with psychoanalysis who is often associated with some form of depth psychology. The contrast however is misleading. In his description of analytic process Freud is invariably attracted to structures of complicated and

multilayered surfaces - he compares unconscious to magical writing pad\textsuperscript{60}, but perhaps more interestingly in his early writings he speaks about strange structure of neurotic thinking:

"The logical chain corresponds not only to zig-zag, twisted line, but rather to ramifying system of lines and more particularly to a converging one. It contains nodal points at which two or more threads meets and thereafter proceed as one; and as a rule several threads which run independently, or which are connected at various points by side-paths, debouch into nucleus. To put this in other, it is very remarkable how often symptom is determined in a several ways, is 'overdetermined'\textsuperscript{61}

Symptoms then appear to be a system of converging lines. It seems clear that this understanding of unconscious "space" is rather far from simplified image of surface and depth. Psychical apparatus looks more like a network made of various paths that converge at some points. The structuring role is played by nucleus, but it appears that despite first associations with the term nucleus this nucleus is not at the centre but rather can only be detected in scattered series of nodal points. In other words nucleus seems to be dispersed in nodes of the spider web of associations.

When Freud reflects on this geometry of unconscious he comes up with the image of irregular zig-zag line path, just like in a knight's move problem, associations are arranged according to a twisted line, which goes differently in every case, it is neither straight nor curved line, but a line which moves in a interrupted irregular way across different layers of psychical material, broken line passes in a roundabout way from periphery to nucleus, yet it would advance toward nucleus, touching at every halting point -

"a line resembling zig-zag line in the solution of Knight's Move problem, which cuts across the squares in the diagram of chess-board".

The knight's move problem, invoked by Freud here refers probably to a question whether this movement is finite or infinite. That is exactly the question in this

\textsuperscript{60} SE 19.
\textsuperscript{61} SE 2, page 290.
mathematical paradox: will knight return to a point from which it departed after skipping through all possible chess field? While it is possible for a knight to return to his previous position it is not known how many routes are there through which knight can pass.

In clinical practice this leads to innumerable attempts to describe the diverse individuality of the patient. We can see this peculiar sort of fascination with case when we look at Freud's reflections about his own cases, it appears that analysis is infinite and ultimately impossible precisely because there are always some surfaces that are not fully analyzed, the surface in which there is no depth, but only an infinite complications of paths.

“It was impossible to unravel this tissue of phantasy thread by thread, the therapeutic success of the treatment was precisely what stood in the way of this. The patient recovered and his ordinary life began to assert its claims, there were many tasks before him, which (…) were incompatible with a continuation of the treatment. (…) The scientific results of psycho-analysis are at present only a by-product of its therapeutic aims, and for that reason it is often in those cases were treatment fails that most discoveries are made”62

It almost appears that normal life of the patient is a threat to analyst; normality distracts the patient from the task of attending to his own unconscious and all deep and hidden fantasies which lurk there. One can almost say that normality is a pathological disturbance. What is even more interesting however is the comparison of fantasy to a material, cloth or texture that has to be unraveled. Fantasy appears to be a surface which needs to be divided into pieces, "unraveled thread by thread".

The influential interpretation of psychoanalysis which states that it represents a model case of hermeneutics of suspicion should be placed in this context. Freud's cases are exercises in suspicion, but it's a suspicion of analytic detective who carefully examines each trace because he knows that this trace is a sign that can lead to elucidation of causes of crime.

When we view Freud's works as exercises in hermeneutics of suspicion we place him between Marx and Nietzsche. Paul Ricoeur, who first used this term in reference to Freud, argued that his method is essentially destructive and negative and should be

62 SE 10, 207-208.
opposed to positive hermeneutics. Particular meaning of hermeneutics of suspicion is developed by Ricouer by means of contrast between medieval science of interpretation, which drawing from Aristotle focused mainly on explaining the content of a text; on giving an account of text. This type of hermeneutics is intrinsically bound with reading of the Bible which aims at presenting a message of God to a believer. The other type of hermeneutics emerges in opposition to this tradition and postulates a radical unmasking, demystification, dispelling of illusion (Ricoeur 1970, 27). One may observe that both types of hermeneutics are intrinsically bound with each other. Suspicion is meaningful only in so far as there is a believer; without those who believe in idols there's no job for radical critic of illusions. Hermeneutics of suspicion emerges in the west in particular modern historical context, the church loses its power over believers; yet the power is still strong enough to make it a worthy object of attack for secular intellectuals. Ricouer argues that this trio had successfully undermined the validity of Cartesian cogito. Their main methodological device is a particular insistence on necessity of "deciphering" as opposed to mere exposition of an object of a text. Marx, Nieztsche and Freud assume that a text needs to be deciphered, it hides its double meaning beyond deceptive appearances.

Foucault tries to define hermeneutics of suspicion by means of four characteristics: particular understanding of depth; infinite character of interpretation; rejection of absolute beginning; and particular self-referentially. When Foucault point a new understanding of depth that he traces in hermeneutics of suspicion he thinks about curious structure of space of signs that is presupposed by hermeneutics of suspicion. This space is structured in a hierarchical way, there are artificial layers, and deeper layers; and the deeper ones play the role of cause or basis of other layers. Interpretation is compared to delving into water or playing the role of archeologist who excavates archaic site in search of remnants of the past. On the other hand tough for Freud, Nietzsche and Marx depth appears to be just another layer, just another artificial structure, which hides yet another and another lines of investigation. Every depth turns out to be just an artificial layer. This strange character of space of signs leads to a second feature of modern suspicion – infinite character of interpretation. If there is no real depth, and every depth is just a cover for something else than there is no end to interpretation. Interpretation resembles the play with Russian matrioszka, every time one opens the box in expectation
of some core or essence one finds another toy, structured in the same way as the other. Therefore there is no real end to interpretation, there's no absolute being which to which one would arrive at the end of the whole process. One is left with infinite play of artificial appearances. The last feature of suspicion is linked to its narcissistic or egocentric character – suspicion always somehow involves the interpreter himself.

6. **Individuality of signs**

One interesting process that can be seen in case studies is the gradual merging of personality of the patient with the literary description of the symptoms. It seems as if the person of a patient becomes somehow representative of illness, case reduces individuality of the patient to a status of sign. The symptoms describe in language of doctors shadow all other aspects of personality

“The symptom gradually comes to be the representative of important interest; it is found to be useful in asserting the position of the self and becomes more and more closely merged with the ego and more and more indispensable to it.”

An illness becomes part of ego, symptoms are closely integrated with personality, in a way they become necessary and indispensable. Descriptions merges with reality, there is no hint which allows one to distinguish between the two.

What is perhaps most stunning is the presence of this process in consciousness of the patient. In a way patients identify with what is written about them, they find truth in stories told about them. Dora's approach to her own case study seems to be very interesting and perhaps even representative to some extent. If we read most of the commentaries to her case, written by friends and foes of psychoanalysis alike, we may be tempted to think that Dora was a victim of Freud. Even proponents of psychoanalysis recognize that therapy was too short, marked by dangerous and inappropriate patriarchal stereotypes of Freud. Dora wasn’t really cured; she broke the therapy on her own; in a word she was exposed to clearly inefficient treatment of Freud who was clearly rather experimenting with new methods at the time; and he did not have clear guidelines yet.

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63 SE 20, 100.
It might therefore appear surprising that Dora was actually proud of being a Freud’s case. Deutsch met Ida Bauer 24 years after her psychoanalysis with Freud. At the time of their meeting she had a son, was married, but felt unhappy and complained about neurotic symptoms. She certainly wasn't cured by Freud. Surprisingly tough this did not diminish her appreciation and happiness at being Freud's case, as Deutsch recalls, at one moment during the visit:

“The patient then began to chat in flirtatious manner, inquiring whether I was an analyst and whether I knew Professor Freud. I asked her in turn whether she knew him and whether he had ever treated her. As if having waited for this cue, she quickly replied that she was the “Dora” case (...) She forgot to talk about her sickness, displaying great pride in having been written up as a famous case in psychiatric literature. (...) Then she discussed Freud’s interpretation of her two dreams and asked my opinion about it”

As we see the patient was so proud of being Freud’s case that she completely forgot about her own illness. Isn't that amazing? It almost looks as if being the object of Freud's attention was the most important event of her life. Her light and flirtatious behavior suggest some element of seduction, her discussion of her own dreams clearly implies that she thought Freud’s interpretation through and was open to discuss it with others. In this short scene Dora displays none of the characteristics which were ascribed to her by all those who wrote about her. Most commentators suggest that Freud was unconsciously attracted to Dora, and for some reason they see it as Freud’s fault or sin as if being attracted to someone was a priori bad even if nothing follows from this attraction. Others assume that Dora was passive and Freud somehow mastered the situation. In a scene with Deutsch Dora nicely contradicts this image, perhaps her therapy was enjoyable for her precisely because such a famous doctors as Sigmund Freud was attracted to her and she almost seduced him by speaking about her sexual dreams and fantasies?

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We may draw an interesting parallel between Dora and Krafft-Ebbing patients. The work is typically condemned as another instance of normalizing bio-politics and associated with all political positions which appear repugnant to progressive left-leaning western intellectuals of today. This harsh judgment fails to notice the real social and cultural position of sexual science at the time. It suffices to say that Krafft-Ebing he received about 400 hundred letters from all around the world; most of them contained autobiographical accounts of various types of perversions.\textsuperscript{65}

All those subjects, who wrote letters to Krafft-Ebing were not really terrified or paralyzed by Krafft-Ebing discourse. They spontaneously decided to write down their own desires and symptoms and share them with anonymously with the expert. The tone of those letters is interesting in its mixture of submissiveness and self-enjoyment:

“\textit{Altough I fear to annoy you, Sir, with my letter (…) I still trustingly turn to you, hoping that a layman might report something to the scholar that is not entirely without interest: even the most inconspicuous thing may gain importance in the right place and may be worthy of scholarly attention}”\textsuperscript{66}

In next paragraphs author proceeds to describe his sexual life with utmost detail focusing especially on his fetishes and enjoyment of masochistic practices. All those subjects who wrote letters to Krafft-Ebing (and he actually quotes multiple instances of those letters in his writings), were apparently neither afraid nor reluctant or ashamed to speak about their perverse sexuality. On the contrary, they displayed a desire to write about it, they enjoyed writing letters about their intimate life, even though they knew or suspected that it is illicit. There seems to be an implicit pact between sexologist and his patient.

This seems to suggest that the relationship between patients and their doctors, or to put it in more general terms, between subjects and power, was much more complicated and nuance then most of accounts of the problem seem to suggest. Patients actively provoke the discourse about them, they are the engineers of the sexual science itself, the doctors actually caters to their tastes by describing their quirks in his magnificent “\textit{Psychopathia Sexualis}”. As Harry Oosterhuis points out:

\textsuperscript{65} Oosterhuis, \textit{Stepchildren of nature : Krafft-Ebing, psychiatry, and the making of sexuality identity}.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 1.
“Krafft-Ebing case histories can be viewed as specific version of modern (auto)biographical genre as it originated in the eighteenth century and came to full development in nineteenth century”

The cases were similar to autobiography in that they indulged in particular presentation of “truth” about oneself. This seems to resemble the processes described by Michel Foucault in “History of Sexuality” - sexuality is constituted as site of truth, as something which reveals personal essence about the life of the individual. Patients unconsciously shared this assumption, they were convinced that by writing down their sexual experiences they are representing their true and hidden nature, which is different from “artificial”, “fake” social mask. This contrast between inner truth and social appearance seems to be justified by the necessity of hiding perverse desires in conservative Victorian society. In most European countries homosexuality was still considered an offence punishable by imprisonment. It is therefore not surprising that the patients felt that when they are sharing their stories they are expressing their true authentic self, which is radically different from social masks that they had to wear.

Freud's case studies should be placed in this context, they also offered his patient the possibility of facing their true selves, and obviously those true selves could be only uncovered by means of writing, especially writing of someone who possessed necessary authority, someone who was expected to tell the truth.

The case of other patient Wolf-Man or Sergey Pankeyeff is perhaps more disturbing but equally interesting. At some point Freud decided to break therapy of him and refereed him to fellow analyst Ruth Brunswick. From then on Wolf-Man became some kind of darling or mascot for the whole psychoanalytic community. Freud had no qualms about openly gathering money for him, he even asked his patients, especially his rich American friends, to contribute to the cause. After Freud's death patient was supported by other analysts. He accepted small financial gifts, and earned his living by selling his paintings to members of psychoanalytic community. As Paul Roazen notes on the basis of interviews with analysts who knew the patient at some point he became a sort of celebrity in Vienna, he was visited be analysts from all around the world, and clearly

67 Ibid., 216.
68 ‘Analysis Terminable and Interminable’, SE, 23.
exploited this status financially, everyone had to leave a donation. Until his death in 1970-ties he never had to work because he was able to support himself from psychoanalytic donations.

In a way then Freud's patient become signs of psychoanalysis, they become living monuments of the discipline. Unexpectedly they seem to enjoy it, they revel in escape from reality into world of literary fantasy offered by case studies. Freud knew very well that returning to normal life was not really an ambition of his patients. In one Little Hans's case he openly complains that "short-sighted therapeutic ambition", should not distract anyone from engaging in psychoanalysis. But this approach is perhaps most visible in Ratman's case, where Freud almost sees therapeutic success as something which disturbs his investigation, something which leads to discontinuity of analysis.

On the other hand there is clearly some kind of tension between therapeutic dimension and transfer/production of knowledge at play here. Therapeutic success stands on the way of the lofty task of unraveling fantasy thread by thread. Professional activity of the middle class patient (of course Ratman was lawyer) distracts him from utopian search for the truth about himself, what a pity. We may note here that this tension is not uncommon in clinical psychiatry of the time. Critics of psychoanalysis who insist that the treatment is completely inefficient (for instance Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen) and deplore this fact, completely forget that clinical psychiatry from which psychoanalysis grew was in many respects a project of research and the task of curing patients was not treated as the one of the utmost importance. As one researcher of history of psychiatry in Germany notes “therapeutic efficacy hardly suffices to explain the emergence of clinical psychiatry”. The rate of cure of biggest and most famous mental hospitals was extremely low. In famous Salpetriere hospital which was the widely respected and most modern institution of the time the rate of cure was at about 9.72%. Just about one patient out of ten was cured by psychiatric treatment . That's not a big wonder, one may

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70 SE 17, 10.
71 See Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian subject*.
73 Didi-Huberman, *Invention of hysteria : Charcot and the photographic iconography of the Salpêtrière*. 15
say, they were experimenting with therapeutic perspectives of writing on the body, what therapeutic value can this have? But this just hides more important point. Academic clinics derived their authority from the kind of knowledge that their gathered and transmitted, not from the efficiency of treatment. Popularity of therapy had nothing to do with its rate of cure.

The crucial thing to note here is that this desire to gain this knowledge was probably not seen by Freud’s patients as threat. The position of being an object of research does not have to be uncomfortable. We may assume that some patients knew very well that their lives may be described in some kind of case study or other book. Freud’s patients read his books quite attentively, Ratman for instance actually made a decision to start a treatment because they read his books. Perhaps he desired to be a case? This would be very peculiar manifestation or reversal of will to knowledge, which is typical for official sexual science portrayed by Foucault in “History of Sexuality”. Foucault's history focuses on the side of those who had the alleged power, on the side of scientists, this new clergy imposing new rituals of confessions in disguise of medical procedures. In this narration speech of patients, their spontaneous discourse about their disturbances appears to be enforced by representatives of dominant discourses. It is interesting to note in this context, that the desire to speak appears so spontaneous in so many of the subjects of psychiatric pathology. Freud's patient's enjoyment of their involvement in scientific discourse is not uncommon in this time.

What we witness here is an interesting play of mirrors between interpreter and the one who is interpreter. Patients see themselves in the images of them that are created in Freud's writings. They recognize their features in Freud's sentences and paragraphs. The difference between writing and being is blurred.

At the same time patient's reactions to their objectification in discourse prove to be strangely creative. Let's note that Dora attempts to discuss Freud's own interpretation, she tries to question and critically analyze narration about her. In this way she enters hermeneutic play, she creates yet another reflection of analytic discourse.

If we view case studies as hermeneutics of suspicion we must mention their social and cultural background and environment. Indeed this will be one of the main subjects of following chapters.
Case studies play interesting role in late Victorian society. One the one hand they demonstrate some interesting and dominant cultural motifs, they are closely related to social and political problems of the time. Hysteria seems to be closely related to social and political situation of women, Schreber's psychosis, as I will argue seems to respond partly to anxieties about technology, Rat Man's obsession on the other hand seems to revolve around a curious crisis of religion.

On the other hand there is another politics at play, it involves an element of accusation implicit in cases. Clearly mental disturbances were still associated with morality, and moral judgments still had influence on the life of the patients. Psychiatrist to some extent attempted to reduce this element of moral judgment. In many respects scientific psychiatry attempted to decriminalize some of disturbances. For instance

This is most of all due to the fact that medicalization of sexuality led to subsequent loss of bond between sex and morality. If sexuality may be a cause of illness than all those who suffer from illnesses caused by sexual dysfunctions are simply normal moral beings who are not responsible for their state. Therefore the moral opprobrium is no longer justified. Clearly it still lingers in personal opinions or, more likely, in personal feelings of doctors, but it has no influence on objective state of affairs. In this sense Freud's feeling that his patients are trash have no consequence for psychoanalysis, it is just his opinion expressed in a private letter, not a statement of fact. It would be naive and absurd to judge psychoanalysis on the basis of some loose remarks made by Freud, or even on the basis of revulsion that he felt when faced with his patients.

This liberating effect of distinguishing between morality and sexuality is perhaps most visible in case of homosexuality in Germany. At the end of XIX century homosexuality was still a criminal offence. We should point out clearly that Krafft-Ebing's discussion of homosexuality as pathology actually subverts criminalization of homosexuality and implies liberalization of penal code. Krafft-Ebing pathologization of homosexuality is actually a limitation of political power. If something is a disturbance of mental health then it should be not treated by police and courts but by the doctors. Therefore one should not be punished for being homosexual, one should be only treated by the doctor. Furthermore, since homosexuality is an illness rather than a sin, one should not be held accountable for being homosexual just like one should not be held
accountable for suffering from any other illness. Not surprisingly Krafft-Ebing forcibly argued for abolishment of all penal measures against homosexuality. Although the idea of treating homosexuality as is clearly oppressive and false from our perspective, it was perceived as a challenge to common-sense morality at the time. One should remember that at the time homosexuality was most of all a moral threat. Changing the understanding of homosexuality from sin and moral offence to simple medical pathology paved the way for all later developments which led to official recognition of the fact that homosexuality is perfectly normal.

We can see similar process at play if we trace history of hysteria. The moral panic around the disturbance is precisely the reason why diagnosis of sexual etiology of hysteria met with opposition from some medical writers. Freud was not the only author who argued that sexual experiences play an important role in hysteria. There were doctors in XIX century who readily admitted sexual etiology of hysteria. Robert Brudenell Carter (1828-1918) or Jules Falret (1824-1902) were two most notable figures who held this view (both are quoted in Ilse Veith's classical history of hysteria)\(^74\). Those interpretations of hysteria were rejected most of all because medical audience assumed that they morally denigrate patients, that they involve a judgment about sexual morality of patients. Recognition of the role sexuality in hysteria was coupled with scorn and repugnance, which is not surprising if one considers the implications of this diagnosis in the moral context of the time. Carter for instance suggests that hysteric women inflict damages to vagina in order to necessitate examination by means of speculum. In the writings of Carter or Falret sexual diagnosis was clearly coupled with moral evaluation. Carter's rants against the use of speculum appear quite humorous from the distance of time\(^75\), but they disclose important feature of morality. Women who displayed sexual desires in a way deemed excessive were considered perverse and immoral.

At first glance this may suggest that all psychiatrists were tied to sexual morality of the time. But again this is not so simple. Some doctors rejected this diagnosis in order to save their patients from reactions of their community on their immoral sexuality. Pierre


\(^75\) Ibid.205
Janet for example attempts to save hysterical women from the attacks of crowds, he compares those who look for sexual causes in hysteria to witch-hunters, who persecute innocent girls because they feel that something is wrong with them. He was well aware of this fact and recognized it himself in his letters to Fliess:

"What would you say, by the way, if I told you that my brand new theory of an early etiology of hysteria was already well known and had been published a hundred times over, though several centuries ago? (...) But why did the devil who took possession of the poor thing invariably abused them sexually and in a loathsome manner? Why are their confessions under torture so like the communications made by my patients in psychological treatment?"

"I understand the harsh therapy of the witches' judges"76

Of course those remarks are clearly auto-ironic, they should be placed in context of general tone of Freud's correspondence with Fliess which is witty, offhand and full of loose half joking remarks. Fliess' and Freud's friendship was tinged marked with auto-irony, they called their meetings congresses, they were ironical about their own scientific projects, and honest about their weaknesses. As we see in Freud and Janet this analogy between clinical treatment of hysteria and trials of witches was already well established in medical discourse.

Freud's introduction of seduction theory did not change the moral evaluation of sexual factor in hysteria. Theory of infantile seduction of the child by the father or other adult member of the family actually served to save patients from responsibility for their sexual desires. It was probably directed by the same strategy to the one adapted by Janet, hysterical sexuality is not to blame; it is not immoral. Not because of the fact that it is absent, but because it is caused by some external factor - sexual harassment in childhood. The abandonment of seduction theory - Freud's argument that it is fantasy about sexual intercourse with parent and not the real event of rape which is responsible for the outbreak of hysteria - in popular perception of his time must have been seen as return to moral opprobrium associated with hysteria. The position which Janet perceived as analogous to medieval theories of witches.

7. Conclusions

We may conclude that psychoanalytic case studies belong to rich tradition of lyrical clinical experience. Freud's interpretations should not be opposed to neurology or psychiatry of its time, they develop some aspects of neurology and psychiatry that those disciplines share with humanities - their interest in individual human being. From this point of view case study as such should be reevaluated. There is no doubt that modern institutions and modern networks of power contributed to emergence of case study. At the same time we should recognize the element of art and literature at the heart of this genre. Yes case study is certainly possible only in context of asymmetrical clinical observation, observation that may make its object it passive recipient of medical attention, even Freud has to remain somewhat one sided, he must treat his patients as objects of legitimate medical discourse. At the same time there is an element of creativity and even playfulness in case studies. Charcot's attempts to write on the backs of his female patients with stylus, his project of creating photographic catalogue of mental disturbances - prove this point in an interesting way. Freud's own case studies should be placed in this context. Psychoanalytic fascination with art and literature becomes understandable if we point at the importance of this fascination for Freud's intellectual background. The similarity between psychoanalytic case studies and clinical discourse can be clearly seen if we point out common themes between those two disciplines and analytic detective novels.
1. "A case of petite hystérie"

At first sight there is nothing really original in Dora's case.

"It is merely a case of 'petite hystérie' with the commonest of all somatic and mental symptoms: dyspnoea, tussis nervosa, aphonia, and possibly migraines, together with depression, hysterical unsociability, and a taedium vitae which was probably not entirely genuine"\textsuperscript{77}.

"Petite" hysteria is opposed here to grand hystérie of Charcot's patients. Most of them were female, and they belonged to lower socials strata. Their hysteria was a spectacle, they displayed amazing and bizarre symptoms stigmata, hyper sensibility were the norm, Charcot's hysteria bordered with supernatural.

Despite this apparent lack of originality Dora became no less famous than Blanche Wittman and other Charcot's patients. She was also proud of being a case, as we noted earlier this was duly noted by Felix Deutsch who met patient long after her therapy with Freud:

"The patient then began to chat in flirtatious manner, inquiring whether I was an analyst and whether I knew Professor Freud. I asked her in turn whether she knew him and whether he had ever treated her. As if having waited for this cue, she quickly replied that she was the “Dora” case (…) She forgot to talk about her sickness, displaying great pride in having been written

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\textsuperscript{77} SE 7, 23-24.
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up as a famous case in psychiatric literature. (...) Then she discussed Freud’s
interpretation of her two dreams and asked my opinion about it.\footnote{Deutsch, "A Footnote to Freud’s “Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria”," 35-44.}

What is really interesting here is the process in which case study, discourse born in asylums, tied to specific techniques of observations and mechanisms of control, becomes a literary work, a romance or crime novel of sorts. Dora is proud of being Freud's patient because she is proud of being a literary figure, she is proud that her life becomes material for some form of art.

Of course this art is an art that focuses on daily life. Freud turns from spectacular, original, individual to common, typical and down to earth. Dyspnoea instead of stigmata. Shortness of breath instead of spectacular displays of hysteria. Freud's interest in lack of originality is a reaction to some important transformations of medical opinion. After it was discovered that grand hysterias of Charcot were to some extent fabricated by assistants of famous neurologist, medical community became increasingly skeptical and began to doubt in magnificent hysterical "spectacle of pain" (to use Georges Didi-Huberman's term\footnote{Didi-Huberman, \textit{Invention of hysteria : Charcot and the photographic iconography of the Salpêtrière}.}). To some extent demise of hysteria as a clinical unit was a consequence of dissatisfaction with Charcot's methods that dominated in medicine at the beginning of XX century. Even most faithful among Charcot's students were sceptical about the work of their master. Everyone were convinced that Charcot was staging his performances, that he was actually manipulating his medical audience to receive funding and attention. Freud appears to detect the mood of medical public and turns from grand, amazing symptoms (e.g. spectacular attacks) to shortness of breath, migraines and \textit{taedium vitae}. Nevertheless we should not be tricked by Freud's insistence on typicality. What is presented here as typical is not typical at all.

There are some dry facts that should probably be presented before we move to discussion of this case. Let's begin with some factual material.

Freud's patient real name was Ida Bauer. She was the daughter of a wealthy owner of two manufactures in Bohemia - Philip Bauer. The family has only recently moved to Vienna, interestingly they lived on Berggasse, just a couple of blocks away from Freud's office. Dora's father was of poor health, he suffered from some minor mental
disturbances, lost vision in one of his eyes and even experienced partial paralysis. The family lived in Vienna but spend parts of the year in various spa's and health resorts. Dora was born in 1881, and apparently from her young age suffered from multiple health problems. Most of them were probably ignored by doctors.

The therapy with Freud starts in October 1900 and it is initiated by Dora's father, who is worried about mental health of his daughter after he founds her suicide note. Although he suspects that the note wasn't entirely genuine, he nevertheless feels obliged to do something for his daughter. Philip Bauer explains to Freud that she is unhappy because she is obsessed about his romance with a friend of his - Frau K. He assures him that the whole story is invented and that his daughter is simply hysterical. Dora confirms that she is unhappy because of her father's romance, but she also tells Freud that the main reason of her frustration is the fact that her whole family does not treat seriously her resentment and anger about behavior of husband of his father's lover - Herr K. Herr K. has allegedly made an "indecent" proposal to the girl, he attempted to seduce her during the family trip to one of Alpine ski resorts, Dora rejected his advances, and after some time informed her family about the whole situation. When asked about the event Herr K denied any wrongdoing and blamed everything on girl's imagination. He added that the girl had read improper books with his wife, and that this might be the factor that excited her fantasy.

As we have said Freud insists on Dora's typicality, he suggests that there is nothing special about this case. And indeed many of Dora's symptoms are quire typical. For example aphonia or hysterical loss of voice is quite common in hysterical patients in nineteenth century. Common however does not have to be synonymous with 'uninteresting'. Aphonia was perhaps typical but by no means boring. The experience must have felt strange all of a sudden one feels that one's vocal chords are paralyzed, and one is either unable to say anything or is able to speak only some strange words for months on end. One young German patient was only able to scream two words: "Rabe" (raven), and 'Vetsera' (apparently meaningless term). Another hysterical patient was able to speak, she didn't suffer from full paralysis, but she preceded each pronounced word
with the letter "T". Yet another patient treated by Pierre Janet was only able to scream "Cholera... it is taking me!". After hypnotizing the patient Janet discovered that her original trauma was elicited by the fantasy about corpses of two men. During hypnosis Janet provoked this scene in the patient and began to convince her that naked corpses have nothing to do with cholera, there is no cholera here, he suggested there is only a Chinese general (the patient had apparently seen an Chinese soldier at the exhibition in Paris, and it provoked her immense curiosity). After the patient woke up from hypnosis her hysterical fits became weaker. Both the symptoms and the treatment appear surreal rather than typical.

Dora's father expects that Freud will "bring the girl to order", in other words encourage her to accept familial status quo and stop disturbing everyone with her frustration. The roots of Philippe Bauer's trust in therapeutic skills of Freud are quite interesting in themselves. Both men had met earlier in circumstance that where fairly, again, "typical" for the time (and again not uninteresting). Dora's father had suffered from syphilis and Freud apparently helped him relieve the symptoms. Syphilis was not unusual at the end of nineteenth century. According to some statistics almost 20% of men in Vienna suffered from venereal diseases. Feminist writers presented even grimmer picture of the problem, Charlotte Pankhurst argues that two thirds of Victorian men suffered from Gonorrhea - but we should probably remain skeptical about exact numbers, Pankhurst's argument is part of wider polemics with Victorian approach to sexuality, it serves rhetorical purposes and is not based on objective research. Aside from exact numbers we may safely assume that venereal diseases were an important problem. Many memoirs from the time document the scope of the issue. Lack of contraceptives, erroneous medical believes about causes of illness, relatively late time of forming marriages - all contributed to the problem. Most importantly severe Victorian morality

reduced extramarital sex to the underworld. Stefan Zweig recollects that the cost of session with prostitute was about equal to the cost of pack of cigarettes or a newspaper, the streets were so crowded with prostitutes that it was harder to avoid them than to find them, and almost all his fellow students at the University of Vienna were willing to pay this modest price. On the other hand sexual relationships with servant girls, and poorer working class girls were unofficial norm. Most of Freud's patients from middle or higher classes had their first sexual encounters with servants. Erotic literature of the time ("My Secret Life") is full of sexual scenes involving female servants. There is something of a class divide in sexual matters at the time. Casual, non-marital sexual contacts were tacitly allowed, or more likely enforced by their masters, on working class women, but they were sternly forbidden to those in middle and higher classes. One statistical study from the time notes that over a third of illegitimate children in Austria and Germany were born to domestic servants. We may assume that most of the fathers were simply employers of those servants. This peculiar approach to sexuality of working class women is mirrored in medical literature. Freud and Breuer for instance recognize that peasant and working class girls are less prone to hysteria because when confronted with sexuality they don't feel the resistance and embarrassment typical for middle classes. Popular English magazine *Saturday Review* expressed a similar opinion: "the best and most innocent-minded girl of the laboring classes knows far more at fifteen than the high born damsel of twenty-five." This knowledge was often not a result of spontaneous curiosity but rather a consequence of childhood traumas of sexual abuse. We may also clarify the meaning of term girls here. The age of consent in Austria at the time was set at fourteen years. Most medical writers assumed that sexual imitation of working class girls took place much earlier than that. At the same time as Zweig notes sexual affairs were associated not only

83 Stefan Zweig, *The world of yesterday* (London: Pushkin, 2009). 105. Zweig was born in 1881 his memoirs were originally published in 1942.
86 They write that" some girls approach sexual matters "with complete unembarassment (...) and this is no doubt the rule with peasant and working class girls" Freud, SE II, 245.
with health risk but also with considerable moral or social risks. As he points out many of his friends were blackmailed by former lovers, who threatened to disclose publicly their affairs. All this explains fairly well the disgust that was associated with sexuality by many contemporaries - Freud's patients, artists, and finally hysterical women. Dora's disgust about sexuality seems to grow from similar roots as the disgust of Egon Schiele, Otto Weininger, Robert Musil.

From this perspective Philip Bauer expectation that Freud will bring Dora three months Dora interrupted her treatment. At the beginning of 1901 Freud had written down the case history and began thinking about publication. One of Freud's most successful and popular books - "Interpretation of Dreams" was published a couple of months earlier - so he decided that Dora's story will illustrate the therapeutic value of his newly invented method of analyzing dreams. He sent it to one journal under the title "Dreams and Hysteria", but apparently got it rejected (it appears that even Freud had his articles rejected sometimes). After a couple of months he sent it again to other journal which accepted the text, but then Freud withdraw it from publication. He finally published the piece in 1905.

The reasons for his hesitation and deferral of publication are not difficult to understand - the case story hardly proves the effectiveness of psychoanalysis. Dora rejects most of Freud's interpretations, her symptoms do not disappear, at the end she interrupts her therapy, so the treatment remains unfinished. On the other hand the text must have appeared controversial to readers of medical journals of the time. After all Freud speaks with 19 year old girl about things such as oral sex, he imputes to her incestuous fantasies and discusses the impotence of her father - this might have been perceived as breach of medical ethics. Finally even tough Freud changed some details and used pseudonyms he still felt that he disclosed enough information to make identification of his patient possible.

2. "Resistant heroine..."

There is one reading of Dora's case that appears to be most popular and influential. It sees in Dora a victim of oppressive patriarchal relationship which objectify women and reduces them to the subservient and humiliating roles. From this point of
view Dora becomes a "resistant heroine"\textsuperscript{88}, and her story is simply a metaphor for "silent revolt against male power over women's bodies and women's language", "radiant example of feminist revolt"\textsuperscript{89} or "attempt to deny patriarchal sexuality"\textsuperscript{90}. Dora rejection of Herr K and, equally importantly, her resistance to Freud's interpretations appear, in this reading, as an act of defiance, a protest against oppressive social environment and a threat to the whole atmosphere of hypocrisy which lead to a situation in which women are treated as simply objects of sexual exchange without the will of their own.

There are many reasons to agree with this reading. Let's just consider one of them. We learn that Herr K "indecent" proposition by the lake which triggered Dora's outbreak was not his first attempt to seduce young girl. A couple of years earlier when the patient was fourteen years old (at this time fourteen was an age of consent, some commentators argue that the event took place when she was thirteen and that Freud distorted the facts in order to fit his interpretation and make it appear less controversial) Herr K invited Dora to his office. He arranged everything in such a way that he was alone with the girl, sent off all his employees, and closed the door. At some point he pressed Dora violently to the door and attempted to kiss her, she rejected him, and after short struggle managed to escape.

The situation is not untypical for the time. The mixture of violence and desire is all too typical for Victorian sexuality. What is more troubling in our context is Freud's reaction to this rather shocking attempt at sexual abuse.

Freud does not see a problem here. Or, more specifically, he does not see a problem in Herr K's behavior, he sees a problem in Dora's reaction to this attack. He interestingly remarks that at the time when the even happened (about four years before the second attempt at seduction) Dora has already been hysterical:

"In this scene (...) the behavior of this child of fourteen was entirely and completely hysterical. I should without question consider a person hysterical in whom an occasion for sexual excitement elicited feeling that were

\textsuperscript{88} Bernheimer and Kahane, \textit{In Dora's case : Freud--hysteria--feminism}, 25.

\textsuperscript{89} Moi, "Representation of Patriarchy: Sexuality and Epistemology in Freud's Dora," 192.

\textsuperscript{90} Ramas, "Freud's Dora, Dora's Hysteria," 149.
predominantly or exclusively unpleasurable; and I should do so whether or
not the person were capable of producing somatic symptoms”

Psychoanalysis tend to focus on fantasy of the patient but perhaps in this case it is
precisely the fantasy of analyst which deserves interest. There is little doubt that Freud's
understanding of teenage sexuality appears to be rather limited. Freud's understanding is
closer to male fantasy about female sexuality, a fantasy, let's add, that was current at the
turn of century. This fantasy stated that when women are resisting sexual propositions
they are doing so because they are paying lip service to social conventions, but not
because they don't desire a man. It also assumed that men should be aggressive and
women passive, and that male aggressiveness is natural and even recommended. Of

course this fantasy is still present today, it suffices to read reviews of "Fifty Shades of
Gray", to notice that, but it is one thing when this fantasy is expressed by a woman, it is
quite another when it is put to use by men when they face a situation which involves a
fourteen year old girl.

It seems clear here, that, as Madelon Sprengnether points out in a fascinating and
polemical study of the case, Freud unconsciously identified with Herr K, he desired Dora
and placed himself in Herr K position. This unwitting identification with Dora's would-be lover led quite a logical and predictable finale - since Dora rejected Herr K, she
rejected Freud as well, she simply interrupted her therapy. It is difficult to defend Freud
against this charge. In this respect his critics are certainly right to some extent. Freud's
therapeutic effort may be well seen as misguided attempts at enforcing patriarchal
framework for polymorphous and resistant hysteric desire.

It is interesting to see how psychoanalysis may respond to this charge. Jacques
Lacan makes a point which is very similar to "patriarchal" interpretation, but his general
tone is slightly different, his tone seems to disclose some form of acceptance for reducing
women to the status of objects of exchange.

"As is true for all women, and for reasons that are at the very crux of the
most elementary social exchange (the very exchanges Dora names as the

91 Freud, SE VII, 28.
ground for her revolt), the problem of her condition is fundamentally that of accepting herself as man's object of desire.\(^93\)

Leaving aside the question of whether Dora's problem is common to all women, and whether she should accept her situation or not (most readers who see Dora as "resistant heroine" think that she should not accept it, Lacan on the other hand appears to say that she has a problem, this is dangerously close to Freud's attempt to see a problem in her reactions), Lacan points at similar problem - hysteria is most of all a reaction to mostly patriarchal social arrangements concerning women as objects of desire. When speaking about elementary forms of social exchange Lacan clearly alludes to Claude Levi-Strauss' "Elementary Forms of Kinship".\(^94\)

In any case the social exchange here does not have to be reduced to exchange of women. One may well argue that there is a wider disturbance of symbolic economy at play here. Various kinds of gifts play decisive in the whole case. Dora's father plays the role of the main source of wealth, he generously gives small gifts to all "his" women - he gives jewelry to a wife of his friend K, in order to cover up the doubts that it may raise he also gives similar gifts to his wife and Dora. Herr K, on his side, also gives jewelry to Dora. Dora's symptoms are clearly related to that circle of exchange. In her first dream she dreams about saving her jewel-case from the fire. Freud is quick to recognize that jewel-case is a condensation of a thought about female genitalia. Obviously Dora, and probably all the readers of Freud answers: "I knew you would say that."\(^95\). Freud is not discouraged by this skeptical remark, what's more he is eager to turn it on its head - "You mean you knew the significance"- he responds. He continues that her fear of losing her jewel-case in the dream is simply a fear of exchanging her own 'jewel-case' for jewelry given to her by Herr K. In other words Dora doesn't want to give her own body back,

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\(^94\) This short remark from one text is just a fragment of Lacan's extensive writing on Dora and hysteria - his thinking about hysteria evolved and changed between his first seminar and seminar XX For good overview see Véronique Voruz, "A Lacanian Reading of Dora," in The Later Lacan: an introduction, ed. Véronique Voruz and Bogdan Wolf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007). We will return to this problem later.

\(^95\) Freud, SE VII 69.
which disturbs a smooth circle of exchange. Herr K has given his wife to Dora's father, Frau K has given her body to Dora's father in exchange for love, affection and jewelry, and now Dora is expected to give her own body back to Herr K. When Herr K approaches Dora by the lake he says exactly that - "I know I get nothing from my wife", this may well mean: "I have given up my wife, and I want something in exchange".

We may note that the reduction of woman to commodity, to which Dora reacts with her symptoms, assumes particularly interesting shape, because it takes place outside of traditional morality. The ties established by exchange of women are usually regulated by moral or familial rules, they are integral part of official social order. Freud's patient on the other hand is exchanged in a rather different way, the whole process becomes so to say cryptic or clandestine. It is obvious that Dora's father has an interest in keeping artificially good relationships with her lover's husband. Herr K's romance with Dora distracts him from his wife, and ensures that he does not disturb the romance of Dora's father.

If we were to understand hysteria in this way - as a protest against reduction of a body to the status of a thing (and a common thing, not even the Thing, or das Ding) - we should arrive at a conclusion that there is much room for hysteria in the world we live in today. We certainly live at the time when the exchange of the body and its subsequent commoditization reaches fascinating dimensions. The banality of all attempt to sell the product by appealing to an image of a female body seem to be the most visible manifestation of this. The difference between product, or object of exchange and woman is completely blurred here - are we buying the product or are we simply buying the woman who is advertising it? Commodity appears to be feminine. Perhaps then we can see in hysterias of fin de siècle one of first reactions at this commodification of sexuality? Dora's hysteria certainly in large parts revolve around her father, and we should recall that her father is most of all a capitalist - he's an owner of a factory. His approach to gifts, his tendency to treat women in particular way may well derive from his experience in business. Colette Soler interestingly develops this line of thought by pointing out how in every-day experience we have tendency to think about own body in instrumental objectifying way, we assume that are bodies are simply machines, we give them
checkups, special diets, fitness training, beauty care. The body is a form of capital for us, and we treat it as such."  

This reading of hysteria as a protest against reduction of the body to the status of commodity places it at the side of the opponents of capitalism. It seems that precisely for those reasons the figure of hysterical women were so fascinating for all those who desired to challenge bourgeois hypocrisy and its strange deformed morality. Let's recall for instance how one of surrealist artists Andre Breton understood hysteria, the quote is from an interesting text which celebrates the anniversary of inventing the clinical unit by Charcot:

"Hysteria is (...) marked by the subversion, quite apart from any delirium system, of the relations established between the subject and the moral world under whose authority he believes himself, practically to be. (...) Hysteria is not a pathological phenomenon and may in all respects be considered as a supreme means of expression."  

For Breton hysteria is related not just to gender norms but to totality of moral world in which the subject is placed. Breton clearly associates hysteria with a criticism of petty bourgeois morality and hypocrisy that pervades social relations within capitalist social universe. Hysterical woman opposes those norms, and through this opposition she expresses her own authentic being, hysteria is thus in a way, a work of art. This may well be simply related to the fact that hysteria is marked by hyper-activity of imagination - recall that this is precisely the charge that is raised against Dora by her father and his friend - she is considered overexcited, she imagines too much, her imagination is too vivid.

It is interesting that even anti-feminist writers celebrated hysteria precisely because of the threat that it posed social status quo at the turn of the century. We may find traces of this approach in Otto Weininger - Vienesse the author of controversial


treatise "Sex and Character" (published in 1905). The book is widely and correctly perceived as artifact of anti-Semitic and misogynistic prejudices of his time. Recently Weininger has been rediscovered by Slavoy Žižek98, who subjects "Sex and Character" to a series of interesting and surprising dialectical reversals. One is tempted to question the need for dialectical reversals in this context. As a matter of fact, we do not have to revert Weininger's thought to find the views that Žižek finds after alleged "reversals", it suffices to read him. Otto Weininger actually explicitly excluded hysterical women from his criticism of female immorality. He argues that only hysterical women are able to overcome ethical limitations and assume the position of moral authority. He saw hysteria as "proof of feminine morality", but this did not mean that he saved women from his criticism, on the contrary, hysteria was just "crisis of the organic mendacity of the female"99. In other words hysterical woman has been alienated from her feminity, hysteria is a disturbance of a woman who identifies with masculine ethical ideals. If men don't follow those ideas it is because they are not fully men, they are dominated by their sexual desires. Actually most men according to Weininger are feminine (and most Aryans are Jews in their behavior). Weininger's friend Emil Lucka expresses this perhaps in most unambiguous terms when he claims that hysterical woman is simply unreflectively taking over male morality which results in divided personality. Obviously the remark about divided personality should be taken with care here, because woman as such, according to Lucka, does not have personality in a strict sense, she only has as much personality as the male element within her allows100. One wonders if this type of

98 "The ultimate result of our reading of Weininger is thus paradoxical yet inevitable reversal of the anti-feminist ideological apparatus espoused by Weininger himself, according to which women are wholly submitted to phallic enjoyment, whereas men have access to desexualized domain of ethical goals beyond the phallus: it is man who is wholly submitted to the Phallus (...) whereas woman, through the inconsistency of her desire attains the domain "beyond the Phallus". Only woman has access to the (non-phallic) enjoyment." Slavoj Žižek, The metastases of enjoyment : six essays on woman and causality (London: Verso, 1994). 160.


hate speech still remains hidden in male imagination, are men free of those kind of ideas today? In 1905 Weininger ideas were only one drop within a whole violent current of misogynistic treatises - as a matter of fact many misogynist writers accused Weininger of being too liberal and idealistic (he still allowed women to be ethical by assuming hysterical positions and allowing male elements within them to dominate feminity.)

In any case the symptom which makes hysteria pathological for Freud - repulsion at an occasion for sexual intercourse - becomes one of few elements salvaging ethnical ideals of women in the eyes of Weininger. In hysteria woman completely renounces her sexual desires, she feels repugnance and hate at a mere thought about her own sexuality. It is therefore not surprising that Freud, in contrast to Žižek, didn't really like Weininger and referred to him as "neurotic (...) under the sway of infantile complexes"\textsuperscript{101}. Some historians suggest, but this is almost certainly an exaggeration, that Freud's disapproving evaluation of manuscript of Weninger's "Sex and Character" exacerbated young philosopher's depression which eventually led to his suicide\textsuperscript{102}.

This repulsion concerning sexuality is an interesting phenomenon. Dora's relationship with the world is marked by repulsion - few things bring her pleasure, most sensual activities are related to repulsion - she is a poor eater, she rejects possibility of sexual relationships with Herr K because of her repulsion at the mere thought about intercourse. Obviously the fantasy about oral sex which is postulated by Freud as the root cause of her disturbances also provokes her disgust. Repulsion then plays a mediating role between knowledge, phantasy and action - hysterical actions or symptoms are fantasies inscribed into body by means of repulsion\textsuperscript{103}. Perhaps we can even risk a hypothesis that "theory of hysteria is Freud's effort to describe an epistemology of disgust?"\textsuperscript{104}.

\textsuperscript{101} Freud, 10, page 36.
\textsuperscript{102} Luft, \textit{Eros and inwardness in Vienna : Weininger, Musil, Doderer}: 53.
\textsuperscript{103} "The memory actually stinks just as in the present the object stinks; and in the same manner as we turn away from our sense organ (the head and nose) in disgust, the preconscious and the sense of consciousness turn away from the memory. This is repression" , November 14 1897, page 280.
3. Question of knowledge

The standard reading of the case with its focus on 'patriarchal oppression' leaves many questions unanswered, but more importantly if leads to interpretative impasse. Certainly hate of women was real at the turn of the century, women were expected to accept decisions about their life, and in most cases their attempts at gaining control over their lives were seen as strange and not normal. Freud's imagination was certainly shaped by the culture of his time in this respect, even though he must have appeared fairly liberal in the eyes of his contemporaries such as Weininger.

However true all this is we should agree that an interpretation which reduces every text to a set of prejudices is not very interesting. The fact that Freud simply "enforces Oedipus", "represents patriarchy", "acts as an agent of oppressive norms of his time" is not very revealing. It is difficult to justify an interest in a text by just pointing at prejudices it represents. Why should we read the case if all that can be found there is just a set of clichés or forgotten and mostly simply wrong biases? We must find some other fields of interest if we are to really rediscover something interesting in a text written more than one hundred years ago.

One thing which appears fascinating in the perception of hysteria is the particular role of hysterical knowledge. In many respects Freud's case study is an attempt to come to terms with this strange and uncanny being represented by hysterical knowledge. In a way Dora suffers precisely from some form of knowledge.

For Dora's father and Herr K the situation appeared trivial. The girl had simply "read too much" and "knows too much" for such a young girl, and now she suffers from the consequences of this knowledge. Her readings appear rather innocent to us - we know that she has read books by Mario Montegazza, the author of popular treatises on love and sexuality. We also learn that she has read encyclopedia, focusing especially on "indecent" topics. While Montegazza might have appear shocking for his contemporaries, he wrote about unusual (from Victorian perspective) sexual practices (such as anal sex) in exotic countries (Africa, middle East) with openness rarely found in literature of the time - the belief in detrimental effects of reading his books obviously tells us more about men in Vienna at the end of century rather than about symptoms or cause of hysteria.
Concerns about dangers of corrupting inexperienced girl are an element of social conventions of the time. As a professional medical writer Freud is obliged to share those concerns. He does this by issuing his constant assurances that he does not disclose new knowledge to Dora. He defends himself against the charge of giving new knowledge to his patient by arguing that this knowledge wasn't new to the patient in the first place.

The source of this knowledge is quickly revealed. It turns out that Dora was corrupted by her father's lover - Frau K, who lent Dora forbidden books. Both women were sleeping in the same bedroom and often discussed sexual themes with each other. An interesting and puzzling intimacy is developed between them. Dora idealizes Frau K, at some point she speaks about her "adorable white body", when she receives gifts from Herr K she is convinced that they must have been chosen by Frau K, because they demonstrate signs of exquisite taste. Even the fact that Frau K betrays her by telling her husband that she had read forbidden books with her does not seem to deter Dora in her adoration.

One may thus say that the source of hysterical knowledge is the object of Dora's love - her love of knowledge is closely bound with her love of Frau K. This love appears to express itself in her response to art. When she visits art gallery in Dresden she rejects the company of her cousin and wonders around the place alone - the picture that fascinates her most is the painting of Sistine Madonna by Raphael. She spent long time before the picture in rapt admiration and when Freud asked her what did she found so interesting in the picture she was unable to say anything else but "Madonna". Freud traces origins of her rapt admiration of Madonna to her fascination with Frau K\textsuperscript{105}. This interpretation is fascinating in that it suggests that our aesthetic experiences are closely tied with our personal history - our admiration of some works of art is just a response or elaboration of desires that drive our life. In a way this opens the possibility of specific art-therapy in which the subject goes to the gallery and is asked to find a work of art which provokes strongest emotions in him - we can then ask him about his thoughts - perhaps they are related to some unconscious experiences. We could be invited here to consciously analyze our own admiration and fascination - to look for some personal memory traces and associations that make the experience of work of art deeply personal

\textsuperscript{105} Freud, SE VII, 96.
matter. An interesting approach which is completely at odds with the habit adapted by most bored and tired tourists who tend to wander around the gallery with the intention of 'seeing everything'. In this psychoanalytic perspective it turns out that one should actually see only one painting, and spend more time before it focusing on one's own free and spontaneous associations, rather than wander around with aimlessly.

At the same time a skeptic may object that Freud's question appears strange - can anyone explain clearly why particular picture provokes his admiration? Dora was no art critic, what else could she say when asked why did she liked Madonna? And why should we see anything strange in admiration of a picture that was admired by some many other visitors of Dresden gallery? From the times of Friedrich Schlegel and his fellow romantics this particular painting that provoked admiration of Dora was unanimously hailed as the ultimate work of art which raises art to the level of religion. The legend around this picture was so strong that everyone were captivated. Not only Dora but indeed most if not all of visitors spent a lot of time before this picture, brought to Dresden by Augustus III of Poland in 1754 (the king, known from his extravagant and expensive lifestyle bought it for an enormous sum), just like many visitors to Louvre spend a lot of time before the picture of Mona Lisa. In fact the picture of Rafael has become no less popular than Mona Lisa, and in effect have become equally trivial today. The figures of two putti lost in thoughts placed at the bottom of the canvas may be found on postcards and birthday cards sold in just about every supermarket today. The commercialization of this picture was of course unheard of at the beginning of the century when Dora was staring at it with "rapt admiration".

Nevertheless this matter-of-fact approach to the picture tends to cloud our perception of the issue. Yes the picture is certainly amazing and it provoked admiration of thousands of visitors of Dresden gallery, yes, there is nothing surprising in the fact that it provoked the admiration of some hysterical girl from Vienna, but still Freud has his reasons to see Frau K in Madonna, he probably mentions the picture more as an illustration of symptoms rather than as main symptom. A woman, Madonna, is here precisely a lofty ethical ideal which commands and subjugates everything around it, all other figures (well, almost all, all besides those kitschy putti) at the painting are kneeling.

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in front of her. Perhaps the picture simply presents the subjective paradox or dilemma that Dora expressed? Or perhaps it expresses in a nutshell the whole erotic quadruple in which Dora is caught? After all Frau K is in centre of everyone's attention - she seduced Dora's father, she seduced Dora, and she was a wife of Herr K. In this context the slap in the face of Herr K by the lake appears quite understandable. His brusque remark 'I've got nothing from my wife is a horrific blasphemy for Dora - it humiliates the figure which is so deeply loved by Dora.

Let's note briefly that this adoration of Madonna does not have to represent some form of attachment to mother or maternal body. Frau K is not Dora's mother, on the contrary she is the rival of her mother, and if Dora would identify with her mother she would clearly react rather aggressively on Frau K. Freud seems to accept Dora's evaluation of her own mother - which briefly consists of the judgment that she is simply foolish, limited, and concerned only with house cleaning. Mary Jacobus suggests that this is a result of Freud's bias and his inability to "to deal with the submerged presence of the (m)Other Woman". Jacobus argues that adoration of Madonna is "a symptom of repressed maternal discourse which surfaces in sublimated discourse of Christianity". In other words the reason why the mother is missing from Dora's case is related to Freud's inability and unwillingness to focus on Dora's relationship with her. The woman was not absent from Dora's life she was simply excluded from Freud's narration. An interesting interpretation but it is more an attempt to pay homage to Kristeva rather than a homage to Dora and her hysteria. The only reason which the text really gives for acceptance of the role of the mother is the assumption that Kristeva's understanding of central role of the mother is true. There are no hints that mother played an important role for Dora or for hysteria in general

It is more likely that Madonna represent here this quasi-divine female figure, mysterious sexual knowledge, fantasy about beauty and innocence of feminine body. Let's just recall that there are analogies to Weininger's views, what lies dormant here is

108 Ibid., 143.
the romantic conception of love, which was also enthusiastically defended by slightly forgotten Montegazza:

"There is then such a thing as "Platonic" love, even if professors of psychiatry don't think so. I would even say: there is only platonic love. For what is otherwise called love belongs in the realm of the sows. There is only one love: it is the love of Beatrice, the adoration of Madonna. For coitus the Babylonian whore is there".109

True love of Beatrice opposed to disgusting coitus - nothing seems to be closer to Dora's conscious thoughts, but also nothing is farther from her experiences, and nothing is farther from Freud's interpretation of her unconscious thoughts. Just on the margin of the quote we may note, that it remarkable that at the beginning of our century one could nourish such fantasies, or even express them in widely read books, without an element of shame. If we do feel some kind of shame when we read them today it is probably because professors of psychiatry won the battle. Obviously the chief enemy of Weininger here is Freud, who leads the group of those disrespectful enemies of Beatrice and Madonna who deny possibility of platonic love.

Nothing demonstrates better the difference between Dora, Weininger and psychoanalysis then Freud's own subjective, personal response to the same painting. In a fascinating text about Freud's aesthetics Ernst Gombrich dig out one fascinating letter from 1884, in which Freud describes his experiences of visiting Dresden gallery. Gombrich interestingly shows his interest in art began precisely in Dresden, in a letter Freud assures his fiance that he finally freed himself from his "own barbarity". It is fascinating in our context that Raphael's Maddona did not make a lasting impression on Freud, his down to earth approach must have appeared shocking and heretical to his contemporaries, after some customary tribute to the beauty of painting he presents some rather dry remarks.

"The beauty of the painting exerts a spell which it is impossible to resist. And yet I had an important criticism to make of the Madonna. Holbein's is neither a woman nor girl and her sublimity and holy humility excludes any

109 Weininger, 318, quoted in Luft, 79.
further questioning. But Raphael's is a girl, one would think her sixteen years, she looks into the world with such innocence and liveliness that the idea obtruded itself against my will that she was a charming and appealing nurse-maid from our own world rather than from heaven. Here in Vienna this opinion was rejected as heresy, they praised a trait of greatness round her eyes that made her into the Madonna but this escaped me in the brief time I had.  

In a word then Freud is unimpressed, Raphael's Madonna appears to him to be simple working-class Viennese nurse-maid who has to deal with harsh economic reality of capitalist life. No rapt admiration or fascination, no belief in supernatural heavenly power, just a down to earth evaluation of Madonna's face. One may be tempted to see here a trace of estrangement from Christian heritage typical for Jewish intellectuals of the time. But this would be, not even racist but also too simple, as Gombrich duly notices, Freud admired Christian art, estrangement from religious beliefs that were associated with the paintings made him all the more sensitive to their aesthetic beauty. He admired Holbein and loved Renaissance paintings. Just this particular figure, which made such a great impression on Dora, did not made an impression on him.  

Where Dora sees beauty and love Freud sees work. Perhaps this is because ultimately love in psychoanalysis is a form of work - the work of unconscious which toils at forming or rather deforming fantasies and representations. Unconscious appears to be a worker who crafts affects and desires in order to satisfy the commands of anonymous master (or masters). Most importantly perhaps in Freud's unconscious Dora was represented as a worker. As he confesses in "Psychopathology of Everyday Life" the name Dora was chosen after Freud's sister's maid. During the visit to his sister Freud had seen a letter addressed to Frau Rosa, since he never heard of any Rosa working or living in the household, he asked who this Rosa was. He was told that this is the name of a maid. This surprised him because he always called the maid Dora. His sister explained that officially the maid is called Rosa but since she started to work in the house she had had to use name Dora in order to avoid confusion with the name of Freud's sister who is also called Rosa. This convention was assumed in order to avoid awkward and confusing situations when for instance Freud's sister husband would say to maid "Rosa could you

please do this or that" and his wife would be confronted with an affront of being addressed in a form appropriate in conversation with a maid but not appropriate in communication with the member of the family. This interesting situation tells us a lot about the class differences in Vienna at the time. "Poor people" Freud thought "they cannot even keep their own names! (...) When next day I was looking for a name for someone who could not keep her own, 'Dora' was the only one to occur to me" 111.

In the same sentence Freud suggests that maids somehow play a crucial role in Dora's story. The role of maid is an object of some competition between women in the family. At first Dora plays the role of her father's nurse, the father is constantly sick and suffers from various ailments, he requires constant care. At some point Frau K takes over the role of nurse from Dora. In effect Dora becomes a nurse of K's children, she frequently takes care of them when their mother is away with Dora's father. On the other hand Dora is betrayed by her own governess. At first the woman befriends Dora and even shares some of her secrets with her. Later on tough she is attracted to Dora's father and in consequence starts to ignore her pupil, who sees through her disdain and reacts with resentment. What really enrages Dora tough is the fact that the governess starts to criticize Dora's mother for tolerating an affair of her husband. This must have appeared unbearable to Dora who loved Frau K and was bored and disgusted with her own mother. The picture of the role of maids and nurses in the whole family is complemented by Dora's mother, who in her activities resembles a zealous servant. We learn that she displays a picture of 'housewife psychosis', she incessantly cleans the house, her commitment to cleanliness being so radical, that it makes impossible the enjoyment of all utensils. In a way then all women in the story are maids, they all find their recognition in service for men, especially for one and most important man in the family - Dora's father.

At the same time Freud's patient hates this subservient role and this is perhaps yet another aspect that touches her painfully in Herr K's brusque remark "I've got nothing from my wife". It seems that Dora is not so much reduced to the status of object as to the status of servant or slave. This is revealed at the end of therapy, when Dora visits Freud's office and notifies him that she is not going to continue seeing him. They both return to the scene by the lake for one last time, and Dora provides some new unknown material,

111 SE 7, 241.
she reveals that before the scene she had spoken with the governess of K's children. The girl told her that her master had approached her and tried to force her to have sex with him. She consented but after a while her master lost interest in her, she was planning to leave the house. What is crucial in this story is that the girl told Dora that herr K had said to her - 'You know I don't get anything from my wife', which were exactly same words that Dora heard by the lake.

Logically Freud infers from this that the chief reason of Dora's reaction to Herr K advances was her unconscious assumption that she treats her as his maid or governess. In other words it touched her that she is going to be treated as servant. Dora's identification with governess is quite clear - the governess told her parents about her affair, just like Dora did, and she gave Freud a fortnight notice just like the governess planned to do. This last association of Freud appears slightly puzzling since it suggests that he assumes the position of Herr K. The basis of this identification is not difficult to infer - Dora actually takes care of Herr K's children - so she literally plays the role of governess for them.

We should note here the ambiguous consequences of Freud's unconscious choice of name. It is puzzling and interesting that he actually repeats Herr K. slight. Dora's hysteria was a reaction to all the attempts to master her, to reduce her to the status of subservient maid. Yet Freud, by choosing the name after a maid, makes a renewed attempt to subjugate the girl. In his choice he seems to say, "perhaps you thought that you freed yourself from me, perhaps you thought that you were not a maid, but for me you'll always be a maid-servant". We can decipher a strain of vengeful thoughts typical for a man whose desire was unsatisfied. Perhaps Herr K felt similar emotions when he was rejected by Dora.

In a way then different reactions to Madonna point at crucial unconscious conflicts that are taking place between Freud - Dora - Herr K - Frau K and Dora's father. Freud clearly sides with Herr K in his denigration of feminine beauty - 'there's nothing sacred about woman, no sacred essences, underneath fascination there's a hidden desire for mastery - desire to reduce someone to the status of instrument of subject's desire' - this seems to be the insight that creates a bond between two men, this indeed seems to be

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112 Freud, SE V7, 106.
an insight that forms a bond between all men of the period (we may recall that relationships with servants and prostitutes were the common form of sexual gratification). Love of Herr K and love of Freud appear to be precisely a form of service, or to put it more bluntly it appears to be on a par with this despicable 'coitus of Babylonian whore' which provoked such an immense repulsion and anxiety of poor suicidal Weininger.

Most importantly tough the different reactions on Madonna are related to the problem of innocence, and this in turn leads us back to the question of knowledge, which is our main object of interest here. From some perspective Dora's repulsion at the mere thought about sexual act with a man who is married with her friend would certainly appear as some form of innocence. Freud's ontology however categorically precludes the existence of innocence. Replacement of 'innocence' with 'infantile sexuality' is probably the main contribution of Freud to our philosophical and cultural dictionary. Obviously "innocence" is not a word Freud uses frequently. When he uses the term he usually puts the word in brackets to mark his ironical distance to the idea that anything can be innocent. "Interpretation of Dreams" is a one enormous treatise which intends to prove that "there are no innocent dreams", in Freud's words innocent dreams are "wolves in sheep's clothing". If are to believe the authors of index of Standard Edition the term innocence appears only a couple of times ('innocent' dreams, innocent jokes), usually in polemical, derisory or ironical contexts. Even when discussing innocent jokes, a topic which is rather far from the context in which innocence was discussed in other cultures, Freud can't resist the temptation to put this, certainly awkward and irritating, from his perspective, word in brackets. It is therefore not surprising that Dora's admiration of Madonna's 'innocence' were associated by Freud with tendencies which were not innocent at all - homosexual unconscious fantasies about Mms K. Innocent Madonna is actually not that innocent from Freud's perspective, she actually works for her master, her beauty is just a cover-up of her illicit desires.

What is fascinating here is that 'innocence' is opposed not only to work but also to knowledge, and even more interestingly this guilty knowledge, obtained at the prize of innocence, is seen as a cause of hysteria. As Freud says:

113Freud, SE IV, 183.
'There is never any danger of corrupting an inexperienced girl. For where there is no knowledge of sexual processes even in the unconscious, no hysterical symptom will arise; and where hysteria is found there can no longer be any question of 'innocence of mind' in the sense in which parents and educators use the phrase.\footnote{Freud SE VII, 49.}

Unconscious knowledge - the 'discovery' or 'invention' of this strange discursive being makes 'innocence' a phrase which should always be put in the brackets, a word which may be used by some simple minded educators, but not by a truly educated man. Dora suffers from her own unconscious and guilty knowledge. In Freud's eyes her adoration of Madonna is not an adoration of innocence but an adoration of a figure which shared her little dirty secrets with Dora - an adoration of Frau K.

Let's note the social implications of Freud's claim. We know that sexual knowledge at the time was associated with working class girls - they learned a lot about sexuality very early. Freud's suggestion that there is no innocence, even in case of sensitive and cultured middle class girls, seems to lead to a conclusion that the class difference in sexual matters does not exist.

What exactly is this knowledge? How does it manifest itself? Freud's answer to this question is puzzling and fascinating. He suggest that Dora simply knows that one may achieve sexual satisfaction by means of oral sex, and she pictures herself a scene of oral sex taking place between her father and his lover, in effect she identifies with Frau K and imagines to be in her position. What is most surprising and interesting here is that this knowledge juxtaposed with fantasy expresses itself in symptoms - namely in Dora's nervous cough. She coughs because she feels tickling in her throat, this tickling is explained by Freud as the result of fantasy about sexual intercourse 'per os' (as Freud puts it using Latin term in conformance to medical conventions of the time) with her father. She literally feels something in her throat. Hysteria then results from loss of innocence, it is a consequence of acquisition of traumatic sexual knowledge which expresses itself in fantasy.

At this point we understand why some commentators assume that Freud interpretations are rather indelicate. We also probably understand why Dora break away
her treatment and felt dissatisfied or perhaps even angry at Freud when he attempted to force her to accept this interpretation of her symptoms. She came to his office thinking that she will be able to share what she feels was a violation of her intimacy - her encounter with awkward, unattractive brutal Herr K. She received a diagnosis saying that she is unable to be excited by a man who she resents because she fantasizes about oral sex with her father.

The method in which Freud arrives at this interpretation is certainly unique, original and highly unintuitive, to some extent it is difficult to accepts this interpretation at face value, it's not surprising that it provoked criticism. The main reason for this is that apparently when speaking about her father Dora misspelled the word "vermogen" (rich) in a peculiar and strange way (which Freud does not quote), that made it sound like "unvermogen", which among various meaning can also mean "impotent". This led Freud to suggest that he was impotent, and according to the text Dora confirmed this interpretation. Then Freud investigated further and asked Dora if she knew about other forms of sexual gratification, she knew about them, so it was assumed that the link between cough and oral sexuality was confirmed. The reasoning appears convoluted at best.

In this context we may agree with Van Geyskens and van Haute who argue that the main relevance and interest of hysteria today is related to an interesting light it throws on the question of the relationship between mind and body\textsuperscript{115}. Of course hysterical symptoms don't have to be framed within eternal debate about mind and body (which leads to all well known and rather unattractive problems of dualism, reductionism etc), but we may well ask about the type of subjectivity that emerges here.

Who is the subject here? Can we find some traces of Cartesian subjectivity here? Surprisingly and interestingly it appears that the subject of knowledge here may be identified with the body, or in an even more puzzling way, with mouth. As Monique David-Menard puts it in a fascinating study: "It is by way of her mouth that she tries to present (darstellen) her father's sexual relationship with Frau K., but she does not

succeed in this: it can't be swallowed, it veers off into the symptoms of voicelessness. In other words in hysteria the body assumes the role of the representing almost Cartesian subject, the mouth thinks on its own, it attempts to represent, to present some kind of unconscious knowledge that is too repulsive and strange to be expressed in words. Thinking subject is reduced to mouth of hysterical patient.

This is a truly fascinating and inventive idea that appears to subvert all readings of the case that accuse Freud of representing patriarchy. If anyone is representing anything here it is Dora's mouth. Moreover it is unclear if she really represents patriarchy. This is suggested by Freud, his argument about oral sex suggests that she is representing the power of her father. Dora loves his father and she accepts subservient position, she disregards her own pleasure and enjoyment and only fantasizes about giving pleasure to the Other. But this again is just Freud's outrageous interpretation. Monique Menard-David on the other hand is more cautious in her discussion of Dora's symptoms, she doesn't mention "patriarchy", she suggests that it is sexual difference that is represented here. Dora's symptoms are related to inability to situate oneself within symbolic universe which directs relations between sexes. In a way then Dora represents her social world, a world in which one man, her father possesses wealth and power, but at the same time appears to be helpless, passive and submissive. A world in which the one who appears to be a master of the situation is somehow mastered by others and reduced to the status of a tool.

Quite aside from the content of this representation what is really interesting here is that Dora represents not only some particular events that took place in their life and traumatized them (as Freud tended to think before he abandoned his seduction theory), but rather a concept of difference. Their hysteria is an attempt to understand something it is a love of knowledge, a particular form of philosophy. Adoration of Madonna here is just that, an expression of love of knowledge. Freud at some point argued that this has to do with anxiety of castration - in other words hysteric is unable to come to terms with the fact that she does not have penis. This doctrine is turned by Lacan into his ontology of the real - it is inability to face the traumatic real that is at play in hysteria. Hysteric tries to

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express this traumatic lack in her body. When Lacan speaks about fear of castration and hysteric reaction to lack of penis he turns penis into phallus and phallus becomes for him a symbol of a bar between signified and signifier (at least according to Bruce Fink). Why exactly he uses the term referring to penis as a description of a difference between signifier and signifier is unclear, and his followers recognize that there is no particular reason for this choice of terminology. Leaving this rather confusing choice of term, Lacanian reading here would insist that hysteria appears to be a search for "what a woman was or could be. In one of the letters Freud remarks that "what is essentially repressed is always what is feminine". As Paul Verhaeghe puts it in an interesting study of hysteria:

"Traumatic real, for which there is no signifier in the Symbolic, is femininity. Freud had discovered the lack in the Symbolic system: there is no signifier for The Woman."

Of course it is uncertain whether we should understand this fantasy in this particular way. Some critics of Freud complain that he interpreted this fantasy as fellatio which, given Dora's love for Frau K, is misleading, he should understand this as cunnilingus. One has to admit that Freud's own remarks about this problem are contradictory, it is true that at one point he suggests that Dora was placing herself in frau K's place, but at the same time he is the first to recognize her homosexual love for frau K. As a matter of fact Freud opens the possibility of multiple determination of this symptoms, he speaks explicitly about overdetermination. In case of cough apart from multiple meanings of fantasy about oral sex - fellatio or cunnilingus - there are meanings

117 "How we could understand the bar or barrier between the signifier and the signified as being in any way related to the biological organ associated with the male of the species is truly difficult to see" Bruce Fink, "Knowledge and Jouissance," in Reading Seminar XX : Lacans major work on love, knowledge, and feminine sexuality, ed. Suzanne Barnard and Bruce Fink (Albany, N.Y. ; [Great Britain]: State University of New York Press, 2002), 37.


119 Freud SE VII, 56.

120 Freud SE VII, 47.
associated with presence or absence of herr K - she was coughing when he was gone and felt healthy when he was back.

The concept of over-determination is probably quite important here so we may do well to stop at it for a moment and reflect on the peculiar sort of bodily knowledge that it implies. The most concise definition of over-determination that Freud gives in Dora's goes as follows:

"A symptom has more than one meaning and serves to represent several unconscious processes simultaneously. And I should like to add that in my estimation a single unconscious mental process of phantasy will scarcely suffice for the production of a symptom"\(^{121}\)

"We have already learnt that it quite regularly happens that a single symptom corresponds to several meanings simultaneously. We may now add that it can express several meanings in succession"\(^{122}\)

The use of term meaning clearly suggests that the symptom is most of all a signifier - and phantasy plays the role of signified here. What is perhaps more interesting tough, is the fact that this interpretation of hysteria is completely at odds with theory of dominance of Oedipus complex. If every symptom always represents multiple phantasies then there is no one dominant phantasy, and theory of Oedipus clearly assumes that the subject is enthralled by one single fantasy - the fantasy about mother in case of boys or father in case of girls. When Freud writes Dora's case he is well aware that there are multiple fantasies at play and he underscores this with some conviction in his remarks about over-determination of Dora's symptoms.

But returning to multiplicity of identifications and Dora. To some extent the problem of hysteria and also its puzzling disappearance from clinical symptomatology is related precisely to prevalence of multiple identifications. Skepticism about hysteria is usually rooted in recognition of this aspect of the illness. Edward Shorter for instance in his history of psychosomatic symptoms remarks a propos Dora's second confrontation with psychoanalysis, her meeting with Felix Deutsch, that her symptoms immediately

\(^{121}\) Freud SE VII, 47.
\(^{122}\) Freud SE VII, 53.
changed when she discovered that her doctors is psychoanalyst. This phenomenon is usually referred to as 'hysteric suggestibility', patients imitate symptoms popular at the time, or simply display symptoms which appear to be legitimate to doctors.

Perhaps this is precisely the context in which hysteria becomes interesting for social theory - hysteria as desire to imitate - as desire to sustain multiple contradictory identifications with various actors. Surprisingly social theory build around this hysteric tendency would have to be different from theory relying on Oedipus. Instead of one law imposed on a society of brothers after the death of the father we would probably be faced with multiple laws, imposed not by one hegemonic instance but by multiplicity of actors identifying with themselves. This could probably resemble society of Lacanian psychoanalysts, according to Francois Roustang - each one has a different opinion about the teaching of the master and everyone are in conflict with each other - "a true society of madmen" as Roustang puts it.

In any case the insistence of overdetermination gives analyst a considerable license. Since all symptoms have multiple meanings and those meanings may well contradict each other one is free to interpret them in all possible ways. Freud's clearly uses this license to form all form of interesting and puzzling hypotheses, some of them are rather loosely related to disturbances of his patient. In the word of one commentator, Freud is "possessed by the demon of interpretation" and he forgets about his patient when he elaborates his visions. The 'science' of overdetermination looks like a justification for this kind of wild and unregulated hermeneutic. It is based on rejection of the idea of coherent non-contradictory text, that can be deciphered by skilled commentator who is supposed to look for the truth of the matter It is perhaps not surprising that this is precisely this point of Freud that influences Lacanian psychoanalysis. Fink's comment on lack of relationship between penis and phallus in Lacanian teaching demonstrates the absurd consequences of taking overdetermination to its extreme. Freud apparently


somewhat uneasy about the freedom of interpretation that he enjoyed, he apparently
needed some form of straitjacket that will secure consistency throughout his writings. It
seems that the teaching about Oedipus complex plays this role.

Oedipus can be certainly viewed as particular threat to this freedom of
interpretation. Madelon Sprengnether impressive criticism of the case, to give just one
instance, seems to follow exactly this line - Freud enforces his own knowledge, by which
she means Oedipus, he is unable to understand feminine sexuality, he is the victim of
prejudices common at his time. "Enforcing" here appears to be something that should
provoked uneasy feelings, it is something that should make us uncomfortable and
anxious. The theory of Oedipus complex is seen here as an another attempt to silence
hysterical woman, is an attempt to create a homogenous and coherent narrative about a
disturbance which resists any clear interpretation and point at real source of social
oppression. Madelon Sprengnether for example underscores "coercive quality" and
"uneasy tone" of Freud's remarks:

"On an interpretative 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." 125

But this reading assumes, without sufficient justification that Freud really
believed in Oedipus when he was writing Dora's case. This is far from certain. Criticism
of Oedipus is certainly a commonplace today, but perhaps this theory was not that
important for Freud at the time of writing this case study as his opponents tend to
believe? Perhaps we also need Oedipus, and the belief that Freud believe in Oedipus in
order to be able to write about psychoanalysis? Perhaps just like some atheists or critics
of religion need a fiction of coherent and homogenous church led by leader who fully
believes in his ideals, critics of psychoanalysis simply need an illusion that there was
once one psychoanalysis united by belief in one core idea of Oedipus?

Rachel B. Blass in her very comprehensive reading of Dora suggests just that -
according to her views at the time of writing Dora's case Freud did not yet believe in
Oedipus complex. According to Blass in Dora Freud seems to focus on internal organic

125 Sprengnether, "Enforcing Oedipus: Freud and Dora," 263.
causes of pathology - excessive sexual drive deriving from childhood - without yet suggesting the presence of some form of primal fantasy about parent\textsuperscript{126}. Most importantly, even leaving aside the idea of overdetermination, which in my view is in conflict with Oedipal model, Dora's love of the father in this case is not a 'normal', 'regular' phenomenon of development, but it is rather a defensive formation against the intense sexual drives.

This interpretation has been recently revived by Phillipe Van Haute and Tomas Geyskens authors of "A Non-Oedipal Psychoanalysis?". They too, claim that fantasy about the father for Dora is not the main causal factor of her neurosis, as Oedipus theory would suggest, but that it is just a defense against here intense desire for Herr K. Hysteria is most of all determined by bisexuality and organic factors and not by Oedipus complex\textsuperscript{127}. Obviously this does not mean that Freud did not believe in Oedipus at all, only that this belief did not play an important role in this particular case.

In any case the crucial question that we're facing here concerns the role of psychoanalytic subject - who exactly is she? We know that it may be wise to abstain from identifying analytic subject with Oedipal subject, we know that Freud's thinking about overdetermination, and multiple meanings of Dora's fantasy and her search of knowledge appear to contradict the idea of homogenous unified unconscious being. Perhaps we should rephrase the question, instead of asking who is the subject here, let's ask how many subjects are there. One thing that appears obvious when we frame the question in this way is the role of Freud in constitution of all Dora's symptoms. Perhaps even Dora's aphony is somehow related to Freud's efforts - isn't he silencing the girl with his constant stream of thoughts, steady flow of interpretations? Perhaps her aphony and tickling in her throat is just an expression of willingness to say something about Freud. So perhaps it is Freud who is speaking through Dora's body, perhaps it is Freud's fantasy that is expressed in her strange symptoms. This may appear unlikely, after all he only knew her


\textsuperscript{127} Haute and Geyskens, \textit{A non-Oedipal psychoanalysis? : a clinical anthropology of hysteria in the works of Freud and Lacan}: 56. "The focus on a polymorphic, perverse, bisexual, and (subsequently) a-teleological libido is at odds with psychogenetic approach[typical for Oedipus]".
for a brief amount of time, yet it is also very probable if we take into account that he was of full representation of Dora's symptoms. It is Freud who represents Dora's symptoms, by means of his writings. Perhaps Dora's hysteria is just Freud's hysteria? Perhaps both fantasies are intermingled here? It is interesting that Freud encourages this kind of reading explicitly when he states that the case study is a continuation of his book on dreams. We know that "Interpretation of Dreams" is a text which is partly autobiographical, the most important dreams, including the specimen dream of psychoanalysis, are Freud's. Perhaps then Freud's hysteria can throw an interesting light on Dora's disturbances, especially on the curious knot of knowledge, body and the feeling of exploitation that haunts Dora.

4. Freud's hysteria

Let's focus for a moment on Freud's own fantasies, his own desires related to maids, nurse-maids, his own hysterical symptoms.

One interesting symptom of hysteria that we may easily trace in Freud's narration of Dora's story is interestingly related to particular style of storytelling. One of main characteristics of hysterical discourse is its structural incoherence:

"They can, indeed, give the physician plenty of coherent information about this or that period of lives; but it is sure to be followed by another period as to which their communications run dry, leaving gaps unfilled, and riddles unanswered"\(^{128}\)

Surprisingly and ironically tough, Freud's own discourse about hysteria is similarly incoherent. We are constantly reminded only some selected parts of the story are presented, others are not described, some crucial events are completely omitted. The title of the work expresses this lack of coherence explicitly - "The fragment of an analysis...". In a word the analyst is unable to create a seamless narrative, he is unable to close the narrative, to make it appear coherent. This does not have to point to a "failure of interpretation" as some of Freud's critics claim\(^ {129}\). It is more likely that analyst does

\(^{128}\) Freud, SE VII, 16.

\(^{129}\) Sprengnether, "Enforcing Oedipus:Freud and Dora," 269.
justice to hysterical discourse, which is precisely enigmatic, unfulfilled, fractured between different meanings of the same situation. As Steven Marcus remarks this puts Freud on the same level as Joyce or Proust - it appears that the case study is one of the masterpieces of modernist fiction.\(^{130}\)

According to some readings Freud seems to heroically fight against all those contradictions and incoherencies and attempts to find some general overarching interpretation of all symptoms (read Oedipus). We may see some symptoms of this tendency. At times Freud's discussions with his patients resemble trials rather than therapy, Freud uses contradictions against the patient - he uses facts against the patient, he convinces her, he forcefully attempt to prove that his interpretations are right.

But before we attempt to criticize Freud for his aggressive tendency to impose his newly invented theory on everyone we should remember that he was probably well aware of shortcomings of his own strategy. In this respect critics of Freud are one reflexive loop behind the object of their study. If we read Freud's correspondence we will quickly discover that he was aware of the effects of his interventions, and remained quite ironical and sarcastic about himself, one interesting theme that runs through letters to Fliess is a comparison between psychoanalytic treatment of hysteria and inquisition:

"Why are their confessions under torture so like the communications made by my patients in psychic treatment? (...) I have ordered the *Malleus maleficarum*, and (...) shall study it diligently."\(^{131}\)

"I understand the harsh therapy of the witches' judges."\(^{132}\)

Freud notices here that his hysterical patients behave as if they were tortured by his more or less painful and difficult to accept interpretations, he also tends to focus on similarities between witches and hysterics rather than between analysts and inquisitors. Witches in this interpretation were simply hysterical women, who invent fantasies about being sexually abused by the devil.

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\(^{132}\) Ibid., 224.
"What would you say, by the way, if I told you that my brand-new published theory of hysteria is already known and was published hundred times over, though several centuries ago? Do you remember that I always said that the medieval theory of possession held by ecclesiastical courts was identical with our theory of foreign body and the splitting of consciousness?"\(^\text{133}\)

Later on Freud goes on to elucidate all possible meanings of fantasies about witches. Broomsticks on which witches fly are obviously penises, more surprisingly their gatherings where they play and dance are simply metaphors for childhood play, apparently innocent, but in essence - guilty and full of sadistic impulses.

The analogy between hysteria and witchcraft is of course a common theme in the history of the disease. Ilse Veith in a classical account of history of hysteria seems to be convinced that some if not most of the witches were simply hysterical or psychotic women:

"many, if not most, of the witches as well as a great numbers of their victims (...) were simply hysteric who suffered from partial anesthesia, mutism, blindness, and convulsions, and above all, from variety of sexual delusions\(^\text{134}\)

The suspicion that both alleged "victims" of witches and witches themselves were suffering from some sort of hysteria seems to be justified if we analyze the problem. "Victims" of witches often complained at sexual disturbances caused by alleged witch, very often men were complaining that a witch has taken away their member or caused impotence. "Witches' Hammer" is full of confessions of men whose members were magically and mischievously stolen by an evil witch. It may well be that witch hunts simply expressed a fear of feminine, they were expressions of male insecurity. The interesting element that Veith brings into our discussion is the recognition that both witches and inquisitors or victims of witches were hysterical - they all suffered from similar disturbances, which often involved particular delusions about other sex. In

\(^{133}\) Ibid.

psychoanalytic terms they clearly suffered from their guilty knowledge, it inscribed itself in body by means of phantasy.

Interestingly this type of sexual delusions still plays an important role in cultures that still believe in witchcraft today. In Republic of South Africa for instance it is widely believed that witches have exceptionally large breasts or penises, and that they send zombies to rape their victims and cause infertility or impotence\textsuperscript{135}. What is more troubling many families of AIDS victims in South Africa deny that their relatives had died of AIDS-related diseases and ascribe the cause of their deaths to witchcraft\textsuperscript{136}. According to some researchers AIDS is responsible for resurgence of witch-hunting and witch-cleansing movements in Africa\textsuperscript{137}. Very often the belief in witches is tied with the belief in ultimate moral superiority of witch-hunter, in many cases the judgment of witchcraft is given to priests of new evangelical churches, who have almost the status of saints.

But the whole discussion of witches in Freud's letters seems to be related to a much more important problem when we discover that it is closely bound with Freud's own self-analysis and his struggle with his own hysteria. A curious turn of narration seems to suggest that witches represent a more important element in Freud's unconscious.

We learn from letters that some old woman, a witch of sorts, played a decisive role in his development. This seems to contradict received interpretation of Oedipus complex, according to which it was discovered by Freud in 1897 during his own self-analysis\textsuperscript{138}. The orthodox psychoanalytic narration states that in letters to Fliess Freud slowly abandons so called seduction theory and adapts different view of neurosis which focuses on the Oedipal conflict between child and parent. The abandonment of seduction theory is triggered by personal crisis in Freud's life began after the death of his father in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{135} Isak A. Niehaus, \textit{Witchcraft and a life in the new South Africa} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). 12.
\item \textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 17.
\item \textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 163.
\item \textsuperscript{138} This orthodox view is expressed by Ernst Kris,: "Freud's insight into the structure of Oedipus complex, i.e. the core problem of psychoanalysis, was made possible by his self-analysis, which he began in the summer of 1897" (Kris, 1986, "Einleitung zur Erstausgabe", 545 \textit{Briefe an Wilhelm Fliess}, p.519-561).
\end{itemize}
autumn 1896. There are different interpretations of this crisis. Marianne Krüll suggest that Freud wanted to save the memory of his father from implications of seduction theory, which claimed that most fathers are sexual predators who abuse their children. After the death of his father Freud was unwilling to claim that his father abused him in childhood - a claim that he should have made if the seduction theory was valid. In consequence he accepted different doctrine that claimed that the child desired the mother and wanted to kill the father. The father is acquitted, it is the child now who is guilty of murderous impulses. The abandonment of seduction theory is a topic of intense debate, the problem still provokes controversy because it is directly relevant to the question of reality of sexual abuse.

Yet if we look carefully at the letters we'll see that Freud's own self-analysis is not centered on his father, but on his nurse-maid. On the other hand the invention of Oedipus complex looks rather like a result of a break or interruption of his own self-analysis, there is no hint that Freud arrived at it through his own self-analysis. It is more likely that he arrived at it through repression of his memories about his nurse-maid who played a decisive role in shaping his ambiguous identifications.

At some point he openly confesses that he never experienced any kind of Oedipal conflicts, that the father did not played a role in his own history at all, and that the decisive role in his personal life was played by some old and ugly woman, who was, and this is really decisive for our whole interpretation, a nurse-maid:

"I can only indicate that the old man plays no active part (...) in my case the 'prime originator' was an ugly, elderly but clever woman, who told me a great deal about God Almighty and hell and who instilled in me a high opinion of my own capacities"


We should note that against all later psychoanalytic theories which try to ascribe decisive role to the figure of mother, this ugly woman was certainly not a mother, she resembles a witch in her divine or demonic aura. She is contrasted with the mother, who is only mentions in a very brief and relatively unimportant remarks.

The role of father does appear in letters to Fliess but nothing suggests that the discover of the father follows from self-analysis. When he speaks about his own father, he remains elusive, his remarks are highly general, and seem to suggest lack of genuine affection for the "old man". One short remarks which is taken to mean that Freud arrived at Oedipus through his own self-analysis looks rather like an attempt to fit his newly invented theory with his own biography. It does not resemble honest discussion of his own past. "I have found, in my case too [the phenomenon] of being in love with mother and jealous of my father"142 - no details, no specific information, no dreams about the father, no slips of tongue, just impersonal "in my case too". It is interesting that Kris and other analysts believed that Freud really discovered Oedipus through analysis of himself - his remarks do not suggest such a reading, it looks more like lack of honesty with oneself, it resembles an interruption of analysis rather than its culmination. If we look at Freud's reflections on his nurse-maid we find dreams, we find elaborate discussion, and some elements of true astonishment about her, all of which seem to suggest that she really played an important role in his subjective experience.

The story of repression of memory about nurse-maid and substitution of this memory with Oedipus throws interesting life on Freud's reaction on Raphael's Madonna vel Vienesse nurse-maid, and of course - Dora and hysteria. Let's note that ugly old maid just like Dora was not allowed to keep her own name, the name is never really mentioned in the letter, she's just an ugly old woman. The editor of the letters Jeffrey Masson quotes an article by Josef Sajner, where the author suggests that the real name of the nurse-maid was Monika Zajlic, but he is unable to give any particular information about her143.

In another letter we learn that despite her religious leanings the woman was a thief and she encouraged Freud to steal too. The ugly nurse was apparently stealing all toys of small Sigmund and she encouraged him to steal money from his parents. She also took

142 Ibid., 272.
143 Ibid., 271.
him to catholic church, and when small Freud returned he preached about God Almighty. When the family discovered that the women was stealing the police was called and she was sent to prison for ten months. Her departure was a first real trauma for Freud, he remembers that he was crying in despair and there was no one around him. In a letter to Fliess Freud associated this story with his a dream that he had in which he had taken money that he shouldn't have taken, the conclusion: 'the correct interpretation is: I= she'\textsuperscript{144}. He then moves on to report with excitement that he will be finally able to overcome his own hysteria thanks to discovery of this long repressed memory:

"If (...) I succeed in resolving my own hysteria, then I shall be grateful to the memory of old woman who provided me at such an early age with the means for living and going on living"\textsuperscript{145}.

Clearly another ironical and ambiguous statement - by stealing and encouraging small Sigmund to steal the woman provided Freud with means of living. Makes sense if we assume that she simply made Freud hysterical, which in turn forced him to invent psychoanalysis which became his main source of means for living. From this perspective it also seems clear that the woman was clearly exploited by Freud, even though it appears that she exploited him, by encouraging him to steal. We should note that dreams about his nurse-maid and Freud's self-analysis takes place at a time when Freud is full of doubts about effectiveness of psychoanalysis, he is aware that his therapy is completely inefficient, he almost feels like he's stealing money from his clients.

This enthusiasm about new discovery quickly fades, Freud somehow cannot integrate this nurse-maid in his own worldview - and it is not difficult to see why - his discussion implies that he identifies with a criminal working class woman, and that neither his well-to-do middle class parents played a crucial role in his development. One month after a letter in which he allegedly found Oedipus complex (according to orthodox view) in his own childhood experiences Freud confesses that he is simply unable to analyze himself and that he must interrupt this whole process:

\textsuperscript{144}Ibid. 271.
\textsuperscript{145}Ibid., 269.
"My analysis remains interrupted. I have realized why I can only analyze myself with the help of knowledge obtained objectively (like an outsider). True self-analysis is impossible; otherwise there would be no neurotic illness. Since I am still contending with some kind of puzzle in my patients, this is bound to hold me up in my self-analysis as well"\textsuperscript{146}

In other words Freud interrupts his self-analysis because he feels he is unable to gain insight into his own complexes. Let's note that he says that is only able to analyze himself when he gains some objective knowledge about the person from his mother, and we know that the main piece of objective knowledge that he obtained from his mother was an information about the stealing nurse-maid. This suggest indirectly that the piece of analysis concerning nanny was indeed a true analysis.

Let's recall that this interruption of therapy appears to be a typical approach of hysteric - Freud interrupts his own therapy just like Dora interrupted her therapy with Freud. Perhaps both Freud and Dora are dissatisfied with objective-like character of Oedipal theory? Perhaps both feel that this objective knowledge, this discourse that claims to be true and scientific contribution to understanding of individual disturbances, simply fails when it comes to understanding oneself?

The relationship between nanny and mother and Oedipus complex is rarely analyzed, there is one rather old and apparently a little forgotten article from American Imago by Jim Swan\textsuperscript{147}. Swan attempts to reconcile this rather disturbing piece of knowledge about Freud with analytic orthodoxy. He argues that the term Originator - \textit{Urheberin} - should rather mean seductress, he suggests that the nanny provoked his first sexual instincts, so she wasn't really a substitute for the father but rather a replacement of mother. But this does not seem very convincing since Freud explicitly tells us that she was old, ugly and clever. This hardly resembles a description of sexual object or seductress. Some of Swan's conclusions appear fascinating tough, he notes that:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 281.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Jim Swan, "\textit{Mater} and Nannie: Freud's Two Mothers and the Discovery of the Oedipus Complex," \textit{American Imago} 31, no. 1 (1974).
\end{itemize}
"Freud's relationship to his nurse has 'feminized' him: first by putting him in a passive, exploited position and then by identification, making him the exploiter of others."\(^{148}\)

This latter position seems to be related to Freud's constant doubts about his own practice, his constant qualms of conscience that he is taking money from his patients without giving them anything back; and also his doubts that he is actually harming rather than helping them. The famous dream about Irma's injection, which chronologically coincides with analysis of nurse-maid, seems to circle precisely around this theme of exploiting others, stealing money from them.

We should probably note that those doubts where not unjustified, in case of Irma Freud has actually harmed her physically, he arranged a rather innovative treatment of her hysteria with Fliess. They decided that she can be cured from her purely psychosomatic disturbances only through operation on the nose (Fliess held an outlandish theory according to which addiction to masturbation can be cured through surgical operation on the nose, he also defended an interesting theory of male menstruation), Fliess had made a mistake during an operation, he left a piece of medical gauze in nasal cavity which led to hemorrhage and nearly killed the patient\(^{149}\).

It is fascinating in this context that the discontinuity between his analysis of nanny and his argument about Oedipus is also related to the problem of truth, especially subjective, personal truth, or honesty. Precisely at the point when Freud invokes honest reflection on his own life he stops to think about his own experiences and assumes the truth of cultural resources - Oedipus, Hamlet (Freud considers briefly the possibility of naming his discovery "Hamlet complex") - in Lacanian parlance he lets the symbolic Other speaks precisely at the point where he feels he is speaking the truth.

"Being totally honest with oneself is a good exercise.(...) I have found in my case too..."\(^{150}\).

\(^{148}\)Ibid., 39.


This "in my case too" seems to be precisely the symbolic Other taking charge and speaking "the truth". Usually when we say "me too" we attempt to fit in with others, to show we are similar, and to paper over unpleasant and disturbing emotions. Often this statement is a blatant lie which simply masks our fear of expressing an uncomfortable opinion. It is easier to say "me too" rather than disagree. On the other hand when Freud appears to be honest he appears to be full of doubts about himself, he sees himself in very unfavorable light. Most importantly he sees how deeply he is enmeshed in the imbroglio of power relations, he is aware that he is exploiting others, forcing his own knowledge on them, suggesting symptoms and expecting obedience. Of course this Other who exercises pressure on Freud is not so much an anonymous voice of society, it should not be confused with Heidegger's man. Obviously theory of Oedipus was quite controversial, there was no consensus around it, there was no social pressure to adapt it. It's is more likely that the Other with whom he concurs is simply other Freud - Freud the master, who attempts to stop overdetermined polysemy of his associations, to repress all the doubts about exploiting others and being exploited, by one crucial theory - Oedipus complex.

Now if we return to the question of hysterical knowledge with the knowledge about Freud's identification with his nurse-maid in mind we may be able to see how both hysteria and psychoanalysis are responding to similar problems. The question of power relations, the question of force and knowledge appears to be central here. Of course the word "power" is confusing and puzzling. It is probably one of most overused concepts in humanities. The idea of power relations is certainly overused and it appears to be a cliché. What exactly do we mean by power then? Dora's main symptoms are to some extent reactions to force, to attempts to subdue her, to reduce her to the role of servant, to reduce her to the role of object of exchange. Her interruption of therapy is just a proof that she has probably seen Freud's intervention as yet another attempt to subdue her - to force her to accept some interpretation of her symptoms that she found unconvincing. We've noticed the particular phenomenon of namelessness that plays an important role here - we may recall that Freud does not name his nanny, who played such an important role in his development, he also refuses to name Dora in a way, he unconsciously associates her with a maid that was unable to keep her name when she was serving her mistress. On the other hand on the side of Dora we have particular aphonia, inability to
speak, which may also resemble or correspond with this inability to name herself. We also know that she herself played the role of nurse for children of her father's lover; and that she cared for her father when he was ill. She also was fascinated by the image of Madonna, an image which Freud compared to Vienesse nurse-maid. Hysteria then is clearly associated with this particular form of work and exploitation.

Freud's main symptoms, his fixation on his nurse-maid, but also to some extent his assumption of Oedipus theory (should we say that Oedipus is a symptom?) on the other hand are also related to doubts about his own exploitation of others - his reflections on inquisition seems to show that he is aware of the element of violence of his interpretation. His identification with nurse-maid who exploited him also seem to point to this element of force and violence. This imbroglio of force and knowledge is surrounded by the chorus of commentators, most of them is certain that Freud indeed forces his interpretations, that he indeed imposes his own master-method on his patient. This kind of reading suggests that Freud solves his subjective crisis by adopting the position of the master, adapting Oedipus, discarding polymorphous sexuality, overdetermination.

It is clear that Freud's knowledge is a response to hysteria. Lacan interestingly point he remarks that hysteria is an enigma which presents itself to Oedipus who does not yet know that he has a complex, in other words it is a puzzle which appears to Freud before he becomes committed to his theory of Oedipus complex. According to Lacan hysteria given analyst a unique possibility of understanding peculiar form of unconscious knowledge, he regrets that Freud had given up this knowledge for the sake of Oedipus: "Why did he substitute this myth, the Oedipus complex, for the knowledge that he gathered from all these mouths of gold, Anna, Emma, Dora?" In seminar XVIII Lacan identifies hysterical knowledge with the knowledge of the slave, expropriated from him by his master, in terms of structural definition of psychical apparatus this may be probably understood as the knowledge of unconscious as opposes to knowledge of ego. In other words it represents unconscious grasp of the Otherness within ourselves which is


152 page 99.
radically different from all narcissistic illusions about ourselves to which we are attached at the level of consciousness.

5. Oedipus and overdetermination

It seems clear that hysteria represents a model that is opposed to Oedipus. Hysteria is over determined, there are multiple causes that form symptoms, Oedipus on the other hand tends to lead to some form of unified causality. When we trace history of reception of psychoanalysis we may see that this unified causality is easily trivialized into popular thinking according to which relations with mother or father in childhood determines all our adult behaviors. This type of mono-causality was often criticized by enemies of psychoanalysis. It is worth noting in this context that thinking in terms of overdetermination seems to be in some form of conflict with this insistence on one specific cause.

Let's recall how Freud defines over determination in Dora's case:

"A symptom has more than one meaning and serves to represent several unconscious processes simultaneously. And I should like to add that in my estimation a single unconscious mental process of phantasy will scarcely suffice for the production of a symptom" 153

One symptom corresponds to multiple processes, it is associated and tied to different strata of mental material. What's more it is also possible that symptoms are not limited to one person, but they involve others in a way. In this reading hysteria, most elaborate manifestation of over determination, involves not only the person of patient, not only Dora, but also her social environment.

This understanding of hysteria continues to haunt psychoanalysis, we may find interesting manifestation of it in “Psychology of the masses...” According to some interpreters this work is an exposition of authoritarian or even totalitarian theory of identification with the leader154. Yet one should stress the fact that Freud only begins

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154 Borch Jascobsen,
with Oedipus. He does not even give any example of his own practice when he starts to speak about it, he just notes, that there is something like Oedipus complex. The rest of chapter is focused on hysterias which display somewhat different, un-oedipal pattern of identification.\textsuperscript{155}\textsuperscript{156}. If we look at cases of hysteria presented by Freud in “Psychology of masses...” it is striking how far from Oedipus complex they are. Let’s examine an example of group hysteria in a boarding school\textsuperscript{157}. One of the girls has had a letter from a lover. This letter provokes her jealousy, and she reacts with an attack of psychosomatic (hysterical) disturbances. Other girls catch a fit, and as we may well imagine it leads to an outburst of psychosomatic symptoms e.g. headaches, vomiting, problems with breathing. While it has to be admitted that this particular example was invented by Freud, we should not assume too hastily that it is completely fictional.

In fact Freud’s example is a trace of a wider concern about epidemics of group hysteria in XIX century Europe. Those epidemics are roughly simultaneous to development of typically modern biopower; they are also simultaneous to entrance of masses of workers on political scene. The first recorded modern example of group hysteria in a workplace took place in a factory in England in 1787. The symptoms involved violent convulsions and sensations of suffocation among 23 female and 1 male worker. Outbreaks of group hysteria in newly reformed schools involved similar purely psychosomatic symptoms, usually they involved convulsions, contractures, trembling or laughing. For example in 1893 in Basel all girls developed symptoms of contagious shaking and convulsions\textsuperscript{158}.

Those examples of mass hysteria are far from archaic, although rather rare today, one may still find reports of them in medical and popular press. There are of course differences between contemporary form of group hysteria and its fin-de-siecle expressions. One of those differences concerns naming, in 1994 “group hysteria” was


\textsuperscript{156} Shorter, "Paralysis: The Rise and Fall of a "Hysterical" Symptom," 549-82.

\textsuperscript{157} SE 18,

removed from classification of mental diseases, and was substituted by term “mass sociogenic illness”, or “mass psychogenic illness”. The reasons for this substitution were simple, hysteria was perceived as a derogatory term - application of term group hysteria to outbursts of social anxiety provoked a violent protest on the side of affected group, which usually was certain that their symptoms are not just psychosomatic but are effected by real causes in their environment.

Yet, apart from different nomenclature, symptoms of group sociogenic illness are same as symptoms of mass hysteria, and they involve bodily disturbances without precipitating organic causes. Mass sociogenic illness is defined today as "a constellation of symptoms suggestive of organic illness but without an identified cause in a group of people with shared beliefs about the cause of the symptoms". Contemporary outbursts of group hysteria are usually related to popular objects of fear, they involve anxiety over some odours or substance which are seen as polluted by bioterrorist activities. In one school in New England in 1998 there was an outbreak of hysteria associated by subjects with exposure to toxic substances allegedly diffused by terrorists. Nearly 100 persons developed similar somatic symptoms which included: headache, dizziness, nausea, drowsiness, chest tightness, and difficulty with breathing. No pollution was discovered in the environment. Other case of mass sociogenic illness took place in Belgian school in 1999, in this case a large group of students developed somatic symptoms which they believed were related to consumption of coca-cola soft drink. Chemical analysis of drink proved that drink was normal, there was no trace of any toxic pollution. Most recent report about case of "mass psychogenic illness" that I found related an outbreak of it in a school in Buffalo in January 2012.

What kind of identification is displayed in case of group hysteria according to "Group Psychology"? One should start by noting that a tie with a leader in case of hysteria is completely different then it is in artificial groupings such as churches or armies discussed by Freud earlier. Far from simply repeating Le Bon’s scorn for the mob

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160 Craig AS, Hoy D, et al.
(as it is sometimes claimed\textsuperscript{163}) Freud seemed to propose something genuinely original and interesting. Most importantly group hysteria displays an identification with a leader which has nothing to do with its typical oedipal structure, therefore it opens a possibility of grasping anti-oedipal or a-oedipal concept of the political which emerges from Freud’s writings.

It is easy to omit the role of the leader altogether and argue that we have here a simple case of mindless panic, a dissolution of group structure, which is rather a regress to savage state of humanity then a diagnosis of mass movements contemporary with Freud. Against this too easy path one should begin by noting that group hysteria, or mass sociogenic illness, is always started by one individual (so called index patient), who suddenly develops somatic symptoms and presents some interpretation of them ("it is bioterroristic attack!" in New England example or "he cheated on me" in Freud's example). This interpretation is then unconsciously accepted by all other members of a group and causes similar symptoms. Index patient in most cases is not in a position of official representative of authority. This strange leader of hystersics gives Freud's argument about crucial role of identification an interesting twist. It turns out that the real leader is always in a different place, then he is officially placed (especially by Freud’s critics).

If we take boarding school example it would have appeared that the real leader was some head teacher, to whose power all girls were subjected. Yet girls do not follow official authority, on the contrary, official authorities must intervene in school to bring back normal order. And this intervention is necessary because hysteric’s body acts on their own, instead of identifying with official regime of power which regulates their movements they identify with a an informal one. The role of initiator of revolt is played by a girl who is considered to be superior to them due to the quality that they desire (being loved by some privileged other), and for which they in some sense fight by means of their symptoms. In effect one may note that leader here is not known a priori. A deeper analysis, which unravels the meaning of symptoms, is necessary in order to discover who it is that provokes symptoms. When Freud narrates his example it might seem that the

\textsuperscript{163} Ellenberger, \textit{The discovery of the unconscious; the history and evolution of dynamic psychiatry}: 528.
case is simple – one girl receives a letter and others catch a fit; causal link is visible at first glance. One should remember however, that from the point of view of analysis it looks somewhat differently. When an analyst approaches group hysteria he first observes some symptoms which are completely irrational and unrelated to anything around. He usually won’t hear an information: x got a letter, and we all caught a fit. Girls will usually say: “there is some odour around, there’s something with coca-cola, it is toxic”. After hearing this interpretation he starts his investigation, like a good detective he asks: who started it all? Which leads him back to one initiator of the outburst, an “index patient”. Then he takes this patient to his couch, and finds out that the unconscious reason of her attack was a letter from her lover.

It is is clear that at the beginning of mass hysteria a leader is an enigma, a puzzle, which has to be resolved by careful analysis of behavior of a group. In consequence power exercised by a leader becomes enigmatic as well, one does not know who really exercises power over some mass before one starts to unravel irrational elements of behavior of people. And the mechanism of this power is equally mysterious. It seems that power is linked to an ability to gain followers, who will imitate one’s behavior. The question: “who is your leader?” is equivalent to a question “who are you coping?”, and this in turn leads to a question: “who are you identifying with?”. How does an analyst discover who are the girls identifying with? Following Lacan we may argue that “Purloined Letter” by Edgar Alan Poe may give a perfect image of analyst procedure in case of group hysteria. Note that it is Poe’s Dupin, and not Freud or Lacan who claims that identification is crucial for understanding political life, since it “lies at the bottom of all the spurious profundity which has been attributed to Rochefoucault, to La Bougive, to Machiavelli, and to Campanella”\(^\text{164}\). The procedure that Dupin employs to recognize stolen letter is exactly analogous as the one employed by Freud in looking for his einziger Zug, single trait which is the basis of identification. Poe’s detective looks for “radicalness of (...) differences, which was excessive”\(^\text{165}\). This radical difference suggest to Dupin that the letter was stolen, in a same way some peculiarities of behavior of the hysterical, and by analogy, crowd suggests that its behavior is copied.

\(^{164}\) Poe, Selected writings: 217.
\(^{165}\) Poe, Selected writings, 223.
6. Individual hysteria as mass hysteria

This type of investigation into multiplicity of associations is clearly displayed in Dora’s case. All symptoms of Dora are unraveled through reference to behaviors of people who surround her, her hysteria is mass phenomenon. At some point, for example, Dora felt intense gastric pains, apparently without any somatic reasons, after a longer analysis it turned out, that few days earlier she had visited her cousins, younger one had become engaged and in reaction to this the other started to suffer from intense gastric pains. Few days after this visit all of a sudden Dora herself began to feel gastric pains. Why? Because, as Freud tells us

“she saw her own story reflected in that of the elder sister, who had recently had a love-affair which had ended unhappily”.

In a similar manner Dora imitated Frau K. (her father's lover) illnesses, Frau K., pretended to be ill, when her husband returned home from his voyages, even though before his arrival she felt well. Dora reversed this symptom and felt bad when Herr K., departed, she suffered from loss of voice and coughing while he was away, and felt well when he returned.

Among those various radical differences which can be traced to imitation of someone, or someone’s story there is one imitation, which for Freud appears to be somehow privileged, and it is later invoked by Freud in “Mass psychology...” as an example of einziger Zug – that is Dora’s nervous cough. Freud interpreted it as an expression of unconscious phantasy about Dora's fellatio with her father. This particular interpretation of Dora’s symptom presented by Freud was countered by numerous commentators, most notably by Lacan, who had argued that this cough may be equally well be interpreted as an unconscious phantasy about cunnilingus. Lacan is certainly

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166 SE 7.
167 SE 7, p.38
168 SE 7, p.238.
right when he points out this simplification of Freud. Probably Freud simplifies matters there by saying that cough was exclusively a symptom of identification with a father. This simplification is probably an attempt to give his ambiguous experience an unambiguous interpretation. But one should avoid a different simplification which states that Dora identified only with Frau K., and never displayed identification with her father. In contrast to this interpretation one should argue, that she probably identified with both, and she identified with many people around her as well, she had not particular preference for one leader, or to state it more vividly she identified with a multiplied leader. Not only did she identify with her father's lover, that would be understandable and appropriate from the point of view of Oedipus, but also developed identifications with her father and occasionally for other persons, for example with her older cousin. We may observe here a puzzling plurality of leaders, in this case we have three leaders, and possibly more, since Freud did not unravel everything, and he proposed without any trace of dogmatism associated with his name, that many other interpretations are equally possible.

This multiplicity of leaders seems to be extremely interesting from the point of view of Freud’s political theory. It seems that a leader is rather a nodal point on which multiple lines of thought converge. Far from being unified or unilateral, identification should be grasped as definitely multilateral and diversified process. Building on Freud’s experience with Dora we should argue that identification of a mass with a leader is of similar character as Dora’s, it also employs multiple links to multiple figures which are imitated by means of common story or fantasy. People see in their leaders their own stories (or fantasies) mirrored, a leader is precisely a person which plays out a phantasy which is experienced as taboo by member of a group.

7. Multiple phantasies of hysterics

This thread of conceptualizing identification with the leader in light of multiple phantasies is developed by Freud in two fascinating and largely forgotten articles written
just after the shock of confrontation with Dora: “Some general remarks on hysterical attacks” and “Hysterical Phantasies a their relation to bisexuality”171.

What is new and interesting here is the argument, that hysterical phantasy should not be reduced to a single and unilateral structure, Freud claims:

“As a rule particular symptom corresponds to multiple phantasies, [all] symptoms are overdetermined”172.

“The attack (...) represents several phantasies in the same material simultaneously through condensation”173.

One attack of this kind consisted of two seemingly contradictory gestures, the patient represented an intercourse by tearing off her own dress with one hand (imitating man), and at the same time pressed her dress up against her body (imitating more female behavior)174. Sexual phantasy here is played out by double identification, with an identification with both sides of the scene. What is curious here is the fact, that this phantasy is expressed as if in a pantomime175. Freud seems to refer here to an original meaning of pantomime: pantos mimos in greek means imitating all. Although some commentators176 see this turn to pantomime as undeveloped and only signaled one may well argue that it has deeper roots in Freud’s earlier writings.

But how exactly identification through multiple phantasies would be possible? It seems that identification overlaps here with condensation.

“An attack [of hysteria] represents multiple phantasies in one symptom as a result of condensation”

says Freud, and in this remark he apparently sees no difference between condensation and identification. We need only to remember that Dora’s symptom, her nervous cough, is presented in “Psychology of masses...” as an example of identification.

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171 Both in SE 9.
172 SE 9, p.163.
173 SE 9, p.230.
174 SE 9, p.166.
175 SE 9, p.230.
176 Menard- David, claims that Freud did not develop this theme. David-Ménard, Hysteria from Freud to Lacan : body and language in psychoanalysis: 11.
In light of remark just quoted it should be rather classified as condensation. What exactly is the relation between condensation and identification?

If we consider the origins of Freud's thinking about identification and condensation in “Traumdeutung” we will see that boundaries between two processes are blurred from the beginning, in fact one may say that they are altogether absent. It seems that identification and condensation are actually condensed or identified with each other. When introducing identification Freud says that:

"The representation of the relation of similarity is assisted by the tendency of the dream work toward condensation. Similarity, consonance, the possession of common attributes - all these are represented in dreams by unification, which may either be present already in the material of the dream-thoughts or may be freshly constructed. The first of this possibilities may be described as 'identification' and the second as 'composition'. (...) In identification, only one of the persons who are linked by a common element succeeds in being represented in the manifest content of the dream while the second or remaining persons seems to be suppressed in it"\(^{177}\)

The quote appears to be complicated. Multiple terms describing dream work appear in a seemingly random order, we have “unification”, “condensation”, “identification” and finally “composition”. It may appear that condensation is “assisted” by identification and composition, but how should we understand this assisting? Are these two distinct processes which go hand in hand, work together and produce similar results? Or is the one dominating the other? Perhaps one may unravel the relation of two processes by simply comparing the effects of their activity.

When Freud discusses identification he takes example of the dream of Irma’s injection. What kind of example does he present when he defines condensation? Well, he gives an example of dream about Irma's injection. When discussing condensation Freud argues that Irma, the main character in the dream content was just a stand-in for multiple figures: she represented some lady for whom he wanted to exchange her, for Freud's daughter, for Freud's other patient, for Freud's wife and whole series of other figures, in a word:

\(^{177}\) SE 4, p. 320.
"Irma became the representative of all these other figures which had been sacrificed to the work of condensation, since I passed over to her, point by point everything that reminded me of them"\(^{178}\).

In his discussion of identification Freud says something slightly different, but not much different:

“In the dream of Irma’s injunction, I wished to exchange her for another patient; I wished that is that the other woman might be my patient just as Irma was”\(^{179}\).

Notice that the only difference between those definitions of two allegedly separate concepts concerns the number of persons involved – in case of condensation there is a seemingly infinite multiplicity of women and in case of identification there are only two figures – main one (Irma) and the other patient. Apart from this slight difference in number of persons (and possibly things) involved both processes are indistinguishable.

Identification seem to overlap with condensation in “Interpretation of dreams” and both processes play similar function in an explanation of symptoms of hysteria – they both serve to underscore particular similarity between two elements of dream (two fantasies), which are somehow fused into one. Dora’s nervous cough, presented in “Psychology of masses…” as identification may be well conceived as condensation of multiple phantasies (fellatio, cunnilingus) which were expressed by means of one symptom. If this is the case, then why shouldn’t we present an identification of the masses with the leader as a similar condensation?

It seems that Freud entertains this possibility of “Psychology of masses”, he speaks about the fact, that sometimes many ideas may play leading role – he distinguishes secondary and primary ideas. This remark is clearly a trace of this slightly repressed thinking about un-oedipal identification, identification through condensation of multiple fantasies in one symptom

If we return to chapter about condensation from “Interpretation of dreams…” we may well understand how exactly this link between multiple thoughts or ideas may play a leading role. In this chapter Freud argues that two decisive elements of the dream

\(^{178}\) SE 4, p.293.

\(^{179}\) SE 4, p.322.
“botanical” and “monograph” are overdetermined nodal points (*Knotenpunkte*), which were created by the work of condensation. Those signifiers:

“possessed copious contacts with the majority of the dream-thoughts, because, that is to say, they constituted ‘nodal points’ upon which great number of the dream-thoughts converged, and because they had several meanings in connection with the interpretation of the dream. The explanation of this fundamental fact can also be put in another way: each of the elements of the dream’s content turns out to have been ‘overdetermined’ - to have been represented in the dream thoughts many times over.”*180*

It seems that origins of Lacan’s concept of button tie, upholstery button (*point de capiton*) should be looked for exactly in Freud’s thinking about nodal points. His terminology drawn from upholstery is a direct reference to a quote from Goethe that Freud introduces in this chapter. Describing the work of condensation comprising establishment of overdetermined nodal points Freud says: "Here we find ourselves in a factory of thoughts where, as in the ‘weaver’s masterpiece’ (and then goes a quotation from Goethe's Faust):

a thousand threads one treadle throws,

Where fly the shuttles hither and thither,

Unseen the threads are knit together,

And an infinite combination grows."*181*

This ‘treadle’ which knits together thousands is precisely a nodal point (*Knotenpunkt*) - and it is here that Lacan adds his joke by calling this a point where this needle knits two materials: point-de-capiton, button tie. According to Grimm dictionary in Freud times *Knotenpunkt* had several other meanings. Apart from its upholstery meaning of knot or tie, it also meant a place where trains meet, a junction. Other meaning is more general and it refers to a general place from which power over whole infrastructure can be exercised - for example a historian might have said that when Napoleon won a battle over Leipzig he attained a crucial juncture (*Knotenpunkt*) from

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*180* SE 4, p. 283.  
*181* SE 4, 283.
which he could control roads in the whole area. In general Knotenpunkt refers to a place in which paths or threads meet and from which a power over that which flows through this paths may be exercised.

In Freud the notion of ‘nodal point’ appears for the first time, not accidentally in “Studies on Hysteria” to solve a problem of undecidability of free associations. When discussing his technique Freud is struck by apparently arbitrary nature of free associations which nevertheless seems to circle around some strategic dominating points. It might had seemed that there is nothing fixed in free associations, they seem to proceed in a random manner. In order to give account of this randomness Freud invokes so called Knight’s tour problem - a popular mathematical problem relating to chess. In knight’s tour problem a knight is placed on an empty chessboard and the player is expected to move it in such a way that it visits every field on the chessboard once and only once. If after touching all fields it ends up in a field attacking a field from which it started his tour is considered a closed one, he may tour the whole board with exactly same path. If he ends his tour on any different field a tour is considered open. The exact number of open tours in unknown but a number of closed tours on typical 8 x 8 chessboard can be counted – according to some estimates 26,534,728,821,064.

Of course this multiplicity of associations that are possible if we assume that theory of over determination is valid can be presented as an argument against validity of Freud’s interpretations of Dora, and as an argument against psychoanalysis. Notice that this is exactly a charge posed to psychoanalytic free associations by its most shrewd critics. For example Sebastiano Timpanaro argues from Marxist point of view that there is an infinite number of possible associations between two terms, in effect Freud’s associations presented in “Psychopathology of Everyday life” may be well supplemented by other associations, one may well invent different, perhaps even more creative and more puzzling associations then ones proposed by Freud as links between conscious thoughts and unconscious representations. Knight’s move problem refers exactly to this

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182 Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, Deutsches Wörterbuch (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1854).
183 SE 2, 290.
apparent aporia of random, contingent, decentred character of psychoanalytic associations.

Timpanaro seems to be unaware that in “Studies on Hysteria” Freud gives a solution to this apparent problem. Associations are not completely arbitrary because,

"The logical chain [of free associations] corresponds not only to zig-zag, twisted line [of a chess knight movement], but rather to ramifying system of lines and more particularly to a converging one. It contains nodal points (Knotenpunkten) at which two or more threads meet and thereafter proceed as one; and as a rule several threads which run independently, or which are connected at various points by side-paths, debouch into nucleus"\textsuperscript{185}.

In other words there is some core, some nucleus, there is some central node to which all multiple associations lead. Thus one may say that nodal points in Freud serve to fix the meaning of apparently unending process of creation of associations. They provide some nodes or knots, which give unity to discourse. Analysis comprises of the process of unraveling those knots, distinguishing threads involved in a given knot and following them. Determining what exactly constitutes a knot or tie seems to be a major problem which influences all later moves of analyst. We need just a tiny step to conclude, that the figure of the leader “Psychology of masses…” may be understood in this sense – as an overdetermined nodal point, which condenses multiple threads into single symptom or dream-thought.

One needs to analyze Freud’s notes from Ratman case to see that this possibility is not far-fetched (although certainly it is a possibility, a hypothesis, and note that it refers to the way this text may be understood and not to Freud’s understanding of his own work). Those notes disclose that Freud actually thought about identification with a father in terms of nodal points, in terms of complexes of ideas unified by some dominating signifier. Freud says for example:

“He [Ratman] thinks highly of his father(...) There is important material behind this. The rat-story becomes more and more a nodal point”\textsuperscript{186}.

\textsuperscript{185} SE 2, 290.
\textsuperscript{186} SE 10, 293.
This remark implies that Ratman’s identification with his father was in fact an identification with a story, that this with a mass of symbols, multiplicity of signs, which are represented by one privileged signifier (in case of this patient – rat, which meant signified almost everything in his libidinal economy: money, penis, vagina, his father and many other things). Once again here it turns out that identification seems to be rather a condensation, which produces a privileged element, which serves as an overdetermined nodal point creating subsequent neurosis. Ratman’s particular disturbance, his anxiety over imagined punishment of his father, which Freud describes as “horror at pleasure of his own of which he himself was unaware” is understandable only if we will agree that the source of this horror of pleasure is not a real person of his father, but rather a group of overdetermined nodal points, which were created through condensation/identification and dominated somehow libidinal economy of this patient.

8. Conclusions

Dora's case demonstrates an interesting conflict between two different tendencies in psychoanalysis - will to knowledge - will to create scientific discourse, to form structured utterances about individuals constitutes one tendency. This tendency leads to emergence of Oedipus complex. Freud think that this specific theory should place him in pantheon of scientific saints between Newton, Darwin and Galileo. On the other hand we have thinking in terms of multiple causality, theory of overdetermination. This tendency is connected with specific type of abundant creative interpretation that resists all possible interpretative schools or keys, it seems to represent a pure will to create different meanings. It is interesting that Freud does not advertise this element of his thinking as strongly as he advertises Oedipus. When he writes popular presentations of his theory he usually omits this element of his thought. The encounter with Dora also exposes Freud's own personal dilemmas. The repressed memory of nanny seems to demonstrate that main claims of Oedipus complex are marked by some form of unconscious struggle against Freud's own personal attachments. In some respects the idea that the father is responsible for child's neurosis saves Freud from confrontation with memories of humiliation and exploitation.
The case of Rat Man ("Notes Upon A Case of Obsessional Neurosis") was published in 1909, and it describes disturbances of one specific patient of Freud - Paul Lorenz. Lorenz sought professional help because of his obsessive thoughts, from which he suffered since childhood. The treatment began in October 1907. As most of Freud's patients, the ending of therapy was uncertain, we don't really know much about events of patients life after he finished his therapy with Freud. We only learn that he died a couple years later in trenches of first world war.

In the case study Freud repeatedly points out that the chaos of patient’s story was so enormous that he was unable to sort it out, and he acknowledges himself that the he can’t make some elements of it understandable. He confesses for example:

“It would not surprise me to hear that at this point the reader had ceased to be able to follow. For even the detailed account which the patient gave me of the external events of these days and of his reactions to them was full of self-contradictions and sounded hopelessly confused. It was only when he told the story for the third time that I could get him to realize its obscurities and could lay bare the errors of memory and the displacements in which he had become involved.”

Notice that Freud recognizes only that he was able to point out obscurities and errors of memory; he does not say that he was able to form a clear and coherent narrative; he simply states that after long struggle he was able to identify most obscure points, the

187 SE 10, p.169.
most flagrant contradictions and impossibilities in his patient’s story. In the end it seems that Freud was unable to present all complicated ruminations of Rat Man in an understandable manner. One can only describe some nodal points of the story, some crucial elements which are involved in obsession.

In a way interpretation of neurotic thoughts became another exercise in interpretation for Freud. We learn that he viewed obsession as some sort of 'mutilated telegraph message', very similar in structure to dreams or jokes. Freud asserts that obsession is some sort of speech, 'a dialect' a narration that revolves around some central theme. Processes that are active in dreams and jokes - most importantly displacement and compensation - play a crucial role in obsessional neurosis as well. The chaos of patient's story is actually not a bad point of departure for interpretation. Chaos requires some ordering, it requires some meaning, it makes the task of understanding and detecting some central or crucial points urgent.

We learn that Rat Man’s nervous breakdown is provoked by a request to pay back a debt expressed by his colleague from the army – captain N. Before finding Freud’s office, the patient had spent some time at futile ruminations about necessity to return to a city A where he had been at maneuvers. When he was sitting in a train returning from the site of maneuvers he was enormously stressed and anxious about a minor amount of money (it would be probably equivalent of one pound, it was a cost of very small package with pince-nez) that he allegedly had to pay to lieutenant A. He was requested to pay back a debt by his friend captain N, and the debt allegedly related to cost of package in which patient ordered at a local post office. Rat Man had spent much of his free time in A to pay back this absurdly small debt, yet every time he had the opportunity to pay it back something intervened in the way. The whole affair provoked an enormous amount of suffering in the patient, he spend whole days and sleepless nights thinking about inability to pay back this small amount, tormenting himself with most severe and cruel thoughts about his indecency and immorality. Days after he returned home from maneuvers he was still uncertain whether he should not return back to the city A in order to pay back this amount. After a days of suffering with this debt at least he decided that he there is something pathological in this compulsion to ruminate and torment himself with compulsive, irrational vows, and decided to visit Freud. At first he expected that
Freud is going to convince him that he needs to give the debt back and return to the place of maneuvers.

Of course Freud immediately assumes that the thought of debt is obsessive and it masks something else, some kind of unconscious problem with which the patient suffers and which is displaced on this minor and inessential matter of 3,80 Kronen. He quickly discovered that the patient paid his minor debt long time ago, but subsequently repressed the memory of his actions because of some completely irrational impulses and compulsive vows.

It seems that obsession about debt which brought Rat Man to Freud is related to a chain of unconscious associations which associate rats, money, debts, gambling, and patient’s relatives with sex and violence. The outbreak of obsessional neurosis was a result of peculiar accident which triggered unconscious and aggressive identification with patient’s father. Rat Man’s first obsessive thoughts occurred when Captain N requested him to pay back this small debt of 3,80 kronen. The request to pay back debt touched upon sensitive place in patient’s unconscious. Although the patient knew that he does not have to pay back this debt (because he already paid it) he repressed this knowledge and convinced himself that he has to pay it, and that if he won’t pay it he will be like his father.

At the moment of hearing the request about debt Rat Man had particular set of unconscious thoughts about his father. He thought that his father is an unreliable debtor, and this opinion was provoked by one particular story which made a great impact on Rat Man’s unconscious.

Patient's father was also a soldier, and who was fond of gambling. During one of his games he lost regiment's money that was officially entrusted to him, and faced the danger of being demoted and even disciplinarily expelled from the army had he not procure for the money. Luckily one of his friends helped him and borrowed him the amount which he badly needed. Rat Man's father wanted to pay back his debt when he had left the army but he never found his friendly colleague. Therefore the debt remained unpaid. It is precisely this scenario that patient imitates in his futile attempts to pay back debt to Lieutenant A. His indecision in this case, his inner struggle is in fact a repetition of an einziger Zug which binds him with his father. Identification here is precisely an
inability to fulfill an obligation, to return what is owed. Interestingly this identification with the father is also aggressive, it contains a hostile impulse to offend his father by means of a calling him a immoral gambler - *Spielratte* – gambling rat

“The recollection of this sin of his father’s youth was painful to him, for, in spite of appearances, his unconscious was filled with hostile strictures upon his father’s character. The captain’s words, ‘You must pay back the 3.80 kronen to Lieutenant A’ has sounded to his ears like an allusion to unpaid debt of his father’s”

One may say that the patient (falsely) recognized himself in his father; he thought that he is just like his father, and this recognition was intimately bound with a kind of destructive aggressive reaction. Recognition here appears to be bound with violence. This seems to be typical for the mechanism of Oedipal triangle, identification is bound with violence and the desire to take other’s place.

Freud quickly discovered that captain's request concerning the debt, an event which triggered or activated identification with his father, followed a somewhat different story, and it was this story, which contributed to Rat Man’s disturbances. Captain N was fond of cruelty. A moment before requesting Rat Man to give back his debt, he recounted an allegedly Chinese torture, which included placing a pot with rats on an anus of a person. When he heard the story Freud’s patient thought about an application of this torture to his father and his female friend. At the moment of recounting this thought in Freud’s office his “face took on a very strange, composite expression. I could only interpret it as one of horror at pleasure of which he himself was unaware.”

Although quite repulsive and shocking the version of rat torture that Freud presents is in fact a mild version of its original form. Cruel captain N who shared the story about torture with Rat Man probably had read a novel of Octave Mirbeau in which

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189 SE 10, 211.
191 SE 10, 167.
torture of rats is described in detail. In any case the torture of rats in Mirbeau is much more brutal and shocking than in Freud. It is interesting here who really filtered the story, was it Freud, who was concerned about the sensibility of his readers or was it Rat Man who was unable to tell the story fully, or was it Captain N? In Freud we simply read that a pot with rats is placed at victims’ buttocks and rats penetrate the anus. As most psychoanalysts, and indeed most of ‘normal’ people, Freud clearly did not think about technical aspect of the problem, he did not ask why rats should proceed to the anus; why should they desire to escape from the pot. This is a good question tough. Rats can live without food for a long time; they could well have sit in the pot without trying to escape. In original version of torture the problem is solved by means of metal rod heated to highest temperature. Pot is placed onto buttocks, rats are inside the pot, but there is a hole inside the pot, the executioner opens this hole and scares the rats by means of heated rod. Terrified rats have to escape and since they don’t have any other means of escape they have to escape via anus.

The Chinese executioner who narrates the torture to European couple in Mirbeau novel boasts that this torture is the highest possible art, he says:

"Art (...) consists in knowing how to kill, according to the rites of beauty, whose divine secret we Chinese alone possess. Know how to kill! Nothing is rarer and everything depends on that. Know how to kill! That is to say, how to work the human body like a sculptor works his clay or piece of ivory, and evoke the entire sum, every prodigy of suffering it conceals in the depths of its shadows and its mysteries. There! Science is required, variety, taste, imagination”.

The torture of rats is so valuable for torturer because it represents the highest type of art, it requires taste and imagination. In a word it is a masterpiece of Chinese tradition of refined cruelty which is interestingly opposed by the speaker to modern bureaucratic, anonymous and ultimately degraded ways of killing typical for Europe and America:

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“Originality, picturesqueness, psychology, the science of pain- it had everything in its favor. And the bargain, it was infinitely comical.”

We may doubt about comical aspect of this torture, it seems true tough that it requires certain amount of cruel imagination to invent such an elaborate way of tormenting people. If there were officers in Habsburg army who wanted to punish soldiers by means of this kind of torture it certainly does not speak in favor of the army. In this respect the case study is another tribute to stupidity of officers of Habsburg army, which we know so well since “The Good Soldier Svejk”.

No wonder tough, that the torture, even in its somewhat milder form, had caught the imagination of Freud’s patient and terrified him deeply. It seems that this anxiety and terror that he felt when he heard the story led patient to obsessive ruminations about paying back a debt (Rate). According to Freud both anxiety over debt and Chinese torture are curious linguistic phenomena ruled by mechanisms of chance similar to those at play in jokes. They are linked by a consonance between German words Raten (instalments, small debts), Ratte (rats), and Spielratte (literal: playing rat, informal for compulsive gambler, this is how the patient thought about his gambling father). All those words related to rats and debts started to live on their own, they "had acquired a series of symbolic meanings, to which, during the period which followed, fresh ones were continually added". When the patient heard the story about Chinese punishment and subsequent request to pay back debt all those signifiers circling around "rat" “jarred hyperaesthetic spots” in his unconscious. It seems then that identification here is detected in some kind of 'hyperaesthetic spot'. One may even formulate a stronger statement, a subject is exactly this kind of 'hyperaesthetic spot', a bundle of signifiers which are connected by consonance od one single word, rat (Spielratte, Ratten, Ratte, Hei-raten). One may clearly see in this case how exactly “words themselves can suffer symbolic lesions and accomplish imaginary acts whose victim is the subject”.

Freud argues that patient's disturbances are provoked by some form of unconscious economic concerns. Rat Man knew, from some casual remarks of his

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194 SE 10, 211.
mother, that his father acquired his high social position because of his marriage with her. Because of marriage he got a work in industrial business of his father in law. After his death Rat Man's mother came with the idea that her son can also marry some rich relative and improve his standing. He would thus gain business connections with some rich family, just like his father in the past. Freud's patient rejected this plan, because he was in love with other woman. At the same time he was aware of the fact that his beloved was rather poor. This whole situation provoked a conflict in him, and, according to Freud's diagnosis, he resolved this conflict by becoming neurotic. As a result of his neurosis he was unable to work and was able to postpone completion of his education for many years. As we can see Rat Man's dilemma is very similar to a quandary his father experienced after he has left the army. In his attempts to pay back imaginary debt Freud's patient unconsciously imitates and recalls his father's struggle. In a way he acts out his personal anxieties over emotional attachment which is not founded on rational economic calculation. Apparently reasonable considerations concerning marriage turn into irrational obsession. The suggestion concerning role of economic factors may be reinforced some other arguments.

We usually think that unconscious is a site of unreasonable and aberrant impulses. Sometimes Freud tends to describe it in this way, especially in his popular presentations. In "Introductory Lectures" for instance he compares unconscious to a rowdy student who has been evicted from the classroom and bangs forcefully at the door. Freud never tires of repeating that unconscious contains residues of infantile wishes and desires. It is therefore surprising that we find rather rational economic calculations at the heart of seemingly meaningless obsession. There is nothing unreasonable in patient's concerns, they do not appear infantile. On the contrary they seem to prove patient's common sense. Of course those economic considerations are not the single cause of patient's neurosis. Or to put it differently "economy" in psychoanalysis is a term which is overdetermined, it contains different layers of interrelated meanings which converge in Freud's diagnosis. Clearly there is some other "economy" at play in Rat Man's obsession.

1. Obsessive religion

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196 SE 10, 198-199.
One interesting claim that is presented by Freud states that obsessional neurosis in general, and Rat Man's neurosis specifically is some sort of bizarre parody of religion.

"Some cases of obsessional neurosis actually behave like a caricature of private religion so that it is tempting to liken the official religions to an obsessional neurosis that has been mitigated by becoming universalized"\(^{197}\)

"It might be maintained (...) that an obsessional neurosis is a caricature of religion and (...). The divergence resolves itself ultimately into the fact that the neuroses are asocial structures; they endeavor to achieve by private means what is effected in society by collective effort"\(^{198}\).

The suggestion here seems to be that what appears silly and absurd if viewed as a ceremony of an isolated individual - for instance Rat Man's impossible prohibitions concerning some words, thoughts or actions - would have been viewed as a recognized and respected ritual if accepted by the whole society. Obsession is thus differentiated from what is considered "normal" not by irrational character of its prohibitions but by their asocial character. "Asocial" here seems to signify some form of conflict or tension between the neurotic and his social environment. The conflict here seems to resemble some form of resistance to official norms.

If we assume that neurosis presents some form of travesty of religion we may be tempted to ask what exactly is the subject of this parody. One possible interpretation would state that what is parodied here is some form of capitalist ethics, bound with particular ideals. There are some good arguments for this interpretation, in many respects Rat Man's futile ruminations about debt and his pathetic marital calculations resemble a travesty of rational economic subject, for instance a travesty of Benjamin Franklin's ideal, presented by Max Weber as the essence of capitalist spirit.

This line of interpretation appears all the more interesting in so far as we notice that some commentators argue that psychoanalysis itself may be compared to a religion. Eli Zaretsky in "Secrets of The Soul" described Freud's work as 'calvinism of second

\(^{197}\) SE 19, 206.

\(^{198}\) SE 13, 73.
industrial revolution\textsuperscript{199}, 'hallmark of second modernity'\textsuperscript{200} which encouraged individuals to search for fulfillment in 'sexualized dreamworlds of mass consumption'\textsuperscript{201}. Zaretsky's argument is concerned with the way in which psychoanalytic understanding of unconscious converges with new understanding of personal life brought about by times of so called 'second industrial revolution'. Second industrial revolution was marked, among other features, by introduction of an array of technologies as rail, electricity, combustion engine, telegraph or radio. Zaretsky seems to suggest that psychoanalysis assumes and propagates specific idea of subjectivity, particular understanding of oneself, a way of being a person, and that this in turn is an effect of new form of social and political organization.

In a way then psychoanalysis itself creates a specific type of religious subject - neurotic, someone who incessantly searches for impossible satisfaction, someone who obsessively attempts to fulfill his elusive desires. From this point of view Rat Man's obsession may be just this, an incarnation of bizarre form of piety. Zaretsky's diagnosis is not completely new, as a matter of fact when Walter Benjamin was reading Max Weber he apparently arrived at very similar conclusions. One of the most interesting things which Benjamin detects concerns the sense of guilt:

\begin{quote}
“Capitalism is probably the first instance of cult that creates guilt, not atonement. (...) A vast sense of guilt that is unable to find relief seizes on the cult, not to atone for this guilt but to make it universal, to hammer it into the conscious mind”\textsuperscript{202}.
\end{quote}

Interestingly Benjamin goes on to argue that psychoanalysis as well participates in this cult, in other words psychoanalysis is capitalist through and through.

"Freud's theory, too, belongs to the hegemony of priests of this cult. Its conception is capitalist through and through. By virtue of a profound analogy,

\textsuperscript{200} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid. 289
which has still to be illuminated, what has been repressed, the idea of sin, is capital itself, which pays interest on the hell of the unconscious”203.

The most striking instance of this analogy between capital and sin is for Benjamin German word *Schuld* which signifies debt and guilt at the same time. Rat Man's debts then may appear as some strange response to this cult.

One assumption that is undermine by Benjamin's claim is the thesis about difference or even opposition between Victorian 'morality' and contemporary lifestyle. This difference may be described as discontinuity between social vigilant about morality and a society in which "transgression of morality is the fundamental moral imperative”204. Freud may be either perceived as a charismatic leader who began ambivalent revolution (Zarestky), or, he may be seen as a conservative thinker who questioned possibility of Enlightenment and subscribed to conservative and traditional ideals (Wróbel). Wróbel is right in pointing out that Freud's teaching is not as optimistic as it appears in this narration. Anxiety plays an important role in sexual phantasmatic worlds described by Freud, for this reason it is not so different from Protestant horror at thought about judgment day. Fantasy in psychoanalysis does not have to be redemptive it can just as well signify guilt and anxiety.

But let's return to Zaretsky and let's focus at this analogy between neurosis, psychoanalysis and Calvinism. We know that Weber demonstrated in a convincing manner that Reformation led to deep changes in religious sensitivity, and this in turn facilitated the emergence of attitudes typically associated with capitalism. Protestants rejected traditional catholic practices such as confession, pardon or cult of saints. The contact with God became an individual and personal matter which led to development of individualism. On the other hand, perhaps more importantly, Protestantism intensified feelings of guilt felt by believers. The possibility of pardon and confession reduces the amount of anxiety felt by believers. Lack of this procedure increases guilt and anxiety. Calvinism is most radical in this respect. No one is able to know in advance who is going to be redeemed, therefore everyone must suspect that they are guilty. Weber argues that in order to reduce or even forget about this enormous anxiety believers focused on their

203 Ibid. 290
work and cultivated particular lifestyle characterized by thrift and almost ascetic discipline. Still they were curious who will be redeemed and who will end in hell. The success at work began to be perceived as one possible sign of God's grace. Poverty was perceived to be an effect of sin, good fortune an effect of piety. In effect particular cultural "spirit" was born, a worldview which valued wealth not as an end in itself, but as sign of ethical virtues. Wealthy citizen was not seen as good because he was wealthy, but it was thought that he is wealthy because he is good. Wealth was only a side effect of ethical conduct. Calvinism created ethics which produced modern capitalism.

For Zarestky psychoanalysis was the Calvinism of second industrial revolution because it shaped the tape of economic sensibility demanded by modern free market. The development of technology and social changes led to separation of public professional activity and private life. Economy became less dependent on production and increasingly relied on consumption. New 'virtues' and new models of personality were necessary. In this context psychoanalysis, according to Zaretsky, encouraged individuals to focus on their private life, to reflect on their desires, to think about their intimate self. This created space for marketers and public relations experts who could focus on creating and stimulating those desires. One can easily point at the influence of psychoanalysis on the burgeoning field of public relations. As a matter of fact the father of modern PR Edward Bernays was Freud's nephew, he played an important role in publication of "Introduction to Psychoanalysis" in United States and was fascinated by Freud's ideas. Bernays argued that the task of public relations (or as he called it 'propaganda', the term was still not compromised by its association with totalitarian regimes) consists of articulating inchoate desires of the masses. Appeal to reason of individual may play a role in this process but in general propaganda should focus on creating and manipulating desires.

One assumption that seems important in presented argument is the thesis about difference or even opposition between Victorian 'morality' and contemporary lifestyle, as Szymon Wróbel puts it difference between morality and a society in which "transgression of morality is the fundamental moral imperative". Freud may be either perceived as a charismatic leader who began ambivalent revolution (Zarestky), or, he may be seen as a

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205 The evolution of an idea, Creating the early public relations ideology of Edward L. Bernays.
206 Szymon Wróbel, strona 3.
conservative thinker who questioned possibility of Enlightenment and still subscribed to conservative and traditional ideals (Wróbel). It has been rightly pointed out that Freud's teaching is not as optimistic as it appears in this narration. Anxiety plays an important role in sexual phantasmatic worlds described by Freud, for this reason it is not so different from Protestant horror at thought about judgment day. Phantasy in psychoanalysis does not have to be redemptive it can just as well signify guilt and anxiety.

Nevertheless in Zaretsky's interpretation the founder of psychoanalysis appears then as a figure of prophet or even a messiah.

"Just as Jesus gathered the early Christians and Cromwell gathered the Protestant saints, Freud brought his followers together into a charismatic sect."\(^\text{207}\)

In a word then Freud appears to be a preacher of sorts, someone who provokes radical metamorphosis in personalities of his patients and students. We may find here an echo of Philip Rieff's words from "Freud the Mind of Moralist":

"No prophet of our destiny, neither Marx nor Darwin nor any other, has spoken with greater import to the human condition in general and yet spoken more intimately."\(^\text{208}\).

2. **Parodic religions - I know very well, but ...**

What characterizes this peculiar religion of neurotics, which appears to be a travesty of recognized cults? What kind of faith is inherent in Rat Man's strange performances? One thing that is certain is that the element of irrational faith and attachment to religious beliefs is all too real in superficially Enlightened and rational subjects. Instead of seeing in psychoanalysis some form of new faith we may well see some form of persistence of past religious sensibility. Placed in this context Rat Man's bizzare economic calculations may appear surprisingly relevant.


In many respects Rat Man's text is an exemplary case of puzzling mixture of contradictory features. Freud observes that his patient "was once superstition and not superstitious", the quote is worth quoting in full because it really throws an interesting light on the nature of persistence of religious feelings:

"Our patient was to a high degree superstitious, and this although he was a highly educated and enlightened man of considerable acumen, and although he was able at times to assure me that he did not believe a word of all this rubbish. Thus he was once superstitious and not superstitious; and there was a clear distinction between his attitude and the superstition of uneducated people who feel themselves at one with their belief".  

We see then, that what is specific for neurotic mode of being is particular lack of unity between knowledge, faith and behavior. Apparently young and well-educated, certainly voting for liberal parties, supportive of social progress, perhaps even enthusiastic about technological progress. At the same time unable to control intense tendencies to magical thinking.

Let's note that most of patient's superstitions were of a curious nature. For instance he often met a person of which he had just been thinking a moment earlier; or he received letter from a friend who he had not seen for a long time but thought about just days before the letter arrived. On other occasion he visited his sanatorium and asked to be given a room which he occupied during his earlier stay at this place; the room was taken by an old professor, so he was given adjoining place. The patient thought that he wished that professor would die. To his terror next day the professor had been taken to intensive care because of a stroke. In a word then Freud's patient believed in magic, especially in black magic, but he only believed in his own magical deeds. He was skeptical about popular superstitions such as belief in cats bringing bad luck etc.

What is really interesting however is the superficial character of cynical hedonism of Freud's patient. We know that some readers of Freud want to see in psychoanalysis some form of spiritual movement which encourages people to be open about their desires. The whole claim about psychoanalysis as Calvinism relies on this assumption. Of course

209 SE 10, page 229.
210 SE 10, page 235.
it is true that Freud does criticize Victorian hypocrisy in his popular text. At the same
time he seems to be aware of limitations of his project. Rat Man's cynicism appears
striking. When he thinks about sexuality he arrives at the following conclusions:

"What do you know about the next world? Nothing can be known about
it. You're not risking anything- so do it."\(^{211}\)

At the same time the patient was afraid that something bad will happen to his
father and his relatives in the other world, and this anxiety somehow dominated his mind.

As we see Rat Man's approach to religion resembles classical fetishist formula - 'I
know very well, but all the same'. It seems that precisely this element of knowledge
makes his magical thinking comical. This kind of humor resembles sitcoms, in which so
often the character assures that is able to do something, only to be later revealed as
impostor. It is interesting to read how Freud detects the defacement of lofty ideals of
Enlightenment in this case. Skepticism about religion does not lead to some form of
rational moral emancipation, it only masks some deep desires.

In a way neurotic magical thinking presents a challenge to chief Christian
understanding of sin. Christians think that sin results from lack of knowledge. The saying
'forgive them father because they don't what they do' implies precisely this - 'sinners
should be forgiven because of their ignorance'. Lack of knowledge makes redemption
possible, surprisingly sin is not a sin if it is committed without knowledge that it was a
sin. In this optimistic vision of man, no one (aside from witches and devil of course)
willingly, humans have good intentions but they are ignorant about weight of sin.\(^{212}\) To
large extent this idea of sin underlies Marxists understanding of ideology, to put matters
crudely, if workers oppose communism it is not because of their bad will. Workers do
want revolution deep down in their heart. If they don't read Marx it is because they are
stupefied by capitalist propaganda.

Psychoanalysis leads to exactly opposite image of ideology and Slavoy Zizek is
right in underscoring this point. Ideology consists not of belief in truthfulness of
something but in a behavior which assumes that something is true. In other words

\(^{211}\) SE 10, page 169.
\(^{212}\) This is precisely the vision which Sade opposes, Philosophy of Sade.
everyone knows very well that capitalism is bad, workers don't believe in capitalist propaganda, nevertheless they continue to act as if this knowledge did not occur to them, "they are fetishists in practice not in theory"\textsuperscript{213}, "they know very well how things really are, but still they act as if they did not know"\textsuperscript{214}. The preposition apparently presents a gap between knowledge and belief, "I know that there is no God but I still act as if it exists". This of course is cynicism. Cynic assumes that authority is just a fiction, that everything is relative and that nothing is sacred. He infers from this that sacred and established norms have no effect. This inference is erroneous. Lack of justification doesn't matter. He, the cynic, still acts as if the norms were valid, he knows that the king is naked but he doesn't care, he acts as if everything were all right\textsuperscript{215}.

One interesting case of this fetishistic disavowal concerns some parents who don't believe in God but feel somehow pressed to believe because of their children\textsuperscript{216}. Some of those parents know very well that this situation is absurd, they pretend to believe in something just for the sake of others. As Octave Mannoni interestingly notes, cases such as this draw interesting light on the role of myth of childhood innocence for adults, it seems that in some sense adults need children to support their beliefs. Obviously the absurdity of situation stems from the fact that children don't care about faith if parents don't and there is probably nothing bad about it. At the same time parents feel that it is somehow better for their children if they pretend that they do believe. We may ask: why do adults deceive children about so many things? Probably most adults would respond that they do this because there is something good and noble about naive faith. Perhaps then we simply need to believe in the fiction of this naive credulous faith? At the same time we are tempted to think that there is something of a desire to believe. Parents simply want to believe in God and for this reason they are willing to pretend that they do in fact believe. What hides therefore, behind this attitude "I know very well but all the same", is

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid. p 30.
subject's desire to believe, his desire to be deceived. We can explain inefficiency of
cynicism by pointing at this desire. Yes, the cynic knows that moral rules are fiction and
no one follows them, but he still desires them to be true.

On a related note when Immanuel Kant reflects on our duty to pay back debts he
arrives at conclusions which are surprisingly relevant. He proposes the following thought
experiment. Imagine that someone gives you a deposit, and dies shortly thereafter, his
heirs know nothing about the deposit and have no means of finding out, there is no risk
that someone will punish you for not giving the deposit back. Sometime after receiving
the deposit you fall into extreme poverty, you are unable to support your family and are
close to dying of hunger. On the other hand heirs of the person who gave you a deposit
are excessively rich, they don't have to work, they just enjoy life of luxury and leisure.
They are wasting their money on most mindless and stupid entertainment. Giving back
the deposit would be equivalent to throwing it into the sea. Can it be morally permissible
for you to take this deposit and keep it for your family? Kant's answer is clear. No, it is
by no means permissible. It is simply wrong. Your duty is to give back this deposit no
matter what, and this duty is absolute, you should even feel revulsion at not giving it back
if you are really moral. Kant argues that every moral being is certain of this. He amplifies
his argument by adding that the case should be submitted to a smallest kid, and this child
would immediately answer with categorical “no”\textsuperscript{217}.

It is interesting to note that this mythical innocent and credulous child plays here
the role of absolute and ultimate argument. "Look, even the smallest child would say no"
- this apparently ends the debate. One may well ask why does Kant need this child, why
does he believe in children with such intense commitment? Desire to believe, the need for
other, who will confirm our faith. Child is a moralist then, categorical imperative to pay
back what one owes rests on the child's mind. Perhaps obsession represents exactly this
stern "no" expressed by unconscious of Freud's patient, he may be saying no to the
behavior of his father who has broken Kantian principles. From this point of view
unconscious "no" appears to be unexpectedly moral, it signifies some form of resistance

\textsuperscript{217} Immanuel Kant, "On the common saying, that may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice," in \textit{Practical philosophy}, ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 288-89.
to breaches of categorical imperative. It also discloses some strange form of continuity of moral sensitivity, after all the debts in question to not belong to the patient, if his subjectivity were an isolated atom driven by desire for pleasure he would not have felt this form of obsession. The case seems to teach us that one may inherit guilt, that subconsciously we do feel the shame about deeds of our fathers.

It is fascinating that Kant needs this child to make his point. It seems that he acts just like parents described by Mannoni. 'Perhaps you may be tempted to doubt my argument' - he seems to say - 'but ask your children, they will believe me'. This seems to curiously resemble the structure of religion - you should believe because of your children, even if, as a result of moral heroism your children are going to die of hunger. Of course the worst thing that can happen to this argument is a proof that children are not innocent, that they are immoral and don't care about morality. In this case Kantian argument falls down. Adults don't believe in necessity of paying back debt, Kant is well aware of that, but Freud seems to imply that children are equally egoistic and corrupt as well. There is therefore no support for this belief whatsoever.

But does it mean that no one returns deposits and debts if he is not forced by fear of punishment? Of course not. And some people, for instance Freud's patient, tend to return debts, even though there is no need to do so. Rat Man curiously repeats Kant's formula - it may appear that his unconscious resembles this ideal Kantian child that categorically demands to return the deposit, even though there is no punishment for keeping it. In a way he confirms the persistence of categorical imperative, albeit in a rather deformed way.

In other words the subject does not believe in moral law, he stages law into being, acts as if law was real. As Bruce Fink puts it, perverse reasoning seems to run into fol

"I know full well that my father hasn't forced me to give up my mother and the jouissance I take in her presence (real and/or imagined in fantasy), hasn't exacted a pound of flesh, but I'm going to such an exaction or forcing with someone who stands in for him; I'll make that person pronounce the law.'

This particular formulation applies better to the masochist than to the sadist or
fetishist, as we shall see, but suffices to indicate that disavowal implies a
certain staging or making believe regarding the paternal function”\(^\text{218}\).

In other words Fink suggests that pervert knows very well that he is free to pursue
his desires as he wish, he knows that any prohibition is purely fictional, nevertheless he
still feels the need for this prohibitions, he either creates those prohibitions for himself or
makes someone else, the other formulate those prohibitions for him. This approach
appears curious. It appears that from psychoanalytic point of view the main goal of
people is to limit somehow their desires, all clinical categories described by Fink are
really just attempts to thwart and limit one's own desire. Neurotic contains his desire by
means of repression, psychotic is invaded by his desire because of lack of repression,
pervert defends himself against his own jouissance by means of imagining someone
speaking in the name of law, imposing his law on him.

This understanding of pervasion is somewhat at odds with the way in which the
concept functioned in psychiatry since XIX century. The main question for this discourse
was of course whether someone is normal or pathological, and this had direct legal
implications. Pathological individuals were incarcerated. However strong is the criticism
of this approach for many psychiatrists perversion cannot be understood without this
background in mind. On the other hand we may find the conception of perversion as
particular act of revolutionary defiance, opposition to governing normative frameworks
of sexuality\(^\text{219}\). From this perspective perversions appear as simply new and legitimate
forms of sexuality, even neosexuality.

Perversion then appears to be quite close to religion. In fact the first meaning of
the term fetishism referred precisely to religious beliefs - it was used by western
ethnographers to describe various mythical beliefs of exotic societies. The term then was
employed in descriptions of European pathologies - the first analysis was by Binet - in,
somewhat surprisingly text about perversions of Rousseau\(^\text{220}\). Not surprisingly the term


\(^{219}\) Dany Nobus and Lisa Downing, *Perversion: psychoanalytic perspectives/perspectives on

\(^{220}\) Vernon A. Rosario, *The erotic imagination: French histories of perversity* (New York ; Oxford:
Oxford University Press, 1997). 126
fetishism was almost immediacy used in reference to idolatry of capitalist goods. This was done not only by Marx's but also by other writers and thinkers. Overall there is a curious analogy between the development of the concept fetishism and development of capitalism - both processes occur simultaneously, the path of concepts often meet.

Leaving aside clinical differences between obsessional neurosis and perversion we may focus on this element of performance that is so typical for fetishism according to Lacan and Fink. It seems clear that in many respects Freud's patient does stage his own subjection. He does not have to pay back any debts, yet he expects others to force him to do so. It is also probably not accidental that the fantasy here is a sadistic one, novel on voyeurism sadism. In a way Rat Man’s parody of social norms resembles an act of masochistic self-beating, which Slavoy Žižek analyzes on the basis of one scene from “Fightclub”\(^{221}\). Perhaps Žižek’s interpretation of this masochistic scene may help us in finding answer to our questions. The film’s main protagonist, Jack, at some point visits his boss’s office in order to quit his job, and stages an act of violent self-beating. He observes with pleasure how terrified his boss is when he sees that his employee is brutally and violently hurting himself. As Žižek observes by staging this act of self-beating Jack simply enacts the violence that his boss would like to engage in. His boss would perhaps enjoy beating Jack, but he is forbidden to, he is unable to harm him in form other than minor verbal violence and this kind of sadism which is bound with imposing and keeping the norms of given organization. By beating himself Jack acts out the fantasy of the other, he terrorizes other by confronting him with reality of his fantasy.

Žižek seems to think that this kind of self-beating is a step in the right direction; it breaks isolation of capitalist worker, sitting before his PC, alienated from others, devoid of real social connection. It shocks Jack’s boss and perhaps may inspire him to change his behavior, it also can have real and positive effects. Most importantly this masochistic act also displays a kind of enjoyment in power, enjoyment that comes from being subjected to the power of other. It seems to communicate: “I enjoy to be humiliated by you so much, that I can even humiliate myself in front of you”. On the other hand it seems to

suggest that the master is unnecessary, who needs a master if I can order myself to do what he expects? As Žižek concludes:

“It is thus only through first beating up oneself that one becomes free: the true goal of this beating is to beat out that which in me attaches myself to the master (...) We cannot get rid of our subjection through a merely intellectual reflection-our liberation has to be staged in some kind of bodily performance, and furthermore, this performance has to be of an apparently “masochistic” nature, it has to stage the painful process of hitting back at oneself”

In general tough he seems to stage his own submission; his own subjection to the power of other. Both Jack and Rat Man’s performances seem to twist, and deform relations of control to which they are subjected. In fact they tend to create different and unexpected constellations of power.

3. "A protest against symbolic debt..."

What appears to be relevant here is the curious phenomenon - God appears to be dead, yet neurotic still acts as if he were alive. Why?

Lacan suggests that this strange relationship may be called symbolic debt.

"this murder is the fertile moment of the debt by which the subject binds himself for life to the Law".

He then continues to argue that "symbolic Father, insofar as he signifies this Law, is truly the dead Father". From this point of view Rat Man's neurosis appears to be a struggle with this symbolic debt. And this is exactly how Lacan perceives the case in "Neurotic's Individual Myth"224, and in other remarks about it which we may find in "Field and Function of Speech"225, "Freudian Thing"226. Lacan suggests Rat Man's neurosis as a "protest against symbolic debt"227. What do we mean by symbolic debt?

222 Ibid., 118.
225 *Ecrits : the first complete edition in English*. 239-250,
226 Ibid. 360
227 Ibid. 249.
Debt clearly assumes asymmetrical relationship between two parties, one does not have something (usually money) but badly needs it, the other has the abundance of it, but does not really need it. Creditor agrees to give this object to the debtor under certain conditions. Debts are obviously surrounded by various forms of terms and conditions. For this reason they are the opposite or gratuitous gifts. It is sometimes said that debts may destroy friendship. This is perhaps accurate in so far as friendship (or love) assumes that both party exchange goods without any interest in obtaining some gain by giving an object to the other. When I give a present to my friend I don't expect anything in return, at least not explicitly, at least not in ideal situation of pure love or friendship. More importantly my gift is not subjected to some form of binding contract. When I truly love someone I can give him something valuable for me without expecting anything in return. John Forrester quotes one interesting anthropological report about society of Tangu of New Guinea. Paradise in this particular culture is described precisely by this act of free exchange, heaven is "a particular field of relations in which the individuals concerned are temporarily unaligned to each other." Debts are opposite of love, creditors does not love his debtor, his gift is surrounded by various caveats and regulations, his gift is bound by law. By taking the object of belonging to creditor debtor subjects himself to terms of the creditor. He must do what creditor expects him to do.

Debt then implies some form of humiliation and servitude, it implies some form of subjugation to power of someone else. But what is important here, is that the humiliated figure is not the figure of the child, but the figure of the father.

"We submit that the most normalizing situation in the early experience of the modern subject (..) is the fact that the father is the representative (...) of symbolic function. (...) In social structure like ours, the father is always in disharmony with regard to this function, a deficient father, a humiliated father, as Claudel would say. There is always an extremely obvious discrepancy between the symbolic function and what is perceived by the subject in the sphere of experience." 229


128
This discrepancy should be historicized, it is relative to specific time and locale - namely the west at the end of XIX century - to particular society. Precisely this causes neurosis according to this early theory of Lacan. The real father can never live up to child's expectations, he cannot fully assume the position of authority. It implies that there is human need for authority, that we all need some form of stable symbolic framework in which we function. This understanding of neurosis is expressed most succinctly in an article about family written for French Encyclopedia in 1938. In this article Lacan claims that the emergence of psychoanalysis is linked to "decline [...] of paternal imago". This decline was perceived by Freud in multicultural environment of Vienna, where diverse forms of family were existing side by side. This diversity led to particular social anomy, deficiency of symbolic function, which provoked neurosis. This deficiency manifests itself in particular myth that is cultivated by Rat Man's family. This myth is of course a story about father's debt, his troubles after leaving the army, his love to poor girl. All those events play the role of the myth for the subject.

In his reading of this myth Lacan underscores the role of mysterious friend who somehow saves Rat Man's father by lending him money. This mysterious friend, who saves the family, but is never seen again is precisely the fantasy about father who incarnates symbolic function. In this image we find a dream about disinterested act of altruism, the subject who commits this act remains completely anonymous, he is not presented as a real person, he resembles an angel, a representative of some higher powers. Let's note that this friend actually makes the relationship between father and mother possible - if the father had not paid back his debt to the army he would probably lose his fragile social position, he even might have ended up in prison. At the same time this curious and elusive friend never apparently demanded the debt to be returned. We never learn about his motivation but it appears that he might have been motivated by some form of disinterested love of his neighbor. In this respect he appears he contrasts with both Rat Man and his father, who in are rather egoistic and economical in their love pursuits.

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230 Forrester, ibid 127.
This opposition between symbolic debt and real debt returns throughout patient's therapy with Freud. "so many florins, so many rats". As Freud remarks, "in his deliria he coined himself a regular rat currency"\textsuperscript{231}.

It seems that the specific element of social recognition inherent in existence of money symptomatically escapes Kant’s attention when he discusses his famous thesis that existence is not a predicate. To prove this thesis Kant gives an example of difference between real hundred thalers and just possible hundred thalers. Stating that thalers are real does not add anything to their possibility, their existence can be stated only if one leaves the concept and experiences them, e.g. feels them in one’s packet\textsuperscript{232}. What Kant misses here is exactly a symbolic element of means of exchange. Reality is not just a content of the experience, not just an issue of seeing or feeling something. If that were so, then forgery would not be a crime. It would suffice to make a banknote which looks like thaler and feels like thaler to create a means of exchange. Yet Kantian thaler was a real thaler only in so far as it was minted or printed by the king of Prussia, it acquired its reality only through symbolic justification of a political authority. Money is a means of payment only because of symbolic recognition.

In case of Rat Man the only instance that can provide such symbolic recognition is probably his father, that is \textit{Spielratte}. Ratman pays tribute to his father by using the name of his father to name his private currency, just like the images of symbolic authority, a president, king or famous person, is minted or printed on real means of exchange. By insisting that existence of money depends only on experience Kant seems to encourage people to coin their own currency, he encourages people to become obsessive-neurotic. It is through language that we are having debts and obsessions about debts. Language gives money its ultimate reality. Money exists most of all in symbolic realm - it achieves reality not by means of some empirical proof but thanks to recognition of some ultimate social authority - in most cases central bank. It is only because a banknote is underwritten by central bank that it has value. The difference between real

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\textsuperscript{231} SE10, page 213. \\
\end{flushright}
and forged money consists ultimately not in the appearance but in the acceptance of others.

Paradoxically this element of symbolic recognition by some symbolic Other - be it central bank or some private form of authority is decisive for reality of money. In one interesting text Freud argues that payment to the analyst actually makes the relationship real..

"Free treatment enormously increases some of the neurotic's resistances [among them] opposition to an obligation to feel grateful (...) The absence of the regulating effect offered by the payment of a fee to a doctor makes itself very painfully felt the whole relationship is removed from the real world"\textsuperscript{233}

Apparently without money psychoanalysis is not fully real. Other interesting aspect relates to gratitude. Patients are not grateful for what they get for free, they do not appreciate something if they don't pay for it. Lacan argues that money can play this special role because it is a signifier that annihilates every other signification\textsuperscript{234}. There is an interesting difference between money and other gifts. Money is a strange signifier, a signifier which annihilates all signification. Giving others money for birthday or Christmas is generally not very kind, it does not mean anything. Money disrupts chain of words, it disrupts tradition. At the same time we don't need meaning if we get money, if we get money for our job we feel less inclined to search for its meaning.

4. Two Lacanian oracles - oracle one

The opposition between debt and selfless altruistic gift seems to return to Freud's patient in various guises. What is perhaps even more important is the link between this exchange of gifts and symbolic realm. A gift is tied with word, language begins along with law when the first gifts start to circulate. This seems to be the one crucial assumption of Lacan's understanding of symbolic debt.

No one is supposed to be ignorant of the law (...) No man is actually ignorant of it, because the law of man has been the law of language since the

\textsuperscript{233} SE 12, page 132.
first words of recognition presided over the first gifts—it having taken the
detestable Danai, who came and fled by sea, for men to learn to fear deceptive
word accompanying faithless gifts. Up until then, these gifts, the act of giving
them and the objects given, their transmutation into signs, and even their
fabrication, were so closely intertwined with speech for the pacific
Argonauts— uniting the islets of their community with the bonds of a
symbolic commerce—that they were designated by its name.

The quote looks like an oracle, but we may well unravel the allusions and
understand its meaning in context of our case study. We know that Lacan was inspired
by Levi-Strauss anthropology which, to simplify matters somehow, is based on an
assumption that laws of exchange of women are the cement that holds society together\textsuperscript{235}. This time however, when speaking about pacific Argonauts, Lacan leaves a footnote
referring to a book "Da Kamo" by Maurice Leenhardt. The book is a record of
ethnographic study of Canaque community in New Caledonia (published in 1947, derived
from long years of study, he began his studies in 1903). Leenhard work belongs to
phenomenological ethnography, his methods are different from those adopted by Levi-
Strauss, we may almost see literal transcriptions of Heidegger's thought in some of his
remarks. At the same it appears that the books account of economy is quite relevant for
our problem.

One problem which is settled in Canaque society in a puzzling and revealing way
is the problem of debt. When someone has a debt to someone else it is said that he "owes
a portion of his life". When the creditor happens to pass away debtor always attempts to
bring his debt in order to take back his life, and not leave this life in the hands of dead.
Perhaps even more interesting is the approach to money. In this interesting community
there is no money sensu stricto, the role of the means of exchange is played by shells, and
other elements, which are considered precious. An act of giving a thing is identified by
the natives with an act of giving a word. When natives show objects they exchanged with
others they say "These are the words which were said"\textsuperscript{236}, they therefore identify gifts

\textsuperscript{235} Forrester

\textsuperscript{236} Maurice Leenhardt, \textit{Do kamo : person and myth in the Melanesian world}, trans. Basia Miller Gulati
with word. Moreover there is an imperative that this exchange should be fair, when people speak about their transactions they invariably conclude "May the word be straight." Of course if the word is not straight a chaos ensues. As Leenhardt concludes:

"All social discipline proceeds from word. It is kept alive and right by the affectionate vigilance of the chief, Word of the clan."\(^{237}\)

What is crucial for our problem is the radical difference between this form of society and early modern Europe. In Rat Man's family there is no 'chief word of the clan', the word is not straight, exchange of gifts is undermined by purely egoistic calculations, greed and opportunism. Of course we will never know whether the situation was different in New Caledonia when Leenhard did his research there, his story appears too idyllic to be true. Nevertheless even if the image is utopian it still presents some form of ideal to which Lacan seems to refer when he discusses the discrepancy between symbolic function and real person of the father.

5. **Oracle two - Medusa**

What disturbed the smooth circle of exchange which we find in New Caledonia? Let's recall that Lacan says:

"the law of man has been the law of language since the first words of recognition presided over the first gifts—it having taken the detestable Danai, who came and fled by sea, for men to learn to fear deceptive word accompanying faithless gifts."

What does Lacan mean when he speaks about those "detestable Danai, who came and fled by the sea"? It seems that myth of Danae is a myth of "exchange crisis". Danae was a mother of Perseus. She was held captive by Polydektes, who wanted to get rid of Perseus. In order to humiliate the boy and force him out from his area he ordered Perseus to give him a horse as a wedding present. Polydektes was certain that Perseus will never afford a horse. He will no doubt feel humiliated and escape from the island. When he first learned

\(^{237}\) Ibid. page 151.
about Polydektetes request Perseus was confused, then after second thought he declared: I will bring you Medusa's head. This was a smart answer, Medusa was represented as possessing a body of a horse, therefore a king accepted this a potential gift. Polydektetes knew well that no one was able to kill Medusa, everyone that looked at her was turned into stone. Of course as usual in myths Perseus managed to kill Medusa by employing a smart trick, instead of looking at Medusa, he looked at her image in his shield and in this way he was able to cut off her head. At the end he brought it back to Polydektetes, presented Medusa's head as a gift. At this moment all men present at the wedding party were turned into stone.238

To sum up, a gift which somehow represents the law is the gift of Medusa's head. Let's note in this context that Medusa along with three other Gorgons Sthenno and Eurylaë was a symbol of horror. Horror is produced by her gaze. On the other hand Gorgons are associated with horrible sounds. Gorgon is said to derive from sanskrit garg, which refers to emission of guttural sound a cry, a howl. For this reason Medusa is often represented with her mouth open. As Adriana Cavarero comments:

"Medusa alludes to human essence that, deformed in its very being, contemplates the unprecedented act of its own dehumanization."239

In other words then we may read Lacan's statements as saying, "the law of man has been the law of language since the time of man's first encounter with Medusa". Now what exactly can this mean? Here we may note that apart from being very cryptic reference to mythology, this reference is also an allusion to Freud.

When Freud discusses the problem of horror, he alludes to a study of Ferenczi (from 1923) in which Hungarian analyst attempted to prove that Medusa's head is simply a displaced and condensed image of female genitals. In other words fear of Medusa is simply a masked anxiety and horror at the sight of female genitals, and this horror is provoked of course by the sudden insight into possibility of castration.240 Not long ago this psychoanalytic trope has been rediscovered by French artist Orlan. In an interesting

240 SE 19, page 144.
performance "Medusa's head" French artist displayed her vagina under the magnifying glass. The motto of the performance was a quote from Freud "at the sight of the vulva, even the devil runs away."

Freud argues that when child is first faced with the sight of female genitals he is terrified, and convinced that women had to be punished, he therefore realizes that punishment is real, that one may be punished for not following the norms outlined by the parents. And this is precisely the function that this story of Medusa plays in Lacan. When man discovers the possibility of punishment he learns that he must communicate with others to survive, to avoid castration. Economic exchange then is born out of recognition of possibility of castration.

To sum up then, our elucidation of the meaning of two Lacanian oracles leads us to the following conclusion. Harmonious economy governed by symbolic order (tradition) collapsed in the West. It was substituted by 'faithless gifts' - the process of exchange without any intersubjective justification (capitalism). The discrepancy between desire for the symbolic order and the awareness of its impossibility generates neurosis. Neurotic knows that the exchange is unfair, he know that "words is not straight" (to use expression from New Caledonia), nevertheless he continues to act as if the symbolic Other were real. He knows but he doesn't really believe, he clings to some form of faith, some form of fragile personal myth. This myth however fails. Rat Man's story represents this specific problem. His obsessive ruminations reveal a moment of truth concerning reality of economic exchange.

6. **Jouissance of punishments**

   This complicated relationship with symbolic Other, and simultaneous awareness of his death seems to play a crucial role in Rat Man's fantasy about punishment. Let's note that the rat torture is associated with one obsessive thought "I must pay my debts or this will happen to my father". This phrase apparently reveals a curious dilemma to Freud's patient. The dilemma closely resembles a forced choice "your money or your life". Obviously there is no good decision here, in both cases I will lose something precious, I can only decide what I prefer to lose. Lacan suggests that subjective alienation consists precisely in this particular logical structure. Either being or meaning - this is the
form of dilemma that faces each speaking subject according to Lacan. If one chooses being one's subjectivity falls into non-sensical murmur of unconscious; if one chooses meaning, the meaning is somehow mutilated, it is devoid of its nonsensical unconscious repressed component\textsuperscript{241}. For Rat Man this alienation occurs in an interesting form. Either he will return the debts of his father, and he will participate in the continuity of exchange of gifts and words initiated by his father, or he will provoke some strange form of punishment, a torture which he does not want to think about.

Although we have briefly described the torture earlier it may be necessary to remind the reader its gruesome character again. The mechanism of torture is rather simple, pot with rats is placed on the buttocks of the victim, rats attempt to escape, they dig into anus, bite the victim death follows from wounds. Rat Man hears this torture from one of his colleagues from the army ('cruel captain N'), who advocates the use of physical punishments for soldiers. Description of this torture is taken from a book by Octave Mirbeau - 'The Torture Garden'. English title may appear slightly misleading, the original title 'Le Jardin de Supplices' makes it clear that what is at stake is not torture (which is usually meant to extract some information from the victim), but rather cruel form of punishment. As punishments all cruelties described in the book have no rational or economic significance whatsoever. Of course 'rational' justifications for torture are usually flawed, nevertheless torturers of all regimes usually do provide some justifications for their activities. One reason often presented as legitimate ground for torture is the need to extract information from the victim. Torture can then be presented as a set of means to a higher end. Punishment is just an act of violent cruelty, devoid of any justification.

Cruel captain N is well aware of this, he does not think that punishments can be useful, he only think that they can 'boost morale', by provoking fear and terror in the soldiers. Rat Man's patient opposes this archaic and conservative approach, as we learn from case report he feels obliged to disagree with his colleague. Moreover he heartily dislikes his friend for the kind of views that he expresses. Nevertheless the torture that is described by his colleague somehow grips his mind, he is unable to free himself from it even though he wants to forget about it. He is terrified and frightened by his own

\textsuperscript{241} Lacan, Ecrits : the first complete edition in English. 211.
reaction. At the same time, as Freud remarks he feels something of a pleasure when he thinks about it. In general outline Rat Man's approach to this torture resembles his approach to superstition. 'He know very well, but all the same', this phrase seems to resonate in our mind when we read Freud's report. Rat Man knows very well that the torture is cruel, archaic, that those who defend the use of such tortures are simply dangerous conservatives, yet he somehow feels thrilled and excited by it. The punishment is in many respects opposed to rational economist within him. Aside from all ethical reasons punishments of this type are rather inefficient, the investment of force required to punish someone in such a cruel way is not rational. It is faster and more efficient to simply kill someone with a bullet rather then torment him for indeterminate amount of time. The only 'gain' that the torture generates is of course sadistic pleasure of the torturer. I think that this element excessive irrational surplus value is somehow crucial to our considerations here.

Rat Man is divided about his obsessional thought. Interestingly we find the same ambiguity at the origin of his fantasy - in Mirbeau text. It may appear surprising that primal scene of Freud's patient is taken from a book, but it is only surprising if we think that unconscious is some form of residue of primitive archaic instincts. In fact it is nothing of this sort.

Mirbeau text is split between fascination with cruelty and its condemnation. On the one hand the books is meant to be a form of social critique, and this is how some commentators read it. On the other hand the narrator appears to revel in graphic descriptions of tortures, he seems to be fascinated by them. The first side of the text, its critical dimension, is rooted in relatively liberal views of the author. At the time of writing Mirbeau was deeply dissatisfied with French democracy, which was in deep crisis after a series of political scandals such as Panama scandal and Dreyfus affair. Mirbeau defended Dreyfus publicly, and he published the novel at the time of second Dreyfus trial. The books is ironically dedicated "To Priests, Judges-to Men who educate, lead and govern men". The frontispiece which precedes the narration about Oriental tortures

recapitulates a fictional debate between members of French intellectuals elite. The debate begins when a member of Academie Francaise assures his friends that the "murder is the greatest human preoccupation and that all our actions stem from it"\textsuperscript{243}, of course he can't express this view, in public, he continues, but his books about ethics are full of lies in which doesn't believe. In reality, he argues, all governments, all social institutions and morality, are simply institutions which channel human desire for murder. Politicians are just torturers, they simply control the apparatus of violence, which in modern western societies is no different than in Oriental despotic monarchies. Placed in context of this initial declaration tortures described in the book are simply metaphors for cruel violence exercises by the state. This meaningless violence may be visibly seen in Dreyfus affair, when an innocent man is subjected to trial, humiliation and cruel punishment for no meaningful and rational reason\textsuperscript{244}. Anti-semitism, colonialism, economical exploitation and trade are all linked by narrator to this same desire for murder. Emily Apter argues that through graphic description of Oriental tortures Mirbeau criticizes contemporary French society. "Mirbeau's intersection of scapegoating and voyeurism reveals the pornographic cast of anti-Semitism", his critique "was directed toward the domestic repercussions of the colonial expansion of previous decades", he attempt to demonstrate "that the most deplorable wasteland, the moral one, was located in the heart of France"\textsuperscript{245}. Apter also argues that Mirbeau attempts to criticize popular brands of racist Neodarvinist social theory popular at the time, especially Lombroso and others\textsuperscript{246}.

On the other hand the descriptions of tortures is so graphic and plastic that it can hardly appear to be critical. One suspects that there is some hidden enjoyment at play on the side of the author. Charles Bernheim perhaps expresses this doubt about novel most succinctly when he claims the novel's vision of decadence is 'more liberating then repulsive. Or rather the liberation is a masochistic function of the repulsion"\textsuperscript{247}. Bernheim

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{243} Octave Mirbeau and Michael Richardson, \textit{Torture garden}, New ed. ed. (Sawtry: Dedalus Ltd., 2010). 2.
\textsuperscript{244} Ibid.page 6,
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{247} Bernheimer, Kline, and Schor, \textit{Decadent subjects : the idea of decadence in art, literature, philosophy, and culture of the fin de siècle in Europe}. 92
\end{flushright}
interestingly argues that this ambiguity is most visible in description of novel's main protagonist Clara, a gentle well-behaved English young lady who derives utmost pleasure from witnessing all forms of brutal Oriental tortures. Clara condemns European culture for its hypocrisy and cynicism, at the same time she idealizes Orient, which for her is the only place where one can be free, that is only place where one can submit to innermost transgressive desires without minding the law\(^\text{248}\). Her love of cruelty then is ambiguous. She is not opposed to violence as such, she opposes violence which is limited by law. Of course Clara can hardly be seen as the voice of the author, we know very well that Mirbeau hated women, he even wrote a misogynist treatise in disguise (hiding mainly before his wife). At the same time Bernheim appears convincing when he argues that the author "gets too much masochistic satisfaction from Clara's voyeurism for her scopic violence to be convincing vehicle of moral and political critique\(^\text{249}\). Yet another interpretation suggests that the novel should be read as celebration of anarchism, Mirbeau in this reading celebrates purifying revolutionary violence that could destroy capitalist state, Sorel avant la lettre, or perhaps someone anticipating Benjamin's critique of violence\(^\text{250}\).

One thing that appears quite interesting is Mirbeau claim that eroticism is closely tied with death drive. At one point Clara's lover says "I was thinking about love (...) and here you are talking to me again-forever-about torture", for which Clara replies "Doubtless-since it is the same thing-"\(^\text{251}\). Leaving aside the obvious element of kitsch in this dialogue we may well find something of relevance in this description. "Murder is born of love, and love attains its greatest intensity in murder" - suggest decadent philosopher in the introduction\(^\text{252}\). Obviously the moral universe in which this philosopher functions is determined by marquis de Sade.

\(^{248}\) ibid 95.
\(^{249}\) Ibid 100.
\(^{251}\) Mirbeau and Richardson, *Torture garden*.page 132.
\(^{252}\) Ibid, page 15
7. Rat Man and Mirbeau

Luckily we don't need to enter the complicated argument about the meaning of Mirbeau's story. We only need to understand which reading is adapted by Rat Man's unconscious. How Freud's patient reads this story? How his fantasy responds to Mirbeau's decadent vision?

The main transformation of the fantasy that occurs concerns the victims of punishment. In "The Garden of Tortures" the victims were rather unimportant. Perverse Clara who visits the garden is not strictly speaking a sadist, she is a voyeur. Her pleasure is visual, she does not need to torment others to achieve satisfaction, he simply loves to observe different forms of suffering. Throughout her journey she becomes more and more excited by subsequent scenes of torture but she is never really concerned about personality of victims of tortures. She chats with torturers and sometimes asks about crimes committed by tortures, usually the crimes are petty and meaningless. At the end of the story she experiences hysterical attack, phases of which are described with utmost detail. It is perhaps worth remarking that Clara follows all stages of hysteria outlined by Charcot. Mirbeau appears to be an avid reader of psychiatric literature of his time.

The victims of torture in Rat Man's phantasy, on the other hand, play a crucial role. The torture is exercised on his significant others - his father and his girlfriend. This is an important modification of original fantasy. It is perhaps most visible when one compares it with cruel captain's fascination in this story, cruel captain maintained that the torture should be used against soldiers, so in a way he also maintains peculiar anonymous nature of this ritual. In Mirbeau the victims are silent and anonymous. Perhaps for this reason his descriptions appear to be less shocking. In this respect the story resembles some of Sade's novels in which victims are reduced to pure bodily presence, their personality does not enter the space of attention of torturer. As one commentator adequately put it, Sade's hero's resemble figures from *papier mache*. They are simply anonymous bearers of body parts which may be disjointed and disassembled by an act of torture. Freud's patient, on the other hand, endows his victims with personality, he sees

253
others in tortured bodies. For this reason his fantasy is much more terrifying and shocking.

Both fantasies however lead to similar finale. Clara falls into hysteria, and follows the stages of illness described by Charcot, Rat Man experiences an attack of obsessional thoughts and ends up in Freud's office. More importantly both 'cases' involve particular jouissance, pleasure mixed with pain, which overwhelms the subject and somehow paralyzes him for a while. We may recall here the curious expression of patient's face when he recounted his fantasy, we learn that his "face took on a very strange, composite expression. I could only interpret it as one of horror at pleasure of which he himself was unaware". Freud interestingly analyzes this phenomenon in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", he argues that some desires are repressed and cut off from possibility of satisfaction. They remain hidden in unconscious and sometimes, through round-about paths they reach satisfaction, this satisfaction however is not felt as pleasure, because he subject feels overwhelmed and terrified by foreign forces that he feels within him. The satisfaction obtained in this way takes form of strange "pleasure that is not felt as such".

What is the cause of this jouissance? One obvious interpretation could state that it is simply transgression of the law. Rat Man's obsessional thought presents the cruel torture as some form of punishment for breaking the law. "I must pay back debt or this will happen", mysterious 'this' appears to be a thing that lies beyond the law, that exceeds the limits of the law and for this reason somehow guarantees its effectiveness. It is easy to see here a curious statement about motivation 'I must pay back my debts because of this', where 'this' is a cruel torture which brings unbearable enjoyment. What is 'this thing' that terrifies patient and motivates him to engage in fruitless performances of economic rationality?

We have noted earlier that Freud's patient doesn't like this form of torture, that it contradicts his liberal and Enlightened approach to system of justice. The opposition between modern and archaic forms of punishment is clearly articulated in his mind. We may feel tempted to feel Rat Man's ambiguous perspective on physical punishments in

254 SE 10, p. 167.
context of history of disciplines. As we know Foucault demonstrated the gradual process of substitution of spectacular physical punishments (typical for Europe before XIX century) with more 'humane', 'civilized' forms of treatment. Of course the torture which becomes Rat Man's *idée fixe* belongs to those archaic, 'inhumane' forms of discipline that were typical for earlier epochs, but which were later condemned by humanists and utilitarianism as primitive, sadist, dangerous and immoral.

It is interesting to note that modern techniques of power are sometimes presented as reason of emergence of modern obsessions. As we know Foucault also argued that modern power is related to emergence of various techniques of self-control. Power became internalized by individuals, it was expected that individuals are going to regulate themselves, and social institutions are only meant to create reflective individuals that are going to discipline themselves. Lennard Davies suggests that obsession can be seen precisely as psychological mechanism of Foucauldian self-regulation went amok. In other words obsession is a self-regulation brought to parody or absurdity. He notices in this context that obsessive patients often assumed that they are guilty and sinful and that this guilt is something that is characteristic for their deep self. And according to Foucault this particular type of reflexive subjectivity analyzing its own deeds is precisely the invention of modern power techniques. On the other hand obsessions are usually about transgression of some elaborate norms, and isn't the idea of norm and deviation the main feature of psychiatric power? Obsession then can be seen as response to new forms of power, a manifestation of this power. This throws some light on Rat Man's 'I know very well...'. Perhaps he is not archaic but rather simply too modern, obsessively modern so to say, he is too reflexive.

Although there are some reasons to agree on this interpretation some doubts remain. First of all let's note that, in its original context, the torture is actually presented as something opposing western modernity. In Mirbeau story the torturer is convinced that his violence is somehow superior to buearocracy:

"Everything which makes death collective, administrative and bureaucratic-all the filth of of your progress, in fact-is destroying little by

little, our beautiful traditions of the past. It is only here in this garden that they are conserved as well as can be (...) We have been conquered by the mediocrity, and he bourgeois spirit is triumphing everywhere”

As we see Chinese torturer presents his activity as something which is radically different from western ideals. He actually feels endangered by modern disciplines, he is aware of the difference between them and his art. The fact that he sees his work as precisely some form of ancient art is also an argument against its modernity. As a matter of fact this Chinese torturer speaks almost like western intellectual opposing totalitarian regimes and denouncing their atrocities of concentration camps. Of course this voice of Chinese torturer is purely fictional, as is the torture. It is Mirbeau's fantasy about Chinese penal system, this fantasy is not based on any form of serious research. It is true that severe punishments were applied for some types of crimes in China at the time - especially treason, but the punishments were never that severe. Treason was punished with cruel form of torture - a death by thousand cuts - which might have resembled some of the tortures from the "Torture Garden". But punishments were never applied indiscriminately, China's legal code was quite elaborate, for instance each death sentence had to be approved by emperor personally. Local authorities were obliged to follow the code in their punishments, if they diverged from it (for instance if the victim died during punishment and there was no death sentence or even if the beating was applied to wrong parts of the body) they were liable to separate punishments - they were sentenced to 100 blows of bamboo. Mirbeau's novel simply testifies to popular western stereotypes about oriental cruelty and despotism. More recent scholarship proves that those stereotypes were unfounded, in many respects Chinese imperial justice was less severe than legal systems of XVIII century absolutist France - cruel spectacles of pain, such as execution of Damiens with which Foucault begins "Discipline and Punish" never took place in China. Cruel executions of persons convicted of treason were did not take place in public, they were usually hidden from public view.

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257 Mirbeau and Richardson, Torture garden: 147.
Perhaps then we should we view the torture as particular realization of the value of tradition? Perhaps obsession of Rat Man is a form of communicating with "beautiful tradition of the past"? Torture is not, in this reading, a symptom of discipline, a symptom of modernity, it's more likely a symptom of resistance to modernity, particular form of revolt against discipline. Revolt in the name of what is archaic, in the name of beautiful tradition of suffering and violence?

8. Conclusions

Rat Man's disturbances are fascinating in that they have so many different dimensions. On the one hand his disturbances can be seen as some form of return of archaic primitive sadistic desires. On the other hand his symptoms are also very modern. To paraphrase popular sentence from tourist guides Rat Man's fantasy about brutal anal torture is a place where "tradition fuses with modernity", remnants of ethics of Protestantism fuse with some forms of primitive totemism and very modern forms of capitalist social exchange. In a way this case can be also linked with the demise of symbolic authority, the end of belief in authoritative and certain power of the father. Rat Man's father resembles Dora's father in that he can also be seen as sorry, humiliated figure. Father here can be clearly seen as "castrated father", someone who is devoid of his authority. Lack of authority however does not lead to demise of power. Rat Man knows that his father is powerless, he knows that tradition of religious habits don't have any influence on him, yet this knowledge does not bring him freedom, it reinforces his symptoms.
Schreber's case is somewhat at unusual in analytic collection of case studies. All others present an account of actual psychotherapy, and they are based on a series of encounters between patient and analyst. For this reason Freud had privileged and direct access to all the material that he presented in other case studies. In many cases he was the only doctor who knew his patients in person, at least at the time of publication. He was able to withhold some information from publication, selectively choose facts to suite his argument and get away with it. In Schreber's case study situation seems different. Freud never met this specific patient. We may only speculate what Schreber's response to psychoanalysis would be. Case study is wholly based on Schreber's writing, his impressive and magnificent opus magnum "Memoirs of My Nervous Illness", in which he chronicles his disturbances and presents his unusual worldview.

1. Freud’s discussion of psychosis

For Freud Schreber’s psychosis discloses origins of social bond. Pathology shoes in undisclosed form hidden sources of intersubjective ties. As Freud puts it:

"So long as the individual is functioning normally and it is consequently impossible to see the depths of his mental life, we may doubt whether his emotional relations to his neighbor in society have anything to do with sexuality, either actually or in their genesis. But delusions never fail to
uncover these relations and to trace back the social feelings to their roots in a
directly erotic wish\textsuperscript{260}.

Freud’s interpretation of roots of social feelings is clearly paradoxical. He seems
to reflect on the sources of social feelings on the basis of man who apparently had almost
no real social attachments throughout his mental illness. Psychosis is defined as
withdrawal of libido, and in consequence interruption of real social interactions. Freud
focuses most of his attention on this mechanism which leads Schreber to isolate himself
from social world and close himself in closed world of his delusions. This element of
isolation from social world has been one of the most important characteristics of
schizophrenia at the beginning of XIX century. For one of most influential theorists of
mental illness Kraepelin for instance this isolation manifests itself in inability to work. It
is therefore highly surprising that Freud argues that exclusion from society can teach us
something about sources of social feeling.

It seems though that there may be some truth in Freud’s statement, but his idea
needs to be reformulated and corrected to some extent. Schreber’s psychosis indeed can
tell us something very interesting about relations with our neighbors, but not so much in
the sense, that Freud associated with his remarks. The hypothesis that homosexuality is
the cause of psychosis can appear today only as particular historical curiosity. But
perhaps we can find something relevant and interesting in psychotic experience of
neighbors, perhaps we can learn from it, perhaps it offers us some perspective on modern
types of social links? Perhaps psychoanalysis can lead us to a couple of as about the
content of experience of the neighbor in psychosis? What is the meaning of psychotic
love of neighbor? What psychosis can teach us about social link, social bond?

We should note that for Freud psychosis is a privileged object of inquiry into
origins of our love for neighbors because it displays ‘vertical’ relations with neighbors,
others who are just like me, without mediation of identification with the leader (father).
As historians of psychoanalysis know Schreber’s case belongs to archeology of Freud’s
\textit{“Massenpsychologie und Ich-analyse”}. The central topic of \textit{“Massenpsychologie…”} that
is identification as a source of social bond is a continuation of reflections from \textit{“On
Narcissism”}, and \textit{“On Narcissism”} is actually a continuation of polemics with Jung about

\textsuperscript{260} SE 12, 60.
Schreber’s case. One may say thus that the problem of psychosis drove Freud to engage in his social/political speculation.

Schreber’s case displays original social tie in so far as it demonstrates how identification with the leader, with “symbolic father”, to use Lacanian term, decomposes into pure desire. As Freud puts it, identification collapses into object love. Schreber literally loves his God, God becomes an object of his enjoyment. A delusion central to Schreber’s psychosis comprises the belief that the subject must be turned into a woman and given to God for constant sexual enjoyment. This destiny is announced to Schreber by multiplicity of voices which constantly speak to him and torment him with their sometime meaningless chatter. At one point this destiny is even announced by God himself who utters a profound word: “Luder”, which is a particular insult used in southern Germany in XIX century roughly equivalent to English “whore”.

Schreber’s madness is a defense against this emerging homosexual desire for the father; it is governed by particular reversal of one particular statement: “I love him”. Freud presents four types of negation of this statement. First one asserts: “I don’t love him – I hate him”. This form of negation cannot enter consciousness, aggression and destructiveness is projected on external reality, the statement is negated and turned into “I don’t love him he hates me (and the fact that he hates me justifies me in hating him)”. Another form which negation can take is the form I do no love him – I love her. And this in turn is twisted into “I love her because she loves me”. Third form would say “I don’t love him – she loves him”. Fourth way of contradicting this statement would say: “I do not love him – I love no one, I do not love at all”. Mechanism of paranoia is best described by first type of negation in which love is first turned into hate and then into perception of hate of others, especially of one privileged Other, namely archaic and most desired object of desire – father.

What is striking in all those negations is how interestingly they display the logic of unconscious relations with others. Freud takes a very basic statement, comprising of

263 SE 12, 63-65.
subject, object and verb – I love him – and show that unconscious responds in various ways to each part of the sentence. Of course Freud does not exhaust the problem, we can well imagine different ‘negations’ as well, such as “she hates him”, “it hates me”, or even “they love him” (why does Freud limit his investigation only to singular persons?). It’s also fascinating that Freud analyzes desire starting from one sentence, and he shows how desire is actually triggered by particular twists of one sentence. He actually seems to imply that our affects are governed by the transformations of sentences, by particular alternatives in constellations of signs. Homosexual libido here is very much linguistic in nature. Homosexuality is a particular desire for homonymy, I love him is actually particular form of statement I love I, I love me. The linguistic nature of the problem suggested by discussion of psychotic mechanism is somewhat clouded by discussion of homosexuality in terms of desire for a person with similar genitals. Freud argues that homosexuality is actually a remnant of a phase in libidinal development when child was fixed on its own person, lived in a closed, alienated world of its own, and felt traces of desire only for what appeared similar or identical to its own body. It seems though that genitals here are just metaphor for words and erect member is just a metaphor of letter I. How can it be otherwise if mechanism of paranoia is governed by transformation of one sentence starting and ending with “I”?

It is interesting to see some symptoms of Freud’s own narcissistic identification and rivalry with psychotic. In a striking quote Freud acknowledges theoretical value of Schreber’s system, he is well aware that strange ruminations of the Senatpräsident are in many respects similar to psychoanalytic theory. Schreber's symptoms appear to Freud as almost "endopsychic perceptions" of his own theory. At some point Freud even feels compelled to insist that he did not plagiarize any element of Schreber’s system, that he invented his theory of libido by himself, without the help of psychotic.

"Schreber’s delusional structure sound almost like endopsychic perceptions of the processes whose existence I have assumed in these page as the basis of our explanation of paranoia. I can nevertheless call a friend and fellow-specialist to witness that I had developed my theory of paranoia before I became acquainted with the contents of Schreber’s book. It remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should
like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber’s delusion than other people are as yet prepared to believe.\textsuperscript{264}

In this interesting quote psychoanalysis is placed on a par with psychotic discourse. "Only future will decide whether psychoanalytic interpretation was one big delusion". This statement appears even more puzzling if we read it together with Freud's insistence that psychosis can be seen as parody of philosophy:

"It might be maintained that a case of hysteria is a caricature of a work of art, that an obsessional neurosis is a caricature of a religion and that a paranoid delusion is a caricature of a philosophical system".\textsuperscript{265}

The claim about "parody" of philosophy here seems to refer to asocial and isolated character of psychotic delusions. Freud seems to assume that "healthy" philosophy is bound with society, it is socially validated by members of society who recognize the official existence of departments of philosophy. In this respect psychoanalysis may well appear to be a parody of philosophy - unofficial, unrecognized, controversial and unorthodox repetition of classical philosophical themes.

Psychosis appears to Freud as specific disturbances of sociality, some form of degraded interpersonal bond. What is interesting here is that his own text is also confirming this phenomenon. Freud writes that Schreber alienates himself from others and is unable to create affective ties with others, yet he himself turns his object - psychotic - into artifact. By writing about Schreber, by turning his experiences into letters Freud himself alienates the patient further.

Psychotic relationship with other is marked by exaggerated attention paid to their interpretations, as Freud notes when writing about other case of paranoia:

"Our consideration of the first case, the jealous paranoia, led to a similar estimate of the, importance of the quantitative factor, by showing that there also the abnormality essentially consisted, in the hypercathexis of the interpretations of someone else’s unconscious".\textsuperscript{266}

\textsuperscript{264} SE 12, 79.
\textsuperscript{265} SE 13, 73.
\textsuperscript{266} SE 18, 228.
From this point of view psychosis again appears very similar to psychoanalysis - psychotic just like psychoanalyst, is simply fixed on interpretations of others, he is fascinated by unconscious of others. Unconscious of patient understands the world in specific way, analyst attempts to understand those interpretations, he constantly wonders about interpretations of others. This places interesting light on all interpreters of Freud - all commentators, who write books, articles, all those subjects who engage in infinite task of interpreting psychoanalysis. Their intellectual activity seems to be marked as well by this interesting "hypercathexis" of interpretations of others. On the other hand the difference between psychosis and psychoanalysis seems to be marked by the degree of distance to subjects own interpretations. Psychotic patients are, as Freud puts it "completely under the spell of the apprehension brought on by her experience" - they are completely immersed in their interpretations. Psychoanalysts on the other hand, perhaps are able to distance themselves from them, at least they should be able to distance themselves. The idea of "hypercathexis" of intepretation suggests that subject can resolves the puzzle of his own desire only if he refers to authority of others. Psychosis is perhaps most instructive in this respect because. It seems to be a twisted form of social proof: “if they hate me I must hate them”. Surprisingly then drives are mediated by others, they are justified and legislated by others, my hate can only become mine, in so far as others are involved.

On the other hand, by suggesting that homosexuality constitutes basis of social feeling Freud seems to acknowledge the universality and necessity of homosexuality, this makes him surprisingly close to Plato. One should however that psychosis is not triggered by homosexual libido, but by defense against it. Not infer all homosexuals will be psychotic. As a matter of fact we are all homosexual in so far as there is an element of desire for similarity in our social interactions, the problem emerges when for some reasons we start to defend and negate our homosexuality. According to Schreber’s delirium is triggered precisely by a homosexual panic, by refusal and protest against homosexuality, if he were openly homosexual he wouldn’t have had any problems. Thus Freud’s interpretation actually implies that what lies at root of psychosis is not homosexual desire but particular homophobia of late XIX and early XX century. This homophobia, this decomposition of social feelings, and fear of others who are just like
me, seems to be provoked by collapse of identification. Strange process through which the figure of the father, normally associated with authority and respect, becomes transformed into obscene Machinean God whose demands are arbitrary and mad.

What happens to homosexuality without this trace of uncanny homophobia which turns it into psychosis? As Freud argues homosexual desire is deflected from its aim and transformed into friendship, attachment to fellow human beings. The atmosphere of time, marked by militarism, probably provoked Freud to speak about esprit de corps as one of the forms in which homosexual desire expresses itself.

Freud returns to this problem in “Massenpsychologie...” where slightly surprisingly he tries to derive friendly feelings to others from original envy. It seems that Freud slightly reverses his matrix from Schreber’s case. In Schreber’s case reversal of love into hate leads to psychotic breakdown, in “Massenpsychologie...” reversal of envy into love, leads to peaceful social cooperation. In a way Freud is quite positive about homosexuality in so far as it is not openly sexual, he even argues that homosexual love “springs from work in common”. In general he seems to be convinced that homosexuality is a factor which adds extra glue to social relations, it encourages people to tolerate their neighbors even though they may appear intolerable sometimes.

The topic returns again in “Civilization and its Discontents”, here again Freud turns to a question of the meaning of love of fellow human beings, but this time he focuses on Christian imperative “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”. Freud recognizes that this Christian maxim is in one particular sense universal – civilization always tries to force us to form friendly attachments to other people; friendship and common work is always more constructive for society then enmity. But leaving aside this rather banal meaning of the maxim he concludes that it is completely unrealistic:

“Men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved(…)they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbor is for them not

\[267\] SE 12, 61.
\[268\] SE 18, 120.
\[269\] SE 18, 102-103.
\[270\] SE 21, 109.
only potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on them”²⁷¹

In a way then Jesus is utterly unrealistic, he demands something which is completely unattainable, people will always desire to exploit their neighbors, to rape them, to seize properties of others and to humiliate others. As we know Freud is rather pessimistic, the only type of brotherly love that he can imagine is a love of one community which is cemented by hate of others. In this context he discusses European feuds between neighboring nations, the antagonisms and stereotypes that flourish precisely in nations that are geographically close to each other (Poles laugh at Czechs, Czechs laugh at Poles, Spaniards who don’t like Frenchmen and so on), and thus should in theory have some shared experiences²⁷². One is reminded in this context of Nick Cave’s song “People ain’t no Good”, especially his cynical acknowledgment of people’s helpfulness followed by pessimistic denunciation of this false love:

“It ain't that in their hearts they're bad
They can comfort you, some even try
They nurse you when you're ill of health
They bury you when you go and die
It ain't that in their hearts they're bad
They'd stick by you if they could
Aaaah, But that's just bullshit, baby,
People just ain't no good”²⁷³

The curious psychotic reversal of love into hate appears in a somewhat different light after this brief excursion into Freud’s understanding of brotherly love. Psychotic seems to represent a particular exceptional case, a subject which reverses the natural process of sociality in which hate is turned into false and pretended love. In Schreber’s

²⁷¹ SE 21, 111.
²⁷² SE 21, 114.
²⁷³ Nick Cave, People ain’t no good, Album: The Boatman’s Call.

152
case true and intense love is turned into false hate. The paradox here is that Schreber apparently really loves his neighbor, he is simply unable to face it.

2. Love your artificial neighbor

If Schreber’s psychosis is a disturbance of intersubjective bond, this disturbance manifests itself by particular fixation on interpretations of others but also in particular type of interpretations of others that dominates psychotic mind. But how exactly did Schreber perceive his neighbors? How did he interpret others?

If we can risk some generalization we may say that others appeared to Schreber mostly in form of “fleetingly-improvised man” with whom he had superficial acquaintance. In other words, as Schreber argues they were simply miraculously invented by God for a short period of time just to appear to him. After a meeting with him they simply disappeared. Against the dominant understanding of psychosis which states that psychotic is certain of his own delusions Schreber doubts sometimes whether really all people around are “fleeting-improvised”, but he simply cannot convince himself that he is wrong:

“Even now I cannot convince myself that this idea is wrong, because I definitely remember for instance, seeing more than once during those very light June mornings, this “attendant of the Country Court” who slept in separate bed in my room, becoming one with his bed; that is to say I saw him gradually disappear.”

We see then that he tries to convince himself, he feels the need to justify his unusual experience to himself, but he feels that the force of his experience is just too strong. Convinced by his impressions Schreber is certain that indeed all people surrounding him disappear when they leave his field of vision. When he travels to Dresden he knows very well that all people that he sees on the streets are created just for a moment for the purpose of his journey. One may say that the world appear to him to be constant Potemkin village, everything is created just for a short, fleeting impression that it makes on him. Everything that happens is artificial; there is nothing natural or

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spontaneous. Everything is controlled by God and his servant Flechsig who conspire to torment Schreber. As with other of his convictions those convictions are not baseless, there are some good reasons to believe in them:

"I have reason to assume that (...), mankind and all its activities have only been artificially maintained by means of direct divine miracles, to an extent which the restrictions under which I live do not allow me to survey fully."\(^{275}\)

Louis Sass rightly points out that Schreber really experiences the whole world as one giant panopticon\(^{276}\). It is crucial tough that he really experiences something which was only a fantasy for Bentham, and what is still rather a fantasy then reality today. Although CCIT is ubiquitous today one may well say that in many cases it does not work as promised, the reality is not as effective and terrifying as fantasy. Schreber’s reality is a fantasy tough. All his encounters with others are a part of giant experiment that God makes on him. It is surprising that even Schreber’s relatives are perceived as artificial. When he meets his wife after a long period of not seeing her he is convinced that she is also invented cursorily. He is certain that his real wife died during a period when he was in asylum and a figure which presents herself as his wife is only impersonating\(^{277}\). All his physicians are invented as well, and this is precisely a reason why he is determined to write a book and not speak to them. In one length footnote he explains that there was no point speaking to his physicians about all his experiences and thoughts because he knew very well that they are simply fleetingly-improvised. Curiously in this case he adds that they were unknowingly fleetingly improvised, they were not aware of the role that they played in the whole plan\(^{278}\). This situation appears somewhat puzzling and fascinating. We read a book written by a man who apparently thought that only some of his future readers will not be artificial. Schreber’s “Memoirs…” are thus a curious message in a bottle sent from desolate island; they attest to enormous faith in writing – “there must be someone who is not invented out there, and at some point in time he will read this”. The

\(^{275}\) Ibid., 89.


\(^{277}\) Schreber, *Memoirs of my nervous illness; tr., ed. & with introduction, notes and discussion*: 119.

\(^{278}\) Ibid., 129.
reader of memoirs can almost feel proud that by simply not being invented he plays such an important role.

If all men are improvised they must have been constructed by someone - in other words there some smart technology must be at play here. Not surprisingly Schreber quickly moves into technical descriptions of various mechanism of control which are employed to master him. Among the most curious devices is the phenomenon of ‘writing-down’ with which he is constantly tortured. Schreber feels that all his thoughts, all events that happen to him, all the persons that he meets and all things that he sees, are carefully noted by fleetingly-improvised men at other planets. It is crucial here, that the whole process is purely automatic, it is done without deliberate intention. What is written down is later on repeated by the voices, fleeting-improvised men and rays of lights, which torture Schreber with their mindless and senseless chatter.

There is something extraordinarily postmodern in the abundance of spectacular and deeply mystical nonsense with which Schreber is bombarded. We find so many complains on this terrible monotony of nonsense phrases.

“For years my nerves have had to endure incessantly such and similar terrible nonsense in dreary monotony...”\(^\text{279}\),

“however insignificant the rhymes, even obscene verses are worth their weight in gold as mental nourishment compared with the terrible nonsense my nerves are otherwise forced to listen to.”\(^\text{280}\)

There is a deeper link between writing and artificial neighbors then it appears at first sight. German speaking readers of “Memoirs...” quickly discovered that the term used to describe those artificial neighbors is actually related to writing. What is translated as ‘fleeting improvised men’ are really ‘aufgeschriebenen Menschen’. So it implies that the men are actually sketched, drawn, or simply written down. Niederland points out at the link between the figures that can be found in Schreber’s father books, and ....

\(^{279}\) Ibid., 56.

\(^{280}\) Ibid. 203
Friedrich Kittler, claimed that by means of this writing down system Schreber’s madness responds to technological development of his time, especially the invention of typewriter, press and telegraph:

"The paranoid machine operates like an integrated system of all the data-storage devices that revolutionized recording circa 1900"²⁸¹.

According to Kittler we may also see in Schreber an inventor of automatic writing later on developed by Dadaists. On the other hand what is involved in this vision is a feeling of connection with distant lands and planets, a feeling of traversing space and time into some different lands. This seems to be very typical for XIX and XX century mind – accustomed to breaking various frontiers, barriers, borders either in space or in time.

The idea that Other is a machine, especially a writing machine, is at least as old as psychoanalysis itself. Freud’s famous paper on mystic writing pad suggested just that – unconscious can be compared to a machine, it works in a way similar to one particular machine, namely mystic writing pad. The paper has become an object of countless commentaries – Jacques Derrida’s famous “Freud and the Scene of Writing” is probably a classic one in this context²⁸². Derrida points out that metaphor of writing machine is central to Freud’s invention. He gives a lot of textual evidence for his claim: famous letter to Fliess in which Freud compares repression to inscription; some fragments of “Project for Scientific Psychology…”; finally crucial chapters of “Interpretation of Dreams”.

But psychotic machines, especially Schreber’s writing machines are slightly different. One characteristic which distinguishes them from other writing devices is the fact that they are interconnected. Writing machines are connected by means of nerves with invented people, they are placed on different planets. Writing machines have their own subjectivity, they act on a distance. Space is cancelled out in the mechanism of their

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working. In this respect they bear close resemblance to cybernetic dreams which at some point led to invention of internet. We may recall Norbert Wiener dream of teleportation, which later on through Star Trek made its first appearance in pop-culture:

“It is amusing as well as instructive to consider what would happen if we were to transmit the whole pattern of the human body, of the human brain with its memories and cross connections, so that a hypothetical receiving instrument could re-embodi these messages in appropriate matter, capable of continuing the processes already in the body and the mind, and of maintaining the integrity needed for this continuation by a process of homeostasis.”

If we compare Freud’s mystic writing pad, on which Derrida focuses we see quite clearly how different it is from the experience of Schreber and fantasy of inventor if cybernetics Wiener, both thought about interconnected systems which exchange messages, not about isolated devices which simply receive traces stored and obliterated them. In this respect Derrida’s account seems to be slightly out of touch with technological development.

If all human beings really improvised did Schreber experience any kind of real others? It seems that the only fully ‘real’ other that he experiences is God. At one moment for instance God speaks to him personally, not through intermediaries or servants but he appears in person. Although he provokes fear, trembling and terror in Schreber this experience is actually a relief from daily torments of fleeting-improvised man.

“What was spoken did not sound friendly by any means: everything seemed calculated to instill fright and terror into me and the word “wretch”[Luder] was frequently heard(...)Yet everything that was spoken was genuine, not phrases learned by rote as they later were, but the immediate expression of true feeling.”


284 Schreber, Memoirs of my nervous illness; tr., ed. & with introduction, notes and discussion: 131.
This experience seems to confirm Angela Woods’ claim that psychosis may be understood as experience of Kantian sublime\textsuperscript{285}. All elements of Kantian definition of sublime are present in Schreber experiences of God. He experiences something overwhelming, amazing, awesome in original sense of provoking awe. It also seems to support Michel de Certeau’s interpretation which traces analogies between Schreber’s psychosis and mystic experience (of Meister Eckhart and John of the Cross)\textsuperscript{286}. In any case it points at radical difference between experience of others as fleetingly improvised and the experience of genuine Other. What was lacking in day to day life of Schreber was precisely an element of genuine being; everything appeared to him to be artificial, devised just for a short amount of time ago.

It is perhaps typical for psychosis that it displays the role of things in such a bizarre way. The role of machines in psychosis is fairly well documented in psychoanalytic literature. We may mention here interesting Victor Tausk’s “On the Origin of the "Influencing Machine" in Schizophrenia”. Tausk demonstrates there that schizophrenia can be thought of as particular invasion of mysterious, uncanny machines constructed from thousands of small elements.

"The schizophrenic influencing machine is a machine of mystical nature. The patients are able to give only vague hints of its construction. It consists of boxes, cranks, levers, wheels, buttons, wires, batteries, and the like"\textsuperscript{287}.

Tausk describes a case of delusional patient, who was convinced that she is persecuted by an android. The android has the same form as the patient and every time someone manipulates an android something happens to her. It seems that in most psychoanalytic texts machines play the role of oppressors. Schreber is tormented by his invented men. Miss Natalija from Tausk’s case study is also tortured by an android. Psychotics analyzed by psychoanalyst fight with their machines, they are waging war


with technological devices. Inventions appear nonsensical to them, but at the same time psychotic knows that they are created with malicious intentions. What would be the meaning of machines from psychoanalytic perspective? Should we place them on the side of imaginary, real or symbolic? Who are those artificial neighbors that we are living with, all those speaking computers, defecating ducks and androids? What kind of affect can we associate with them?

On the most obvious note we can say that fleeting improvised men are just imaginary reflections of a subject, they are simply little men, men devoid of any support in the symbolic order, subjects not justified by some higher authority of a given culture.

To some extent perhaps one can see them as simply something of an extension of Other. This seems to be compatible with psychotic experience, after all machines in psychosis always act as representatives of someone, they don’t have the will of their own, they are steered by someone who plays the role of main tormentor.

This seems to be the case of Schreber, who thinks that all machines are simply representatives of God. Precisely this curious understanding of emissaries of God which blends technological world with the sacred, mystic experience of transcendence is so fascinating here. For medieval theology the role of emissaries of God was played by angels. There is something symptomatic in Schreber substitutions of angels by writing machines and invented people. Perhaps technology simply substitutes theology today? The hopes of eternal salvation, of infinite happiness and joy, are satisfied not by theologians but by vision of technological changes. The vision of hell is accordingly modified, instead of demons, we have writing machines, cameras, and computer programs which follow us constantly throughout our daily life.

On the other hand in other non-psychoanalytic reports of schizophrenia we may find an experience of particular mystic gloss of things:

"It was the first appearance of those elements which were always present in later sensations of unreality: illimitable vastness, brilliant light, and the gloss of smoothness of material things"288.

Schreber’s fleeting-improvised men seem to be just that, particular things, namely androids, robots programmed in some mysterious and mystic way to act in the way they act. In this respect we may perhaps agree with Michael Freedman, who states that Schreber’s “Memoirs…” is a sort of science-fiction, but not because it creates a vision of subjectivity flooded by meaningless stream of impressions which it cannot synthesize into one meaningful whole (as Jameson and Harvey would have it), but because of particular relation with technology:

"It is in this way that dr Schreber, with its estranging, self-consistent, paranoid world-vision, is himself very nearly an SF author. (...) SF closely corresponds to the weird and coherent interpretive systems of paranoiac."\(^{289}\)

Freedman’s point is part of larger argument about paranoia in Philip K. Dick’s writings. Dick’s definition of paranoia appears to be surprisingly relevant for Schreber as well:

"The ultimate in paranoia is not when everyone is against you but when everything is against you. Instead of "My boss is plotting against me," it would be "My boss's phone is plotting against me." Objects sometimes seem to possess a will of their own anyhow, to the normal mind; they don't do what they're supposed to do, they get in the way, they show an unnatural resistance to change."\(^{290}\)

What is really interesting in this remark by Dick is the reformulation of link between a person and thing. Paranoia occurs when a thing starts to possess a will of its own, when it starts to act against our will, when it resists us. Dick’s novels are populated by multiplicity of this kind of objects – for instance doors which need to be paid for in order to function in “Ubik”. This seems to agree with Schreber’s experience, from his point of view everyone around were actually things, they were inventions, machines, objects, created in order to make a short impression on him.


\(^{290}\) Ibid.
Freedman suggests that in this respect psychosis is a response to commodification of inter-personal relationships in capitalism, according to him what Dick really talks about is simply commodity fetishism. In commodity fetishism particular objects produces by men are perceived as mystical and mysterious beings which act on their own. Marx compares perception of commodities by consumers to perception of mythical heroes or gods by believers. Both consumers and believers think that some objects can have a particular elevated, lofty life of their own. At the same time, as Marx argues people form relationships with each other on the basis of their products - people are treated as things, and they perceive others as objects as well. Commodity fetishism stems from particular forgetting of origins of all the products, it obliterates the fact that product is always a product of labor, and production of it involves a particular organization of labor.

It seems that the in case of machines, especially writing machines or even intelligent machines, such as computers, commodity fetishism appears in a different form then in case of other products. Machines are special kinds of products which apparently do have a life of their own. An illusion of their own life and will is much more convincing than in other cases. Perhaps this confusion between a thing and a person is as old as Descartes, who at some point asks himself:

"And yet what do I see from the window but hats and coats which may cover automatic machines?"291

Descartes seems to prove that doubts about personhood of others are closely related to pure rational self, abstract ego, isolated from real world. Perhaps they are as old as machines themselves? Perhaps we can find in Schreber’s delusions a particular meditation on estrangement from technology? Particular essay on power networks of technology?

If we look into history of machines we will quickly discover that first inventor wanted precisely to create an impression of life and movement; in other words they wanted to create things which looked as if they were alive; things which were acting on their own. This is the case of famous defecating duck build by Jacques Vaucanson and displayed for

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the first time in 1738 in the Hotel de Longueville in Paris\textsuperscript{292}. The device was quite simple, it was simply a mechanical duck which swallowed corn and after some pause returned the material in changed form. The duck was celebrated by Voltaire, and it became an enormous commercial and scientific success. Parisians loved the device so much that they were willing to pay for tickets to see it multiple times.

Defecating duck seems to prove that the relationship with artificial other is as old as modernity. Thus what appears to be so torturing to Schreber is just a wild, bizarre way of expressing something quite obvious – thanks to technological progress some of our neighbors have become artificial. Machines are our neighbors today. We now live among things, not just among people; people are fused with things; and things are fused with people. Things indeed have a life of their own, they are indeed plotting against us, they oppose us, they display their resistance to our will. Technology makes a distinction between a real person and artificial neighbor impossible.

We can see it perhaps most clearly if we recall one fascinating experiment on computing, invention of ELIZA computer program by Joseph Weizenbaum. Weizenbaum simply constructed a computer which was able to lead simple conversations with humans. It had a list of reactions on typical conversational questions and keywords on which it reacted. For example when the program received a simple word like mother it answered: "how do you feel about your mother?". It is fascinating and striking that people who talked with computer sometimes enjoyed conversation so much, that they felt particular attachment and friendship with the computer. Weizenbaum observed for instance that his secretary did not want to talk with the computer when others were around; she felt that a conversation with the computer requires particular intimacy. Interestingly some psychiatrists were certain that ELIZA can be used in psychotherapy, they celebrated the new invention and were enthusiastic about its future therapeutic applications. Weizenbaum, the creator of this invention, however was rather worried and disquieted by effects of his inventions. Far from being enthusiastic about perspectives created by computers he build, felt that strange intimacy between humans and machines may threaten the real interpersonal relationship. On the other hand he was certain that real

\textsuperscript{292} Jessica Riskin, "The Defecating Duck, or, the Ambiguous Origins of Artificial Life," \textit{Critical Inquiry} 29, no. 4 (2003).
relationships are incomparably more valuable than simple artificial ersatz offered by computer programs. He was apparently amazed by traces of paranoia in strange friendship with computers displayed by subjects of his experiments:

“I knew of course that people do form all sorts of emotional bonds to machines, for example to musical instruments, motorcycles or cars (...) What I had not realized is that extremely short exposures to a relatively simple program could induce powerful delusional thinking in quite normal people”293.

In 1976, when Weizenbaum was writing these words, it was perhaps still possible to say that emotional bond with machines was a symptom of delusion, but can we still support this diagnosis today? In any case it is fascinating that psychotic relationship with others, which we observed in case of Schreber, is so persistent in pretty normal attachments to technological objects.

In Weizenbaum’s computer the idea implicit in Vaussacaon’s defecating duck reaches its peak – now we not only have artificial life, an imitation of an animal, things that move, but we have a real artificial neighbor, who can talk and interact with us. This marks the dawn of new era in which we seem to be living now, an era when love of artificial neighbor becomes a cultural norm, something quite established and not shocking at all.

There are multiple experiences which support the view that our experience of neighbor does not mind the border between real person and artificial thing. For instance we may quote a conclusion of experiment on public speaking. In the experiment the subjects, who were afraid of public speaking were presented with real audience and with virtual audience (created animations of real persons). Surprisingly they felt the same level of excitation in both cases. Virtual reality of others, the reality of avatars, graphic animations was experienced on the same level as reality of audience of flesh-and-blood people. Artificial neighbors were just as good as real ones. In this respect the experiment certainly proves something that is well known to various marketing specialist today who sell artificial social media fans and likes – it does not matter whether the public is real, it

matters how big it is. All this seems to lead to interesting reconsideration of original psychoanalytic interpretation of paranoia as disturbance of relationship with neighbors in psychosis in general in Schreber’s psychosis in particular.

So is Schreber’s paranoia a particular form of science fiction? Are writing-down machines and invented others a form of particular prophecy? What is the meaning of real neighbor which is apparently lost in psychosis, and which is increasingly rare in our technological time? Let’s clarify the issue a little bit. Who is a real neighbor who is an artificial neighbor?

3. Lacan's view of psychosis

What would be the meaning of our artificial neighbors – that is machines, androids, computers, avatars or Schreber’s writing down machines and fleeting improvised men for psychoanalysis? What kind of link do we form with all them in our curious delusions about them? What kind of desire binds us with them? How do we love our artificial neighbors? Nodal points, foreclosure of nodal points?

The association between psychoanalytically defined account of psychosis and cultural changes in late capitalism are just as old as the idea which states that there are some cultural changes which are specific for late capitalism. In other words, we can find the idea at the very beginning of postmodernism in Fredric Jameson’s now classical “Postmodernism or Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”.

When Jameson first discusses dissolution of postmodern subjectivity somewhere in the middle of his fascinating essay he draws inspiration from Lacan who argues that psychosis is characterized by foreclosure of the name-of-the-father which leads to profound subjective disorientation and disintegration. It seems however that Jameson is more interested in phenomenological description of psychosis and the analogy between psychosis and postmodern subjectivity then he in exploring Lacanian theory of psychosis. The direct allusions to psychoanalysis are rather brief. The most relevant psychotic experience which attracts Jameson’s attention is particular shattering of unity of experience which leads to situation in which everything is experienced as a heap of...
As countless commentaries and interpretations have repeated since Jameson - schizophrenic subject is characterized by lack of history, she is unable to situate herself in time, and thus is constantly immersed in the present. Perhaps most interestingly in our context Jameson also pays attention to particular relation to technology which is typical for postmodern subject. It is not the main topic of this essay, yet the attention with which the problem meets in later writings makes it appear interesting from our perspective. As Jameson remarks subjective reaction to technological progress may be described as paranoid. Faced with the immense universe of technological networks of power typical for late capitalism an individual must feel overwhelmed and terrified.

The answer to this feeling of inferiority and helplessness is provided by conspiracy theories. Those theories, various stories about international plots, new world order and so on, seem to be a way of dealing with the growing anxiety and fear that new technologies will turn against men. Jamesons interestingly suggests that this anxiety is part of wider alienation typical for commodity capitalism, as he puts it:

"The technology of contemporary society is therefore mesmerizing and fascinating not so much in its own rights but because it seems to offer some privileged representational shorthand for grasping the network of power and control even more difficult for our minds and imaginations to grasp: the whole new decentered global network of the third stage of capital itself. (...) Conspiracy theory (...) must be seen as a degraded attempt-through the figuration of advanced technology-to think the impossible totality of the contemporary world system" 296

Jameson seems to suggest that paranoia of conspiracy theories is most of all a particular relation with things, especially with invented or artificial things, and particular relation to other as a thing.

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296 Jameson, Postmodernism, or, The cultural logic of late capitalism: 38.
From official Lacanian perspective psychosis is a result of foreclosure of the name-of-the-father and all disturbances of relations with others, all strange machines that come to invade subject’s universe should be associated with this process. I’m writing here about ‘official’ Lacanian perspective because as a matter of fact Lacan held differing opinions about origins of psychosis in different periods of his teaching. As Stijn Vanheule points out we can actually distinguish four separate eras or paradigms of thinking about psychosis in Lacan’s teaching. Ideas associated with the first one were expressed in his doctoral dissertation. Second era would relate to his seminar on psychosis, third one to a period inaugurated by seminar 10, in which Lacan adopts his theory of object a to psychosis, and fourth one, started with 23rd seminar in which Lacan develops knot theory and focuses on psychosis as particular set of sinthomes297. Fredric Jameson’s, Jean Baudrillard and David Harvey ‘Lacanian’ understanding of postmodern schizophrenia draws its inspiration from second period of Lacan’s evolving view of psychosis. Bruce Fink influential introduction to Lacanian thought also chooses to present Lacan’s theory of psychosis as foreclosure of the name-of-the-father as the one and only theory of psychosis presented by Lacan298. Thus we may say that his version of Lacan’s teaching became an ‘official’ version, a model of his understanding of psychosis.

Before we move on and present our argument let’s focus our attention on this official version. What exactly is foreclosure which, according to Lacan’s seminar 3, leads to outbreak of psychosis? In common language the term actually means a repossession of a property by a lender following a breach of terms of legal contract by the borrower. Simply put if someone does not pay mortgage his house is repossessed – it is foreclosed. This commonsensical meaning of the terms associates foreclosure with a breach of contract, with disruption of normal flow of events. At the same time it also involves power and authority. The one who forecloses a property is obviously in situation of power, it dominates the other. At the same time foreclosure involves conflict between the two parties - creditor and debtor. It also suggest that one party – the debtor is excluded from his own most intimate area – for instance from his house. Not having his own


298 Fink, A clinical introduction to Lacanian psychoanalysis : theory and technique.
property he is left with nothing. At the same time, on political level, foreclosure suggest quite obviously some form of economical conflict or crisis. Someone took a credit and at some point he was unable to repay it so his house is taken away, and it happens despite the fact that he may have already paid the amount equal or even higher to the value of the house.

All those meanings seem to be present in Lacan’s understanding of psychosis as foreclosure of the name-of-the-father. The term name-of-the-father is actually shorthand for set of laws and regulations which govern inter-subjective relations in a given culture. By assuming name-of-the-father an individual becomes a member of society, he becomes the subject of responsibilities and duties associated with a given role. He inherits in a way accumulated cultural capital. All this capital is stored in language. Language is perceived as particular store of signifiers, a warehouse of ideas and assumptions which regulate interactions between members of a given community.

Foreclosure would be a situation in which someone is alienated from his own speech, alienation from symbolic world, lack of nodal points, and lack of condensation. Subject of psychosis is inhabited by language:

“‘If the neurotic inhabits language, the psychotic is inhabited, possessed, by language’”299.

This is hardly surprising given the fact that language is central for Lacan. But what exactly could that mean? It seems to suggest that subject is repossessed by his own speech. Moved on the plane of our argument about technology if would suggest that writing machines and cursorily invented men, cameras, androids, computers, all those speaking things which torture us are simply symptoms of being possessed by language. And it would suggest that we are possessed or inhabited by language because our relation with some symbolic authority has been disrupted. So all those delusions that we are suffering from - delusions that computer speak, that we can communicate with everyone by means of technological devise, that avatar is a real person and a phone can track us, delusions that we are followed by machines all the time everywhere would be symptoms

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of the fact that we are all inhabited by language. They would simply appear as symptoms of invasion, repossession, exploitation of our life by language.

This interpretation would suggest that it is the subject who is foreclosed, expropriated, reduced to nothingness. How could that function in practice? David Allison explains foreclosure in a quite informative and clear way starting from a curious story. After a plane had crashed one family was convinced that their father died in the plane crash. Airlines rejected their claims and provided a list of passengers of the plane. The name of the man was absent on the list. But the family kept insisting that their father or grandfather was indeed traveling on a plane. Their conviction was perceived as unfounded by everyone around, by airlines, government and other authorities. But at the end of the day it turned out that the father indeed was on board – the crew simply made a mistake and forgot to include his name on the list. Where do we find foreclosure here? Surprisingly foreclosure happens precisely at the moment when something is not written down, something is omitted, disappears from record. Of course someone may complain that the story is not a story of real clinical psychosis, there is no delusions, no voices, and there is only a quest for truth by a grief stricken family. Interestingly though Lacanian perspective on psychosis relies on significantly different account of psychosis then psychiatry. Lacan does not think that deep subjective certainty associated with beliefs which are considered to be at odds with reality should be the main criterion of psychosis. From his perspective psychosis is not constituted by pertinence of delusions which are misrepresenting external reality. What is decisive is the structure of subject’s discourse; psychosis is seen as disturbance on the level of speech, a disruption and radical break in subject’s relation with language. This is why this case of family in search of their father is not so valuable. It gives a colorful and convincing argument that psychosis should not be evaluated on the basis of truth value of a given belief. This may appear dangerous, should we really abstain from rejecting as false Schreber’s beliefs that he is a messiah who will transform the world? Perhaps this question is slightly misleading. It seems that according to Lacan the truth or falsity of a belief is simply not the most important problem. What is important tough is the structure of discourse, particular disruption of

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speech, disorder of speech in which some crucial element, some nodal point, point-de-capiton, name-of-the-father, some master signifier is missing.

One striking symptom of the lack of this decisive suturing point is psychotic position regarding others. This position is marked by the feeling of superiority. Psychotic thinks that he knows best, that he possesses a knowledge which is inaccessible to others. All others appear to be fools, dupes. This is why, according to therapists of psychotics, psychoanalyst must always play the role of someone devoid of knowledge. Neurotics assume that psychoanalyst is someone who knows all the answers to their problems and can share their knowledge with them. Psychotics on the other hand tend to think that psychoanalysts is precisely someone who does not know, who does not have any knowledge or understanding.301

If we were to assume psychoanalytic perspective we should argue that a neighbor may appear artificial only because of foreclosure of symbolic Other. In other words Schreber sees others as degraded, small men, because he is excluded from symbolic order, he no longer participates in common worldview authorized by some form of higher authority. This would be the meaning of Lacanian thesis about foreclosure of the name-of-the-father. Without symbolic Other one is left with imaginary and real fellow human beings - others who are just like me, others in who I can recognize my own impulses; and others in their brutal, savage, primitive dimensions. Foreclosure of the name-of-the-father would imply that there is no common horizon between a psychotic and others. Violence of those others appears to be cruel and unjustified precisely because there is no one who could justify it; there is no symbolic authority, no Hobbesian sovereign who could justify punishment. From this point of view it is not surprising that whole development of Schreber’s delusions leads him to find a bizarre meaning in all tortures that he undergoes. Delusions are driven precisely by the feeling of perceived meaninglessness of all activities of others.

The main symptoms of psychosis for Lacan is precisely an occurrence of disrupted, unfinished sentences. Schreber’s machines, his invented men and voices

constantly utter sentences which are interrupted in the middle, such as “Now I shall,” “You were to,” “I shall,” “It will be,” “This of course was,” “Lacking now is,”. Schreber complains that these words are spoken without any context, they are simply thrown into his mind and he feels an urge to complete them, to make them meaningful again. Those interrupted sentences seem to suggest that psychosis is most of all a particular disruption of communication, a break-down of discourse which is a result of abundance of noise.

The sentences are disrupted because they clearly lack signifiers which give them unity, they are not tied, or sutured, or chained together. Suprisingly Lacan derives his metaphors of psychotic discourse from upholstery. He says that psychotic discourse is devoid of point de capiton. This phrase is usually translated either as button tie (Fink), quilting point (Grigg) or even nodal point. Button tie in upholstery is a particular type of stitch, which binds two fabrics in such a way that it remains invisible. In case of subjective logic button tie refers to a point which stitches or as Jacques Alain Miller puts it ‘sutures’ the subject, in other words, give him feeling of unity and integrity. By means of button tie subject is tied to his discourse, he feels that he possess his own words and gains feeling of mastery of his own discourse. Of course this feeling can be and in fact most of the time is an illusion, after all we never really master our discourse, and our speech is always recognized and received in a way different from our intentions. Then again if we compare normal, that is neurotic relation to language, with psychotic situation we clearly witness a noticeable difference. We may underscore this difference by pointing out that while neurotic inhabits language psychotic is inhabited by language.

306 Jacques-Alain Miller, "Suture (elements of the logic of the signifier)," *Screen* 18, no. 4 (1977).
4. Lacanian inspirations

Eric Santner’s work is clearly among most influential interpretations of Schreber. He places Schreber’s madness in context of general feeling of weariness, disappointment and loss of energy typical for fin-de-siècle Europe. This atmosphere of decadence is presented by Santner as a reaction to a particular “crisis of investiture”. The concept is borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu’s “Language and Symbolic Power” and refers to a procedure by means of which an individual is endowed with particular social position. This usually happens by means of particular performance or performative utterances – various types of social consecration or stigma. Santner associated Bourdieu’s idea of symbolic investiture with Walter Benjamin’s stress on irrational aspect of power. In his seminal “Critique of Violence” Benjamin argues that every power contains an element of irrational force, every power relies on a foundational gesture of violence. Benjamin demonstrates that irrational and unjustified violence is a necessary condition of contemporary rule of law. The rule of law forbids the use of unjustified violence by citizens, this is perhaps best demonstrated by the prohibition on possessing guns in Europe (and a ban on having rifles in public places in some American states). Every act of violence taking place at a given territory of a state must be mandated, approved and justified by some form of legal authority. Thus violence in the rule of law is only allowed as a means of just punishment. At the same time tough states must rely on law-preserving violence of all institutions which secure citizens from unjustified violence – such as police. In effect at some moments police officers must be able to decide, without the intervention of legal apparatus, whether violence (detention, beating or simply surveillance) is justified. Benjamin speaks in this context about “ignominy of authority of police”. Police can follow citizens and exercise some forms of violence over them even if it is not yet proven that those citizens really act against the law. Thus police represents unjustified and arbitrary element of law, and in general it discloses, as Benjamin asserts:

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“In this very violence something rotten in law is revealed, above all to finer sensibility”\textsuperscript{308}

Santner proceeds to argue that this general perception of symbolic authority as compromised lies precisely at the root of Schreber’s psychosis. He convincingly shows that Schreber is obsessed precisely with sensation of collapse of authority, he feels that power is somehow groundless. On most personal level this perception of failing authority was triggered by one event, namely a nomination, that Schreber himself received, he was elected a \textit{Senatpräsident}, which was quite a prestigious function in XIX century Germany. Santner also points at Schreber’s obsession with title and genealogy, at some point in “Memoirs…” he invents his whole genealogy, and argues that his conflict with his physician is a part of wider struggle between two grand families of Schrebers and Flechsig.

Santner’s interpretation draws heavily from Slavoj Žižek; and Žižek in turn develops Santner’s into fully fledged cultural diagnosis of psychosis. Thus we will now turn to Slavoj Žižek’s concept of psychosis, most succinctly expressed in “Ticklish Subject”.

Slavoj Žižek repeats with Lacan that the real cause of psychosis is not the failure of the person of the father to uphold and confirm his symbolic authority before the child, but precisely the opposite situation in which real father attempts to act as if he was a representative of symbolic authority. At the moment when the real father tries to play the role of symbolic authority he is turned into the figure of obscene \textit{jouissseur}. Not surprisingly the term for \textit{jouissseur} that Slavoj Žižek invokes is a Schreberian keyword \textit{Luder}\textsuperscript{309}. The value of Žižek’s contribution lies not so much in its originality, most of it is simply a repetition of Lacan, but rather in turning Lacanian theory into sort of framework, a set of conditions of possibility of cultural interpretation. At purely factual level equation of \textit{jouissseur} is slightly risky. As we recall \textit{Luder} had a meaning roughly equivalent to tart, slut, whore, or more mildly put lascivious woman, so it may appear that the term is rather unsuitable for dominantly male obscene symbolic authority. It is

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{308} Ibid., 10.
\end{flushright}
true tough that God is associated with lascivious desire; at one moment of revelation Schreber really discovers that “God is a whore”. Francois Lyotard corrects this assertion slightly by pointing out that Schreber’s God should rather be called a pimp, he is someone who demands sexual services of Schreber, not someone who delivers sexual services himself.\textsuperscript{310}

For Žižek this psychotic degradation of authority into obscene figure of pimp is related to wider problem of apparently inevitable demise of symbolic authority in XX century. As Žižek points out, once again repeating Lacanian idea, killing of the father is precisely a beginning of symbolic prohibition and not its end. He quotes the structure of the problem of Oedipus as it emerges from “Totem and Taboo” as a proof of this claim. In “Totem and Taboo” the killing of the father does not lead to the situation in which each and every clan member is going to enjoy all the women. As a matter of fact killing of the father is the real source of symbolic prohibition of incest. Before the killing sons were not satisfying their incestuous desire because of fear of violence of the father, not because of their moral qualms. After the killing their aggression toward the father is suddenly turned into kind of self-loathing, aggression against themselves, and this aggression coupled with regret provokes by death of bellowed father is the source of their willing submission to a law.\textsuperscript{311} This interpretation of “Totem and Taboo” seems to convincingly prove that from psychoanalytic point of view only father as symbolic authority can play the regulating role in libidinal economy. If the father was alive, he was unable to play the role of symbolic authority for the sons, they had to kill him in order to really submit to the rules that he imposed. After his killing the element of competition with the father (usually associated with imaginary dimensions of interpersonal relationships for Lacan), and the element of real (associated with all disturbing, disquieting, awkward, and rough dimensions), were gone. The sons were left only with a pure figure of paternal authority, which thereby started to exercise their power over them.

Just on the margins of this theory one may note, that homophobia and homosexuality lurks somewhere in the background. If we reflect on motivation of the

\textsuperscript{310} David B. Allison, ed. \textit{Psychosis and sexual identity : toward a post-analytic view of the Schreber case} (State University of New York Press, 1988).

\textsuperscript{311} Žižek, \textit{The ticklish subject : the absent centre of political ontology}: 378.
sons from “Totem and Taboo”, we will quickly note, that what had really driven them to kill the father was a particular form of homophobia. If they were all homosexual they wouldn’t have killed their father because they would be quite happy to live outside the village without all the women who were gathered by primordial father. One can well imagine an alternative course of action in “Totem and Taboo”, precisely the one in which sons remained in the woods, barred from enjoyment of women, and turned into homosexuals. If we agree with Freud, that the story of “Totem and Taboo” refers to situation which preceded establishment of sexual norms, such as prohibition of incest, it is difficult to understand why sons would have abstained from homosexual intercourses. If sexual norms, such as norms of heterosexuality, are born only after the murder of the father, and if children (that is subjects who do not yet submit to sexual norms) are polymorphously sexual, as Freud claims, they it would follow logically that sons of obscene primordial father could remain homosexual. Freud does not acknowledge this possibility; he doesn’t consider it at all. The reason for that is probably his particular understanding of homosexuality as union of those who are the same, union which is narcissistic in character, a relationships between two I’s without necessary mediation of the Other. This is precisely the situation of the homosexual psychotic. He is someone who does not kill the father, someone for whom father lives all the time, he retains the character of obscene Luder, someone who enjoys all the objects of desire and at the same time does not want to share them.

In any case Žižek rightly points out that father figure for Freud is split into two instances: symbolic authority, and obscene pimp312; in other words: someone who has authority but does not have power; and someone who simply has power without justifying authority. Psychosis is a situation in which the second dimension, the dimensions of unjustified power pretending to be symbolic authority is experienced.

Žižek develops his diagnosis further by pointing at slightly different yet similar structure of Oedipus complex that emerges from Freud’s last great work: “Moses and Monotheism”. As Žižek points out in “Moses…” the matrix of “Totem and Taboo” is reversed. Egyptians kill not the figure of the father as obscene jouissier, but rather father as rational and intelligent instance of symbolic authority. Moses who is killed is precisely

312Ibid., 383.
a learned scholar, someone who understands human nature well, and knows how to regulate it. He dies precisely because Egyptians are attached to old irrational and jealous Jehowa of Old Testament (to particular image of Jehowa, that emerges from thos part of the Bible, which present him as someone who is often enraged, who gives apparently meaningless decrees, who is cruel and unpredictable). In effect, as Žižek stresses in “Moses…” we have a situation in which the Other as embodiment of rational structure of the universe is killed, and he returns as irrational representative of law, as someone who does not give reasons for his decisions, but simply expects submission to his order, the God of Abraham and Izaak. This is a reversal of “Totem and Taboo” where the opposite process took place; irrational, aggressive, lascivious father was substituted by an image of reasonable authority issuing a sensible and healthy prohibition. At the same time the new image of the father is not really an exact match of obscene primordial father. God of Abraham and Izaak, God of unreasonable and morally questionable commands, is characterized by his lack of understanding, his “ferocious ignorance” of sexual matters, he does not enjoy, he forbids enjoyment, and he provokes enjoyment by prohibiting it.313

The crucial point of Žižek’s interpretation is his insistence that symbolic authority has to be rooted in some sort of irrational willing. As he claims:

“The domain of symbolic rules, if it is actually to count as such, has to be grounded in some tautological authority beyond rules, which says “It is because I say so!” . In short beyond divine Reason there is the abyss of God’s Will, of His contingent Decision which sustains even the Eternal Truths”314.

In a way then God of Abraham and Izaak, God who justifies his commands simply by his will, is a necessary background, basis, ground of every social institution. All practices must have some grounding in irrational, illegible, element of ultimate authority. It is interesting how well this conclusion fits with whole tradition of modern philosophy, for instance with Spinoza (on Kolakowski’s reading). As we know well before his critical assessment of Marxism in “Main Currents of Marxism” Kolakowski was an eager communist, he wrote about Spinoza, he never wanted this book to be republished, because he saw it as his act of submission to communist ideology.

313 Ibid.
314 Ibid., 385.
Žižek claims that today this element of irrational quasi-justification is in crisis which leads to all sort of strange social and cultural symptoms. As a matter of fact the passage between psychoanalytic images of father (imagos of the father, as Freud used to say) – we can point at three imagos: father as imaginary (who competes with his son over his women), real (father as jouisser), symbolic (father as source of the reasonable law) and cultural reality is slightly unclear. Žižek claims that we see today a decline of symbolic efficiency, disappearance of big Other. He quickly adds tough, that we should specify the problem by pointing at decline of one specific aspect of the father. Which one? Žižek seems to argue that it is a decline of symbolic father, represented by Moses and the father as nostalgic figure in the memory of sons from “Totem and Taboo”.

“Today, however, it is the very symbolic function of the father which is increasingly undermined – that is, which is losing its performative efficiency; for that reason, a father is no longer perceived as one’s Ego Ideal, the (more or less failed, inadequate) bearer of symbolic authority but as one’s ideal ego, imaginary competitor”315.

What are the causes of this disintegration of big Other, or father function? Žižek points at various factors. Increase of reflexivity and individualism is probably one of the most important elements. It is often stressed that in our society all decisions fall upon individuals. Everything in our life from child rearing practices through gender and sexual practices depends on our own choice and is not regulated by any external instances. Tradition or culture is not seen as something which determines people’s choices but rather as something that can be chosen. I can choose who I am – this is the fundamental idea of modernity, an idea which is embodied in multiple social institutions and practices. This very idea presupposes that there is no Other, no ultimate authority that should justify and regulate my choices, I must decide myself, any invocation of cultural or moral norms, religious commandments or anything else is seen as disruption of individualism316.

Far from celebrating modernity or falling into nostalgic idealization of the past Žižek argues that precisely this apparent emancipation leads to renewed desire for some
kind of submission. Universal reflexivity and freedom is limited and disturbed by remnants of attachments to various masters, all living and thriving in unconscious. The persistence of old forms of subjection is probably the best known idea of Žižek. If Foucault will be remembered by most of students, who had only a fleeting acquaintance with his work, as someone who said that madmen were excluded from society in XVII century, so probably Žižek will be remembered as someone who said that submission to power generates its own enjoyments.

But Žižek also has something else to say, he argues that remnants of attachments to masters are matched or paralleled by returns of figures of big Other, in the real.

“The paradoxical result of the mutation in the nonexistence of the big Other – of the growing collapse of symbolic efficiency – is thus the proliferation of different versions of different versions of a big Other that actually exists, in the Real, not merely as a symbolic fiction.”

Thus Žižek suggests that postmodern subject is psychotic, and he associates symptoms of this contemporary paranoia with particular response to technological changes. Technological paranoia certainly gives us an interesting perspective on the problem. It is fascinating tough how much we can learn from reflections on technology which seem to have only historical value today. I am thinking here about Slavoy Zizek’s diagnosis of perspectives of new media expressed in “Ticklish Subject” published for the first time in 1999. Zizek speculates there that perhaps in the next decade, in the beginning of XXI century Microsoft may become a mega corporation which will have monopoly over the whole internet, radio, and television and entertainment industry. If this scenario would materialize, speculates Zizek, Microsoft could well dominate the whole communicative structure of our lives and thus it may become stronger than any government. It may just as well be able to install software which will track all our habits and thoughts.

If we compare what really happened in first decade of XXI century with Zizek anxieties we may feel relieved for a moment. Microsoft is not a megacorporation which

317 Ibid., 418.
318 Ibid., 442.
319 Ibid., 434.
would control whole internet, Bill Gates empire looks actually somewhat fragile, its share in internet browsers markets is low, Internet Explorer not a popular browser, desktop computers with windows are still the most popular choice for most consumers, but there are alternatives Linux and Apple. So on first sight the conclusions is clear: Zizek was wrong, his anxiety was exaggerated. This first impression is clearly wrong tough. After all what Zizek talks about is not so much Microsoft but rather the possibility that our communicative networks, channels through which we exchange our thoughts, will become simple property of one corporation. In this sense his diagnosis is not only correct, but it seems prophetic. Our communicative networks are indeed controlled by a couple of enormous corporations: Google, Facebook, perhaps by Twitter. We live in a world in which information simply does not exist if it does not pass through these media. Most of Internet users are dependent on those channels of communications. Decisions made by programmers of Facebook and Google, decisions about various possible designs of codes and algorithms which should govern interaction and flow of data on their servers, affect what billions of people think every day. In a way then XXI our reality is scarier than Zizek or indeed anyone else could have thought in 1999. In a way it is an age of return of the Other who is much more monstrous, terrifying, and dangerous than ever before.

This point resonates with recent criticism of social media presented by psychoanalyst Sherry Turkle. Her book is very much a plea for a return to real person and a criticism of growing alienation and loneliness which is the effect of substitution of people by machines. As Turkle phrases it: “Networked, we are together, but so lessened are our expectations of each other that we can feel utterly alone”320. One conclusion to which Turkle’s argument leads is that it is no longer difficult for us today to imagine a love for artificial being. Tamagochi or various types of attachment to virtual beings make friendly or even loving interactions with artificial being pretty much normal in our daily life.

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320 Sherry Turkle, *Alone together : why we expect more from technology and less from each other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).
Similar point is made by Wendy Chun, who argues that Schreber’s paranoid system is a perfect analogy of freedom and control experienced by users of Internet\(^{321}\). Cyberspace is in a way an embodiment of Schreber’s nightmares. It is a psychotic medium in which communication between subjects and various devices occurs all the time. Data stream in cyberspace are not controlled by anyone’s conscious minds, but they are regulated by algorithms coded into computers. Internet is in a way one enormous system of nerves, which incessantly talk to each other. Other similarities between Schreber and Internet users involve constant striving for pleasure, feeling of being watched and viewed all the time.

Yet another perspective on this problem is adopted by Mark Poster. When Turkle or Chun tend to criticize technology for its perceived degrading impact on interpersonal relationships Poster argues that it is not technological world that must change to fit our critical ambitions - critical theory and psychoanalysis should adapt to technology and understand the depth of our relations with things. Psychoanalytic interpretation of the world of human subjects has to be modified in order to take into account the growing role of machines in creating of unconscious. It is obvious today that we form multiple relationships with informational machines. A child for instance is surrounded by computers, tablets, televisions, radios, game playing devices. All those devices in turn are populated by ‘subjects’, by various persons – either animals, or characters from cartoons, or characters from games. All those devices and the content transmitted through them plays an enormous role in formation of unconscious, it creates desires and shapes superego in a completely unexpected way. Compared with plethora of virtual impressions and impulses that a child receives today Freud’s simple model of fort-da game appears as crippled and limited account of child’s game. It is questionable whether we can really make use of this model today\(^{322}\).

In general Schreber’s psychosis poses a question of subjective relation to machines, informational or other; and a question of particular subjectivity of machines;


particular will or personality of things. In this context it seems surprisingly relevant in a
time when a distinction between a thing and person is questioned and undermined from
various points of view. We hear for instance about end of nature and necessity of thinking
in terms of new collective formed of human and nonhuman beings, or we are encouraged
to think about particular type of life lead by things. Schreber’s psychosis seems to
demonstrate what happens when things start to live on their own; what happens when
their will becomes pronounced and well expressed.

There is one label which describes this changes in mode of functioning of global
capitalism in our time – “communicative capitalism”. Communicative capitalism is a
particular is a particular form of capitalism in which channels of information and
communicative networks have become commodity. The most important analogy
between psychosis and communicative capitalism involves a relation to one’s own
discourse. One of the most disturbing symptoms of psychosis is the feeling of not owning
one’s own discourse, discourse becomes somehow excluded from the subject, his words
are steered from without, the words that flow from his mouths are not his own, they are
spoken by someone else, by some voices. In this respect our contemporary situation
provides a great analogy, we too, don’t own our discourses. We don’t own them because
networks of communication are privatized to terrifying extent. Some strange and puzzling
developments in history of mankind led to situation in which decided to give their own private thoughts to private company, large
corporation. Facebook owns our discourses in a very literal meaning, they have the right
to reproduce it and so on. One can hardly imagine a better symptom of expropriation
from one’s own discourse, expropriation from one’s own private, most intimate sphere.
Most importantly this time the Other is not a living being this time the Other is simply
artificial.

How can we imagine this artificial Other? How can we understand its role in our
life? One answer to this question is suggested by the title of Katherine Hayles’s book:
“My Mother was a Computer”. Although this sounds slightly psychotic at first sight the
title has actually a pretty mundane meaning. As Hayles explains her mother indeed was a

323 Jodi Dean, Democracy and other neoliberal fantasies : communicative capitalism and left politics
computer, but in a sense which was associated with the term in the 50-ties. Computer was simply a person who calculated things, someone who worked in an office where calculating machines, the ancestors of our own laptops or desktops were used\textsuperscript{324}.

But if we were to understand Hayles’s title in a different, more recent sense, can we say that today, or will we be able to say in the future that our father, or rather our big Other or Name-of-the-Father is a computer? Leaving aside some banal meanings of this problem (for instance Huxley’s pessimistic idea of artificial insemination in “Brave New World”), and moving the problem on a different level this would be precisely the question that torments Schreber: is our big Other artificial? Can big Other be artificial? What are the implications of the rule of artificial big Other for our relationships with our neighbors?

This line of interpretation would place machines on the side of symbolic, on the side of the Other. From this perspective it is not surprising that the main activity of Schreber’s machines involves communication. Fleeting improvised men either speak or write. They constantly produce the stream of discourse. In a way they simply represent automatic speaking, machine-like communication or to put it in a different way: they represent communication in technological form; communication mediated by technological devices.

On the other hand we may attempt to place technology on the side of the real – something which eludes symbolization, something which is devoid of any meaning. We may think about a situation in which when browsing the internet we find a dead link and a message appears saying error 404 and some gibberish, without meaning. Error 404 is perhaps the best metaphor for the Lacanian real – it’s something which disrupts the whole website and our whole experience by its absence. Something should be at some place but it’s not there, and we are puzzled and perplexed not knowing what to do. Moreover the meaning of error 404 is totally meaningless, against the common understanding of it, there is no dictionary of errors in which all errors can be explained. In this context we may draw an inspiration from Katherine Hayles who argues that:

\begin{quote}
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“Just as the unconscious through significant puns, slips, and metonymic splices, so the underlying code surfaces at those moments when the program makes decisions we have not consciously initiated. This phenomenon suggests the following analogy: as the unconscious is to the conscious, so computer code is to language. I will risk pushing the analogy even further; in our computationally intensive culture, code is the unconscious of language”\textsuperscript{325}.

Building on Hayles argument we could perhaps assume that technology in general plays the role of unconscious real, something that adds disruptions, breaks, anomalous occurrences to our life. This line of reasoning would go against popular notion that technology works smoothly. As probably everyone knows this is not the case. Technology works smoothly only in science fiction movies and in advertisements, in reality errors, bugs, break downs are inherent elements of every device. There is no device which does not have minor glitches. We forget about those glitches and we choose to ignore them only because technological marketing is so intense and powerful.

Perhaps then we can understand psychosis as particular invasion of the technological real – invasion of machines and devices which constantly break down. This seems to be compatible with Deleuze and Guattari understanding of schizophrenia as a state of constant break down of desiring machines:

Desiring-machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down. Judge Schreber "lived for a long time without a stomach, without intestines, almost without lungs, with a torn oesophagus, without a bladder, and with shattered ribs; he used sometimes to swallow part of his own larynx with his food, etc."\textsuperscript{326}

Leaving aside particular understanding of desiring machine and all political implications of Deleuze and Guattari’s “Anti-Oedipus” we can argue that breaking down

can be thought of as internal characteristic of a machine. In other words an interruption and disruption is typical for technology.

5. Friend, enemy, neighbor

It may appear, that psychotic world is apolitical in so far as it is centered around purely private enemy, an enemy which threatens only Schreber’s personal body and not the group. This interpretation could be reinforced by Freud’s elaborate analysis of dissolution of Schreber’s relations with neighbors; psychotic clearly does not have friends, how can he have any enemies? At the same time tough psychosis may be read precisely as a dissolution of friend-enemy distinction which leads to war which is much more unstable, violent, and dangerous than the one with clearly defined enemies. Paradoxically a world without enemies is much less safe then a world in which we are surrounded by enemies. This is a point made by Kenneth Reinhard, who argues that psychosis is precisely the result of instability of friend-enemy distinction. Reinhard observes that obsession about war on terror may be seen as particular manifestation of this psychosis resulting from instability concerning the status of the enemy. A terrorist is a figure which symbolizes instability of an enemy, he appears to be friend, but at the same time he wants to kill us; he may be a neighbor, but he is an existential threat. The often discussed Bush era anxiety over threat of terrorism is probably best proof of that.

The classical discussion of terror is presented by Jean Baudrillard in his controversial and slightly shocking interpretation of 9/11. The interpretation is shocking because it assumes that collapse of twin towers is actually an event about which “everyone without exception has dreamt of it.” It is quite controversial because it argues that terrorists are in fact rebels against the system, they represent an important opposition against hegemonic power of capitalist west. In a way they it justifies the act of terror by ascribing a kind of telos to it. Leaving aside some commonsensical doubts about


the nature of Baudrillard argument (common sense is not of much use in theory, in this respect Hegel’s famous essay never lost its actuality), we may focus on particular representation of enemy implies by terrorist. This representation has also been the object of Carl Schmitt’s attention, but Baudrillard is closer to our time, his discussion is inspired by more or less recent events, and therefore it seems to be more relevant. On the other hand Baudrillard aptly supports Schmitt’s argument about the consequences of foreclosure of the political, it adds some new dimensions to it. Baudrillard assumes in a slightly nostalgic and melancholic tone that the emergence of terrorist as a main enemy is a result of collapse of communism. During the cold war the relation of good and evil was more or less balanced. The triumph of the west led to disruption of this balance, it led to proliferation of western “Good”, and thus it turned western evil enemy into ghostly, vague and diffuse figure. The place of enemy was empty, and because of that much more terrifying, Islam appeared to play the handy role of chief evil. Suicidal attacks and hate to the west felt in Arab countries was presented as the figure of main enemy.

In my argument I would like to develop on a slightly different aspect of Schmitt’s political philosophy. I agree with Reinhard that psychosis should be treated as particular type of response to destabilization of friend enemy distinction. At the same time I would like to look closer at causes and type of this destabilization. Schmitt points at one crucial factor which leads to collapse of friend enemy distinction – it’s a particular belief in technology. If we agree that psychosis is not a hate of some private enemy but rather a symptom of wider destabilization of friend enemy distinction we can well point at particular approach to technology as a factor which triggers psychosis.

What kind of enemy plays a decisive role in psychosis? Carl Schmitt is usually credited with argument stating that the essence of political is defined precisely by the stark opposition between friend and enemy. What is less known tough is that according to Carl Schmitt influential “Concept of the Political” we should distinguish between friend, neighbor, public enemy and private enemy. When divided properly into those four categories Schmitt’s theory of political appears much more complicated then it seems at first sight. If we are to reflect on significance of enemy and friend or neighbor in

psychosis it is necessary to understand properly what exactly we have in mind in this context. Therefore let’s look at Schmitt’s text in order to specify who plays the role of enemy for Schreber.

An enemy is radically different from economic competitor, as Schmitt argues it may well be profitable to do business with the enemy. Establishment of an enemy is always arbitrary, but this arbitrary decision is necessary for constitution of political associations, in so far as without an enemy associations tend to disintegrate into loose groups. The most important condition for establishing someone as an enemy is simply difference, an enemy is

“the other, the stranger; and it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specially intense way, existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible”330

Schmitt’s elaborates his concept of enemy by making an important distinction between public and private enemies. This distinction is a result of peculiar interpretation of Christian doctrine of brotherly love. In Mathew 5, 44 Jesus states:

“You have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy. But I tell you, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute and insult you”331

As Schmitt stresses, Jesus says here: “diligite inimicos vestros” and not “diligite hostes vestros”. The former formula refers to private enemies (inimicos) while the latter (hostes) refers to public ones. Thus for Schmitt Jesus does not expect Christians to love their public enemies, he merely requires people to love their private enemies. He illustrates his thesis by giving a very controversial example of Christians, who will, according to Schmitt, always struggle and fight with Christians, they will remain public enemies of Christianity. At the same time one can and perhaps should love one’s own Muslim friends. The example is interesting in so far as it helps to explain Schmitt’s personal attachment to his Jewish friends, for instance Leo Strauss, which wrote one of

331 Mathew 5, 43-45.
the most important commentaries on the “Concept of the Political”, which did not seem to collide with his German nationalism. Perhaps Schmitt thought that Jews are public enemies of Germany, but they are not private enemies of his own person.

For Schmitt the distinction between friend and enemy is necessary for every political group. He argues that the absence of an enemy leads to even more disastrous and horrific wars. There is no worse war then the war waged in name of peace, because it tends to demonize the enemy, it tends to reduce him to brutal, evil monster. In a word then for Schmitt enmity is always at play, and all liberal, pacifist attempts at creating harmonious unities of cooperation states are doomed to failure. States will always define their identities against other states. If we were to use psychoanalytic terminology we may say that negation of enmity (Schmitt’s term for this dangerous procedure is neutralization) is only a repression, it removes enmity from consciousness, only for it to return with a vengeance in form of violent hate. Lack of an enemy is always either a temporary situation, or simply an attempt at hiding the real hate. In this context one may say that lack of enemy opens up the possibility of most violent conflict. As Jacques Derrida argues in his reading of Schmitt, absence of an enemy unleashes much more dangerous forces of violence and aggression\(^{332}\). Presence of an enemy paradoxically tends to pacify and reassure group.

Schmitt argues convincingly that neutralization and false depoliticization typical for XX century is a result of blind faith in technology.

“Great masses of industrialized peoples today still cling to a torpid religion of technicity because they, like all masses, seek radical results and believe subconsciously that the absolute depoliticization sought after four centuries can be found here and that universal peace begins here"\(^{333}\).

The belief in technology is just another stage in a search for absolute neutral ground which is typical for European mind. In earlier centuries this neutral ground was either found in religion, morality or economics. In XX century masses started to believe that technological progress will end war and conflicts. Distinction between friend and enemy will be abolished because people will no longer compete for resources, there will


\(^{333}\) Schmitt, *The concept of the political*: 95.
be no need for war, if all our needs will be satisfied by machines. Not surprisingly
Schmitt repudiates this technological utopia, he knows well that technology is unable to
solve problems of humanity. More importantly he points out that technology is not
neutral at all, just like all others apparently neutral domains technology becomes an
object of struggle

“Technology is always only an instrument and weapon; precisely because
it serves all it is not neutral. No single decision can be derived from the
immanence of technology, least of all neutrality.”334

Schmitt remains convinced that this seeming annihilation of the political will
always return to return of repressed antagonism. Technology cannot abolish war, it can
only intensify it. Just like pacifism culminates in exaggerated demonization of an enemy
of peace and leads to war which is much more brutal and terrifying than normal war; so
belief in neutral nature of technology leads to increased political struggle.

This critique of blind faith in technology appears to be immensely relevant in our
time. Today faith in inherently benevolent, neutral and apolitical nature of technology has
been raised to nearly religious status. The doubtful prognosis which states that internet,
and general decentralization of power associated with collapse of corporate monopolies
typical for industrial times, will bring us freedom and emancipation is treated as
something obvious. It is widely assumed today that our life is better, that we are free from
authoritarian or totalitarian control just because we happen to live in a world in which
technological inventions are constantly changing our life-world.

In this context psychosis becomes fully understandable. Psychosis appears to be a
particular reaction to substitution of friend-enemy distinction by a belief in technology. In
other words psychotic breakdown would be a result of depoliticization and neutralization
associated with “torpid religion of technicity”. Psychotic foreclosure would be a
foreclosure of political, and substitution of the political with technological.

334 Ibid. 91
6. Psychosis and invasion of mythical violence

Žižek and Santner’s interpretation of psychosis requires further elaboration. Most of all Santner does not really substantiate his association between Schreber’s madness and Benjamin’s idea of particular excessive and unjustified character of power. The idea of crisis of symbolic investiture is slightly vague, Bourdieu appears to be much more important for Santner then Benjamin. Žižek on the other hand clarifies the problem but some doubts still remain. What exactly is typical for psychotic experience of power? Žižek’s augment appears is convincing in its diagnostic part, it really seems to point at important symptoms, it seem to prove that we really do struggle with collapse of symbolic Other today. But it still requires further clarifications concerning the specific status of this event, what really had happened, what really the death of God, the murder of the father means.

Let’s return to Walter Benjamin’s “Critique of Violence” for a moment and let’s try to find an answer to psychotic question in his writings. How does foreclosure manifest itself in Benjamin? It seems that it takes the form of apology of divine violence. This apology must appear surprising to most commentators – who, where, what, why LaCapra, Derrida, all others. In a nutshell Benjamin’s critique proceeds from recognition of unjustified and problematic character of every state violence, through comparison of this state violence with mythical violence. This comparison at first appears to be only polemical, it appears to play the role of rationalistic critique of state violence. Benjamin illustrates mythical violence with an example of Niobe, whose children were killed by Apollo and Artemis, and she herself was turned into stone. As he states far from defining, stating or preserving law, Apollo and Artemis mass murder actually simply attests to existence of gods. As he clams:

“Mythical violence in its archetypal form is a mere manifestation of the gods. Not a means to an end, scarcely a manifestation of their will, but first of all a manifestation of their existence”335

Benjamin identifies mythical violence with fate and necessity. Niobe is punished because she dared to challenge fate; she dared to think that she can be an exception.

Of course we know quite well this structure of thinking that one is exceptional. This is precisely a problem which is decisive for Freud’s struggle with Oedipus complex. Oedipus is precisely someone who thinks that he is exceptional and attempts to fool fate. As Žižek rightly points out tough, Freud in “Totem and Taboo” slightly modifies the structure of Oedipus complex. While in its early form Oedipus is someone who thinks that he is exceptional only to be proven that he is not, in “Totem and Taboo” the murder of the father is collective, it is a universal crime, committed by each and every member of society. An act of incest which appeared as something exceptional earlier becomes precisely a source of community, a basis of society, in that way it is no longer exceptional but it becomes the basis of the law. It is not a suspension of the law but its realization. It seems that Žižek is slightly wrong here, it is difficult to say that “Totem and Taboo” constitutes an exception because there was not law when murder happened, law emerged only from this one event, it wasn’t simply speaking a transgression but rather an establishment of law. Paradox of first transgression.

Similar play of exception to the law and realization of the law is at play in Benjamin’s idea of mythical violence. An act of irrational, unmotivated violence does not affirm the law nor does it really suspend it, it simply states the existence of the sovereign, it manifests who is really in power and is able to bypass the law.

What is really interesting in Benjamin’s essay is not his comparison of state violence to mythical violence, unpredictable, arbitrary, but rather his last dialectical turn, namely his defense of divine violence. This appears surprising because it diverges from still customary and banal depreciation of political theology, in which simple association of a political idea with some religious theme, for instance association between state power and story of Niobe, is seen as simple act of polemics. So if someone states that state of law relies on a principle of fate active in Greek mythology he is seen as someone who simply criticizes state of law. In a brilliant and surprising twist Benjamin repudiates this line of thinking by actually defending sacred element of violence. His defense of divine violence must appear slightly vague but it remains fascinating from our point of
view – which is most of all determined by the desire to understand specific manifestations of power in psychosis.

Benjamin constructs his understanding of divine power by means of apparently simple oppositions between it and mythical violence. He states that while mythical violence is lawmaking divine violence is law destroying, mythical creates boundaries while divine destroys them, the former brings guilt the latter brings expiation. Perhaps the vaguest opposition states that while mythical violence is bloody, divine is lethal without spilling blood:

“Mythical violence is bloody power over mere life for its own sake, divine violence pure power over mere life for the sake of the living”\(^{336}\).

Benjamins associates divine violence with revolutionary violence – with the power to suspend the legal order of the state and oppose existing legal order.

What is truly refreshing in Benjamin (refreshing even today after so many readings of this text) is his dissatisfaction with simple problematization. Benjamin is not satisfied with an assumption that “all violence is apparently meaningless and doubtful”; “we cannot fully justify punishments”; “all appears to be problematic and we need to think about it”. “Critique of Violence” contains a positive program, perhaps a vague program but still a program.

Now, what exactly does it represent? What would be the psychoanalytic counterpart of divine violence? Of course traces that Benjamin leaves gives do not leave a doubt. He quotes the story of Korah as most illustrative case of divine violence.

Surprisingly Korah (or Core according to different spelling) is precisely someone who in priestly tradition led a rebellion against Moses as recounted in “The Book of Numbers” 16,1-50. Quite surprisingly the story of this rebellion is never directly invoked by Freud in “Moses and Monotheism”, even though it might have boosted his argument. The weakness of Freud’s historical sources concerning the hypothetic murder of Moses is quite often invoked by commentators. As a matter of fact Freud does not really provide any new sources, he simply relies on a controversial book by Ernest Sellin, who argued

that Moses was killed by Israelites in a bloody rebellion. This particular book by Sellin, a renowned historian of religion, is infamously difficult to get. Lacan complains that he was unable to find it anywhere. Today the book is not part of resources of British Library. It cannot be found in any of internet archives of old books. I was able to take hold of one particularly fragile copy of the book, which I have found in old bookshop in Cambridge. I bought the book only to learn, that Sellin actually does not discuss the case of Core in his treatise, so Freud probably did not know about it. Well at least I have saved one copy of a book read by Freud and I managed to read something that Lacan dreamt of reading.

The story of Core is of course not an evidence for a murder of Moses – for rebel against Moses led by Core failed, because of God’s decision. Upon hearing about the rebellion Moses he asked the rebels to gather at the doors of the tabernacle - the group of Levites led by Core on the one side and Moses with Aaron on the other to gather in the temple on two opposing sides with censers in their hands. When the groups gathered God’s glory revealed itself to the crowd and God decided that Core’s and his followers will all have to die. God first killed all family members of rebels, the floor around their tents opened suddenly, and all family members of the fell into the earth. The leaders of the rebel who stood at the tabernacle door were killed by fire which came from heaven. The death of the rebels actually enraged Israelites even more, next day Moses and Aaron had to seek refuge in tabernacle. But again God defended Moses and simply killed the crowd which wanted to kill him. The number of victims is quite astonishing, the book of Numbers says that 14 950 men were killed by God’s wrath (250 of closests followers of Core, and 14 700 of those who attacked Moses and Aaron day after killing of Core).

It is interesting and somewhat tricky that Benjamin invokes this story as an instance of divine power. The story is very much a case of violent and bloody quelling of a revolution; it is difficult to find in it any inspiration for revolutionary leftist politics, which was so close to Benjamin. At the same time tough the story demonstrates the most important aspect of sovereignty which seems to be typical for political theology, and also, as we will see for psychoanalysis. The concept of sovereignty obviously derives its meaning from theological arguments about God’s glory and power. It is difficult to question the idea of political theology on historical grounds. What seems more interesting from our point of view is the character of the sovereign, particular understanding of
sovereignty, that is invoked by Benjamin. Divine sovereignty clearly and obviously mirrors Schmitt’s classical understanding of sovereign. “Sovereign is he who decides on the exception”\textsuperscript{337}, this is Schmitt’s sentence which literally begins political theology. Benjamin agrees with that completely, divine power is the power to choose and decide upon exception, it does not express itself in legislating some norms and procedures. It manifests its existence in an act of radical violence, a suspension of normal order. What is also interesting in the story of Core is that God acts through division and exclusion, he excludes a group of his men from other, and then sacrifices this group.

Returning to Freud and psychosis. Freud would probably treat the story of Core as one of many traces of repressed murder of the father, he would probably argue that the story was falsified later on and the true result of this rebel – the killing of Moses was obliterated by the story of God’s violence. But leaving those exegetical discussions aside one can clearly recognize in God from this particular story, the figure of irrational, violent Jehowa, the God who does not understand human jouissance, who does not know and does not want to know anything about human affairs - the irrational irregular mad God of wrath.

In Schmitt the definition of sovereign as someone who decided upon the state of exception is bound with distinction of friend and enemy. Decision concerning state of exception is at the same time a decision follows from recognition of the existence of radical threat or danger, and the gravest danger for every community is simply an enemy. Thus is obviously follows that the real sovereign is someone who determines who is the enemy. Sovereignty is the power to influence the division between friend and enemy.

Now if we read Schmitt’s analysis of technology in mind, if we really agree that technology is not neutral, that indeed nothing is neutral or apolitical because the decision about apolitical nature of something involves politics, an obvious question poses itself: who is the real sovereign over technology? Where can we find a political division in new technologies of communication, such as Internet, and from which decision does this

division come from? What kind of violence do we witness in the most recent technological developments? Is it a mythical, divine or simply legal violence.

7. Conclusions

Psychosis demonstrates with clarity the transformation of interpersonal ties at the turn of the centuries. Psychoanalytic interpretation of Schreber is a response to this transformation. Freud's claim about homosexual roots of social feelings, should be placed in context of specific social feelings of his time. It should be connected with the process of demise of symbolic authority, described with utmost clarity by Eric Santner or Slavoy Žižek. Schreber's withdrawal of libido, which results in his experience of others as artificial or invented men, can be seen as response to technological changes which resulted in transformation of interpersonal bonds. The interesting dialectic of love and hate analyzed by Freud - all possible forms of negation of one sentence "I love him" can be placed in context of technological change. The object of this statement becomes artificial, he is turned into machine, other is transformed into android. At the same time the idea of negation of love can prove fruitful if we turn to the process of demise of enemy that seems typical for our time. In this respect we may connect Schreber's psychosis with Carl Schmitt's diagnosis of effects of technological changes. When other becomes artificial I am no longer able to love him, I lose a friend, but in effect I am also unable to have a true enemy. This leads to demise of political community and increases the amount of subjective uncertainty. Psychosis appears to be a response to this situation of political chaos created by technological change.
Conclusions

What general conclusions can we draw from the series of case studies, that we have presented? The question of general implications of their research was always posed to authors of case studies themselves. As we recall at the dawn of this particular tradition of clinical writing doctors believed that their writings would contribute to general knowledge. The difference between collections of anecdotes or curiosities typical for Renaissance and systematic medical knowledge projected by Enlightenment is at the heart of ideological justification of case studies. This official ideology was always challenged and contested. It was claimed that by focusing on singularity and individuality of patients authors of case studies neglected general systematic ambitions. We can well argue that Freud's case studies may be subjected to this challenge. They also constitute a chaos of themes, multiplicity of observations, thoughts and impressions, not united into one specific discourse. Freud often goes into digressions, presents disturbances of his patients from different perspectives, entertains different hypotheses about causes of their illnesses. We may well argue that this specific element of psychoanalysis is much more interesting and inspiring than all psychoanalytic theory. At the same time however this tendency to write scientific essays is balanced in Freud's wok by his desire to create an overarching theory, to contribute to science by means of some abstract set of claims about morality, roots of culture, beginnings of human society etc.

Before drawing final conclusions let's recapitulate the route that I have taken. I started with analysis of case study as such, I wanted to point out that Freud's case studies offer us a privileged glimpse into psychoanalytic interpretation. In the first chapter I have
shown how psychoanalytic case studies grows out of clinical teaching in some way. On the other hand I wanted to revise the image of clinical psychiatry and neurology, neurology is not a authoritarian regime that enslaves its subjects and reduces them to dependency. In some respects psychiatry or neurology resemble humanities - I tried to prove this point by demonstrating similarities between analytic detective novel, psychoanalytic inquiry and medical mode of investigation. There is no doubt that case study as such is connected with techniques of observation and control typical for large authoritarian institutions (Salpêtrière), but in its development the discourse of case frees itself from its beginnings and turns into a literary genre. Subjects of case study, patients who suffer from specific types of disturbances are turned into literary heroes, sometimes they even achieve fame because of their disturbances. Case studies influences culture of the end of century, it has very real effect on society of the time. The emergence of case study in culture of Europe at the end of XIX century forms the background for beginnings of psychoanalytic case studies. Freud's case studies are in many ways innovative and fresh, yet in other respects they continue existing research traditions.

Literary and cultural resonances of psychoanalytic case studies are clearly visible in Dora's case. This work demonstrates with particular clarity how the mechanisms of overdetermination. The investigation of case shows particular tension in early days of psychoanalysis between model of causality which relied on mono-causality, and the model of singular cause build around Oedipus. On the other hand investigation of Dora demonstrates how unconscious can respond to art, how unconscious economy transforms work of art into object in affective economy. From yet another perspective the case demonstrates how symptoms of mental disturbances are embedded in social context, how they are formed by social processes, such as mimetic imitation. Dora's hysteria is a social phenomenon in this respect.

Ratman's case seems to demonstrate the interesting transformations of religion in late modernity. The case shows how religious and ethical feelings that were supposed to support the symbolic universe of primitive societies transform into specific fetishism expressed in phrase "I know very well but all the same". We encounter here again the question of unconscious knowledge. Rat Man knows that there is no symbolic authority that economic exchange is simply based on brutal exploitation, yet he continues to act as
if the situation was different. His obsessional neurosis acts out this conflict between knowledge and action, it represents subjective dilemma in the form of neurotic symptoms.

Schreber case on the other hand represents an interesting response to technological change that leads to transformation of interpersonal relationships. Freud suggests that his psychosis may be seen as reflection of roots of social feeling. I think that we may well develop this claim and argue that Schreber's psychosis demonstrates the roots of social feelings at the time when first communication technologies were created and intersubjective communication was mediated via different technological mediums. Freud claims that Schreber's case uncovers the roots of "love for our neighbor" or latent homosexuality in modern social structure. I think that we may well develop his claim into wider diagnosis about love of our neighbors at the time when those neighbors are becoming increasingly artificial - that is transformed into technological beings - pieces of data in cyber sphere.

We have presented a range of cases, each of them revolves around different theme, yet they are all untied in so far as they belong to certain tradition of inquiry, by certain unifying approach. What unites all presented cases? First of all it seems that analyzed cases prove as the unconscious is social and political in nature. Desires and drives are not isolated but formed and framed by social context and environment. Symptoms of neurosis or hysteria are closely associated with the social context in which patients function. What appears most intimate to us, our subjective idiosyncrasies are determined by wider social structures in which we are embedded. On the other hand far from being a reservoir of archaic, primitive drives unconscious seems to create its own art and literature. Freudian unconscious is formed by paintings (Dora) books (Rat Man) theological systems (Schreber), it resembles a text full of convoluted allusions and references to other books and texts. This text does not end with a period, in fact it does not have an ending. It remains unfinished and resists our tendency to supplement it with some final sentence that sums it all.
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