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Remembering and Forgetting Freud in Early Twentieth-Century Dreams

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Argument

The paper explores the use of Freud's methods of dream interpretation by four English writers of the early twentieth century: T. H. Pear, W. H. R. Rivers, Ernest Jones, and Alix Strachey. Each employed their own dreams in rather different ways: as part of an assessment of Freud's work as a psychological theory, as illustrative of the cogency of Freud's method and theories as part of the psychoanalytic process. Each adopted different approaches to the question of privacy and decorum. The paper argues that assessment of the impact of Freud's work must take account of the application of the method to the researcher's own dreams and the personal impact this process of analysis had upon them, and must also gauge how the dreamers' deployment of Freud's methods influenced their explicit relationship to him and his theories.

> The dream, then, is the chief gate by which we can enter into the knowledge of the unconscious . . . . Thoughts and desires, which, if they attempted to dominate consciousness in waking life, would be promptly suppressed, arise, develop and expand to an astonishing extent in the dream.
>
> This statement, of course, is entirely independent of the implications of any one "theory of dreams." Its truth is evident to anyone who has honestly recorded or considered his own dreams for even a short period.
>
> (Elliot Smith and Pear 1917, 61)

My specific concern in this paper is the transmission of Freud's method of dream interpretation to England. The reception and dissemination specifically of Freud's theory of dreams has been much studied. Shamdasani (2003) has emphasized how much of Freud's theoretical apparatus had drawn on – or was analogous to – earlier medical and philosophical literature. However, the striking novelty of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* was the method for *interpreting* dreams he proposed and then exemplified at very great length and in overwhelming detail; Freud made his impression in the detail which he relentlessly provided, so that the cascade of dreams – his own and his patients' – was the meat sandwiched between the bread of a rather more conventional medico-scientific theory.

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The four major protagonists in this paper – a psychologist, a medical anthropologist, a leading early analyst, and a translator fledgling analyst – are simultaneously part of the "popular" reception of psychoanalysis and part of its specialist, professional reception. What the story told in this paper helps to clarify is how incomplete an account of the reception of psychoanalysis can be if it is restricted solely to being a theory or a therapeutic. If, for instance, one follows the development of the experimental study of dreams organized around the eventual "discovery" of the relation of REM sleep to dreaming in the 1950s, as Kenton Kroker has done in his superb doctoral dissertation (Kroker 2000), one inevitably leaves to one side the principal impact of Freud's theories, namely on a scientific ideal of self-knowledge to be derived from his practices of dream-interpretation applied reflexively to the "researcher." The influence of psychoanalysis was extensive within laboratory sciences, within medical practice, within the newly developing institutions of psychoanalysis as a profession and other forms of psychotherapy; but its most extensive influence is to be found elsewhere: in a new technology of the self (to borrow Foucault's expression [Foucault 1988]). In addition, while the new profession of psychoanalyst and the new destiny of psychoanalytic patient are undoubtedly key to understanding the impact of psychoanalysis in the early twentieth century, of equal importance is the reception of Freud's theories and technologies by more interstitial figures.

Freud's approach to dreams transposed the method developed with Breuer of examining in detail the minutiae of hysterical and obsessional symptoms of their patients into the domain of dreams; he was then able to return back to psychopathology with the new insights and theories elaborated on and for dreams.[1] It was Breuer who had first followed the exploration of the history of symptoms in such overwhelming detail – he had catalogued over 108 separate detailed instances of one minor sub-symptom of his first patient, Anna O., the symptom of "not hearing when someone came in . . . mentioning the persons and circumstances, often with dates" (Breuer and Freud 1895, 36). Other sub-symptoms were equally exhaustively catalogued: 27 occasions, 50 instances, and so on, seemingly endlessly. It was this conviction that every single minor element in the overall symptomatic structure of a neurosis needed to be drawn out of the neurotic subject that Freud transposed to the inner world of the dream structure. The framing concept for this procedure was that of "the scene" (later crystallized as the "primal scene"): symptoms were tied to the evocation of "scenes." The manifest dream then became a cover for the dream thoughts, themselves derived from scenes derived from the dreamers' inner personal history, both fantasized and historical.

But with the dream, it became not only possible but also tempting for the physician or scientist to draw on his own dreams, to subject himself to this exhausting procedure of extracting every last detail. So, most strikingly and obviously, Freud treated himself in

[1] Perceived clearly by Flournoy, quoted by Shamdasani, in his review of the book when it was first published: one should not lose sight of the "special terrain that is both the point of departure and the point of application of his research on the dream: to understand psychopathological processes" (Shamdasani 2003, 103, n. 4).

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the same way as he had treated his patients' neurotic symptoms and thoughts. He made himself an example. The mark of a Freudian, whatever his views on his overall theory of dreams – wish-fulfilment, the part played by sexuality, the part played by repressed infantile wishes, the utility of the concept of censorship, all vigorously debated and criticized in the early years of the century – then became this adoption of Freud's method and, most critically and revealingly, its application to the writer's own dream life.

Using one's own dreams sounds straightforward. One might think it is the most pragmatic thing to do. One has immediate and involuntary access to one's own dreams and to the free associations. But there are odd complications involved, as the followers and critics of Freud found out. When one makes a "discovery," is it the scientific investigator or the dreamer who discovers? Is it a "scientific" or a "personal" discovery? Is the theoretical development elaborated on the basis of one's own dreams a personal theory, specific to and precious for the dreamer, analyst, theoretician? And how does the dream, the analysis, the theory, stand in relation to the instigating scientific cause – the example and the standard against which personal dreams, interpretations, and theories alike are measured, that of Sigmund Freud? Freud might have appeared to be just one example, but it soon became abundantly clear that he was the privileged example; he would later indicate the perilous ambiguity of having made himself into the privileged example, when in 1909 he wrote to the Protestant pastor and psychoanalytic enthusiast, Oskar Pfister: "I have deliberately set myself up only as an example, but never as a model, let alone an object of veneration" (Freud and Pfister 1963, 23).

The reception of psychoanalysis in Britain has been mapped in a number of important articles (Cameron and Forrester 1999, 2000; Hinshelwood 1995; Rapp 1988, 1990; Richards 2000a, 2000b). Within medical circles, three figures were of palpable significance: Ernest Jones, a close disciple of Freud's; David Eder, first analyst to practice in Britain; and Bernard Hart, author of an introductory textbook much influenced by Freud in 1912, *The Psychology of Insanity*, which was to remain in print till the 1950s and influence generations of medical psychologists, alienists, and psychiatrists. Medicine then was rather disconnected from the British universities (in part because of the medical hegemony of the London medical schools established by the disaffected Edinburgh graduates in the late eighteenth century) and the reception of psychoanalysis in universities. One figure, W. H. R. Rivers, has a rather special status: a founder of both field anthropology and experimental psychology, a much respected physician and medical authority in psychological matters, particularly after the publication of his influential "response" to Freudian psychoanalysis, *Instincts and the Unconscious* (1920).

My first example is taken from the early work of T. H. Pear (1886–1972). Pear as one of the founders of psychology in Britain has now been almost entirely forgotten, almost entirely invisible in disciplinary histories. A student from London who was appointed to a lectureship at Manchester in 1909, aged 23, he became the first professor of psychology in Britain at the age of 33 in 1919. His paper discussing Freud's dream

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theories appears to be the first by a psychologist in Britain. Having spent a year at the psychology laboratory at Würzburg (where he had heard nothing of Freud), Pear later remembered his first contact with Freud, reading a paper by Bernard Hart while studying psychiatry at Giessen in 1911 (Costhall 2001, 192, and n.12; Pear 1960, 227). Pear must have quickly become a Freudian enthusiast – he later referred to himself as "intoxicated" by Freud's views (Pear 1960, 233), so intoxicated that C. S. Myers, his Cambridge mentor, wrote him a long critical letter – and in 1912 gave the first paper on Freud's dream theory to the British Psychological Society. In 1913 he gave a paper to the British Association for the Advancement of Science using his own dreams as the starting-point for the consideration of Freud's theory of dream interpretation.

Pear's rationale for using his own dreams was typical of early covert enthusiasts: "up to the present time, only a few workers have paid careful and systematic attention to their own dreams" (Pear 1913–14, 282). It is clear, however, that Pear was tremendously impressed by Freud's analyses of his own dreams, noting that "the interpretations of [Freud's] own dreams . . . may be considered the most valuable evidence for his theory" (ibid., 284). So, before proceeding to his own dreams, Pear took a detour through a lengthy cull of passages from Freud concerning two theoretical claims he wished to dispute: the relation of conscious to unconscious wishes in the dream, and the rôle of the infantile wish in the dream. In relation to the latter, Pear concluded:

> If we examine some of the most striking examples of [Freud's] own dreams we find that they are "grown-up" dreams which are actuated by professional interests (cf. the second dream examined in this article), and in them he demonstrates no infantile Factors, nor does he show that the wish at the bottom of these dreams was invariably a repressed, unconscious one. (Ibid., 287)

This second of the two dreams of his own that Pear analyzed was principally concerned with a professional conflict between research on memory based in Manchester and a project linked to his mentor C. S. Myers in Cambridge. However, the content of the first dream he discussed was more personal. He noted:

> It is with reluctance that I publish this dream, but the reason which impels me to do so is that I think it important because it was the first dream analysed by me, at a time when I knew only the bare outlines of Freud's theory. Further, at the time of noting it, every detail appeared to me to be perfectly remembered. When it was analysed every point seemed to be perfectly accounted for, in terms of my past experience. This is a subjective feeling which rarely occurs to me when considering my own dreams, but it was very clear at the time. (Ibid., 288)

From internal evidence, we can date the analysis of the dream to early 1912. The central topic of the dream is the dreamer's repression of the death of a close friend at a time when he was studying in Germany and was unable to talk about his loss with anyone who knew the dead friend.

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> When I came back to the University, little was said to me about the sad event, for very natural reasons, and thus there had been no chance to share my sorrow with others. But from time to time I was astonished by the fact that occasionally I forgot momentarily that F. was dead. Once, while immersed in reading, I found a new theory which would have interested him, and was astonished to find that I had begun to write a postcard to him, to call his attention to the fact. My belief is that I had persistently repressed the memory of his death. . . . On the dream-day, however, an indirect reference to him was made in conversation, and I hurried away in order to avoid the subject. But the words of my colleague must be remembered – "I wonder whom we shall get next; the men in that post have always been nice fellows." (Ibid., 290–1)

Having analyzed all elements in the dream, Pear listed those which confirmed Freud's theory: condensation, distortion, symbolism, dramatization, superficial associations enabling the elements linked to form the core of the dream and, finally, the interlocking of two conscious wishes with the covert deeper-lying wish. What was most impressive for Pear was the manner in which this "deeper-lying 'wish', which in waking life was never overt, but existed probably as a restless, untiring conative tendency underlies the whole dream" (ibid., 292). Pear's article concluded with qualified support for Freud's theories, "a valuable contribution to psychology" (ibid., 303). The proper tone of the academic paper is reasserted; the world of his unconscious wish – a quasi-hallucinatory denial of the death of his close friend – is left behind.

Pear was undoubtedly much more of an enthusiast for psychoanalysis than this restrained academic prose belies, as his *Remembering and Forgetting* of 1922 hints:

> To say that the study of the dream lies to the credit of twentieth-century psychology is to make a statement almost startlingly precise; for the foundation-stone of this new structure of knowledge bears the year 1900; the date of the publication, in Vienna, of Dr. Sigmund Freud's *Die Traumdeutung*. To indicate in a few pages the significance for psychology of this pioneer work is difficult; to represent fairly Freud's theory in ten times this space is impossible. (Pear 1922, 73)

The next English dreamer I turn to is a more complicated matter. Working on W. H. R. Rivers (1864–1922) has become something of a cottage industry in recent years. But the question that still hangs over historians is: which Rivers? Nobody has yet taken the measure of Rivers' diverse and fundamental contributions (for some indication, see Slobodin 1978 and Langham 1981). Given the constraints of this paper, let me make clear that for these purposes my Rivers is the medical psychologist, persuaded of the importance of Freudian therapeutic techniques and of dream interpretation by his personal experience as dreamer and as medical psychologist at Maghull and Craiglockhart Hospitals.

It was Pear who first introduced Rivers to Freud:

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> Almost before he had unpacked [on arriving at Maghull in June 1916], Rivers paid me an honour which I shall never forget. He said he would like to be regarded as a student who had been away from books for a long time (the outbreak of war had found him for the second time visiting Melanesia) and wanted to catch up. Would I direct his reading for the next few weeks, and on afternoon walks – Cambridge fashion – discuss it? His first desire was to grasp what Freud meant by the Unconscious, which Rivers thought the most important contribution to psychology for a long time. (Pear 1960, 232)

Many historians, including Young (1995, 1999), have been exercised to distinguish Rivers' views and methods from those of the psychoanalysts, principally Freud. In this they have taken Rivers at his word, noting how he criticized the doctrines of the unconscious, of repression, of the importance of infantile sexuality – all the shibboleths of psychoanalysis. Yet what is most striking in Rivers' work is how under the spell of Freud he is – not at the level of theoretical concepts, where he went out of his way to criticize and disagree, but at the level of method. Indeed, the book *Conflict and Dream* would be best titled, *A Dialogue with Freud in and on Dreams*. It is a book which is "normal science" in the Kuhnian sense at its clearest: taking the exemplars of a great scientific achievement as its model and worrying away at the puzzles the achievement of that model presents and opens up.

Rivers behaved to a large extent – despite his disclaimers – as did Pear, who had noted of his dream that "the analysis was carried out in the well-known way, by tracing the dream material to its sources in waking life through the serial association method, when the mind was freed from all criticism or conscious guidance of the ideas which came to consciousness" (Pear 1913–14, 288). Pear refers to this method as "the well-known way," as did Rivers in effect; but what well-known way was this other than the method introduced by Freud in *Die Traumdeutung*? And, as I have emphasized elsewhere (Forrester 1997; cf. Marinelli and Mayer 2003), there was no surer way of becoming a Freudian than by repeating Freud's methods on one's own dream, no matter how critical one's detached views about that method were. As had Pear's, Rivers' commitment to dream-analysis was initiated by an epiphany:

> In October 1916 I was transferred to a hospital for officers, where I soon began to obtain from my patients dreams of a less simple kind [than manifest wish-fulfilments], but I made no great progress in dream-analysis or in the clinical utilisation of dreams until I had a dream myself which went far to convince me of the truth of the main lines of the Freudian position. (Rivers 1923, 7)

It was this "Presidency" dream" that opened his book *Conflict and Dream*. Set in a Cambridge College garden, the dream moved into a vague evocation of a meeting of the Council of the Royal Anthropological Institute, in which the only person the dreamer recognized was reading a list of names.

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> When the reader was finished, he put the paper from which he was reading on the table, and I leaned over to look at it, in order to ascertain who had been nominated as President, for I knew that his name would appear at the head of the list of new members of Council. There I read S. Poole.

In Rivers' dream-analysis, he was quickly led to a conflict between his desire to spend more time in Cambridge doing his own work and his desire to be elected President of the Institute. Via a series of names – Stanley Pool, Professor Lane-Poole, a young doctor named "Temp. Lieut. Samuel Pool, M.B., R.A.M.C." whose name Rivers had glanced at in the newspaper *Scotsman*, a bookseller's catalogue in which the form "S. Lane-Poole" had occurred – Rivers inferred that the name was a disguised version of his own – the "S" from "RiverS," the "Pool" from schoolboy pranks with "river" – "streams, waters" and so on: "A wish that I should be chosen to be president of a society was disguised by the appearance of my name in a distorted form" (ibid., 16).[2]

Rivers' analysis was preoccupied with two elements of Freudian interpretation: the rigorous determinism of the elements that appeared in the dream, in particular the recent occasions on which he had glanced at newspapers or lists in catalogues and seen names in passing which were then opportunistically utilized by the process of dream distortion to represent his own name in a disguised form; secondly, he was concerned to argue that the dream was more properly a method of representing conflicts than a method of fulfilling wishes.

Rivers pursued his querulous conversation with Freud in the next chapter, which dealt with two dreams of a patient who wished to commit suicide because of the horrors he had experienced during the War. In the second dream, the patient himself had similarly used Rivers' name to good purpose:

> I could see many small rivers among the hills joining to form the large river by the side of which I felt I must continue my terrible journey. I felt terribly exhausted and the river was friendly and sang to me to swim on my journey and take courage . . . (Ibid., 32–3)

Rivers felt obliged to indicate the context for this dream: the patient, formerly under his care in Scotland, was now more of a friend, coming to see him irregularly while they both worked in London.

[2] Some of Rivers' psychoanalytic contemporaries were alert to the personal resonances of the theme of water for him, as can be seen in a letter from John Rickman to Géza Róheim, dated 22 April 1922: "When you reply to Rivers on Baptism (note: *Rivers = Water-Birth*) please deal gently but firmly with him. I know from personal knowledge that *Rivers-Birth Phantasies* is a personal complex of his & one can be firm & kind without hammering on his raw nerves" (italics indicate underlining in original) (Archives, British Psycho-Analytical Society, CRR/FO8/30). It should also be noted that Rivers' full name was William Halse Rivers Rivers and, in the context of the "Presidency" dream, that his uncle James Hunt was the founder and first president in 1863 of the Anthropological Society.

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> As soon as I heard the dream, I had no doubt that its meaning was one in which I was intimately concerned . . . [it] revealed that the question of coming to see me was the subject of a serious conflict in the patient's mind. . . . I need hardly say that it was a regular part of my treatment to guard against the process known to the psycho-analysts as transference . . . it had formed an essential part of my treatment to inculcate independence. . . . The practical importance of the dream was that it revealed a tendency to such transference so strong as to form the subject of a serious conflict . . . (Ibid., 34–6)

Continuing his debate with Freud, Rivers was drawn in to another characteristic gesture of the Freudian struggling with the framework in which he finds himself: he ventured to re-interpret Freud's own dreams. Rivers averred:

> While it is not possible to regard all dreams either as wish-fulfilments or as successful solutions of conflicts, it is possible to bring them all into the category of regression, of throwing back in sleep to modes of mental activity and expression characteristic of earlier periods of life. (Ibid., 75)

Rivers attempted to solve the problem of affect in dreams by deploying this notion of the infantile character of the dream and chose as his example Freud's dream of washing away heaps of feces on a toilet seat with a stream of urine (Freud 1900, 468–70). Freud had interpreted his dream as expressing a longing "to be away from all this grubbing about in human dirt and to be able to join my children and afterwards visit the beauties of Italy," an expression both of delusions of inferiority and of megalomania, so that its "indifferent feeling-tone" resulted from the "mutual inhibition of contrary impulses." Rivers wishes to simplify Freud's notion of mutual inhibition and replace it with a theory based on regression:

> The absence of disgust in the dream seems to receive an explanation more natural and at the same time more simple than that given by Freud if in his dream he had for the time regressed to an infantile attitude and was seeking to purify his surroundings symbolically by a procedure characteristic of childhood. In the child such a procedure would not arouse the emotion of disgust and therefore no such emotion was aroused in the dream. (Rivers 1923, 77)

There is surely something ironic about Rivers deploying the concept of infantile regression to simplify Freud's interpretation of his own dreams and argue against Freud's account of affects in dreams. Having successfully gone beyond Freud, Rivers engages in a similar strategy later in his book, when he undertakes a re-analysis of Freud's dream of the botanical monograph, in order to show that the concept of "displacement," which he links closely to Freud's concept of censorship with which he wishes to dispense, is not present in this dream to the extent to which Freud asserts it is. Having re-interpreted two of Freud's dreams to show how his own theory of dreams is more satisfactory than Freud's, he surveyed his own odyssey:

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> In the history of my attitude towards Freud's theory of the dream . . . a sceptical tendency was overcome by the experience of a dream arising out of a latent desire to be President of a Society. One result of this dream was to make me a temporary convert to the view that the dream expresses the fulfilment of a wish. (Ibid., 117)

Rivers then recapitulated the development of his views beyond those of Freud's wish theory, firstly by the hypothesis that the dream derives from any dominant affect, such as fear, anger, reproach or desire, present in the dreamer prior to sleep, and then to his more stable final position, that dreams are the expressions of recent conflicts in the dreamer's mental life.

To illustrate these theses, he turned to a complex process of interpretation of a dream dreamt in March 1917, subsequently reinterpreted using another dream during the writing of the book in 1921. Not only were these dreams "tests" of his hypotheses concerning the function of dreams, but they were also conducted as tests of the effect of possessing such a theory upon the dreamer's own dreams – a topic his recent re-reading of Freud on 19th March 1917 had provoked in him.[3] Aware that Freud expected readers of his book to dream refutations of it, Rivers was attempting to outflank Freud and critics of his own theories in his very own dreams. The first analysis in 1917 "seemed to support the view that the course of a dream might be determined by the theoretical interests of the dreamer" (ibid., 127). But the second analysis of the 1917 dream, revealing a political conflict between the value of truth and the imperatives of patriotism, inclined Rivers to the opposite view: "any influence of my theoretical bias at the time had been on the analysis rather than on the dream itself" (ibid.).

I do not have space to pursue Rivers further: into his pursuing Freud's ideas into anthropology via his dreams; into his discussion of why he had discussed so few sexual dreams; nor into the two dominant themes of professional conflicts and his political conflicts over the Great War – the latter theme taken up by Pat Barker in her

[3] Rivers had given a talk entitled "Freud's psychology of the unconscious" to the Edinburgh Pathological Club on 7th March 1917, in which he had stated: "Freud's theory of the unconscious is of far wider application than the perusal of recent medical literature would suggest. It is true that Freud is a physician and that he was led to his theory of the unconscious by the study of disease, but his theory is one which [p. 160] concerns a universal problem of psychology. If it is true, it must be taken into account, not only by the physician, but by the teacher, the politician, the moralist, the sociologist, and every other worker who is concerned with the study of human conduct. Not only does the medical controversialist fail to recognise that he is dealing only with one corner of the subject, but too often he looks on the whole matter entirely from the so-called practical standpoint and judges a theory of universal interest by the consequences which follow the application of the theory in the hands of the more extravagant of its adherents. It is possible, even probable, that the practical application of Freud's theory of the unconscious in the domain of medicine may come to be held as one of its least important aspects, and that it is in other branches of human activity that its importance will in future be greatest. I may perhaps mention here that my own belief in the value of Freud's theory of the unconscious as a guide to the better understanding of human conduct is not so much based on my clinical experience as on general observation of human behaviour, on evidence provided by the experience of my friends, and most of all on the observation of my own mental activity, waking and sleeping" (Lecture given to Edinburgh Pathological Club, published in *Lancet*, 16 June 1917, page 912, then republished as Appendix in *Instinct and the Unconscious*).

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Regeneration trilogy. I leave Rivers at the point he has brought himself to: in dialogue with Freud over the intimate relations of theoretical position and dream, and how the counter-wish dream of Freud's patients – such a naked aspect, for Freud, of resistance – is circumvented in this rather murky manner. One might say that Rivers failed to resolve his relationship to Freud: at first clearly sceptical, then enthusiastic following his epiphany, continually engaged in grappling with the details of the dream theory, still dreaming a dialogue in July 1921.[4] The next example I wish to turn to is equally complex, but in a very different fashion.

Ernest Jones was to write a number of classic papers in psychoanalytic dream theory, not least a 1910 paper on the pathology of the nightmare and a small monograph of late 1912 on the nightmare's relation to religion, "Der Alptraum in seiner Beziehung zu gewissen Formen des mittelalterlichen Aberglaubens" (The connections between the nightmare and certain mediæval superstitions), later amalgamated into a book published in English (Jones 1931). His first significant dream paper was given to the American Psychological Association in Boston in December 1909 and was published in 1910. This paper did include his own dreams amongst the fourteen examples, both in avowed and in disguised form. In late 1911, he completed a paper, "A Forgotten Dream (Note on the Oedipus Saving Phantasy)," devoted to a pair of beautifully complementary dreams, both dreamed the same night. These dreams were attributed to a "subject of analysis, a University teacher of biology" who was "quite normal," presenting "no neuropathic traits" (Jones [1912] 1918, 231); it is clear from internal evidence that Jones was the dreamer.

The first dream was a birth fantasy dream, which gave Jones the opportunity to expound Freud's account of rescue fantasies of the parents and their relation to Oedipal strivings. "The deeper layer of the dream thus represents an old childhood wish of the subject's to have a child by his mother." But the most personal element of the dream was a dog, so common in Jones' dreams, connected intimately with sexuality and also representing his parents. Skating over the details, he recounted how the subject had been given a dog at the age of eight by a man he was very fond of; the boy became extraordinarily attached to this dog, which he named "Fanny." Then remembering a Miss Fanny W. from his childhood, he suddenly recalled the second dream of the night:

[4] Ernest Jones' peremptory review of Rivers' posthumously published book brushed aside the complexity of Rivers' relation to Freud, but it is quite accurate: "[Rivers] agrees with Freud that dreams are of great psychical significance; that the distinction between the manifest and latent content is of cardinal importance; that the latent content indicates a remarkable distortion (which he prefers to term transformation) before it is converted into the manifest content; that there are regular laws by which this transformation occurs; that the latent content is a repressed one – in short, all the more essential parts of Freud's theory. He dislikes Freud's term 'wish-fulfilment' and prefers to regard the dream as the expression of an attempt to solve some conflict; the difference here is in most cases verbal only" (E. J. [Jones] 1923, 499).

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> *He was in his father's office with Mr. W., who was expounding to him his genealogy and early life*. Mr. W., the father of Miss Fanny W., was an old man, who had been a colleague of his father's and had worked in the same office. The subject had never seen much of him – he had died when the former was ten years old. (Ibid., 235)

The much admired figure of Mr. W. was crucial to the family romance Jones had elaborated: Mr. W. was the father of his aunt's husband as well as being the father of Miss Fanny W. But the figure of Mr. W. in the dream was in addition a composite of two others: a Mr. A. for whom Jones had worked some years before and who owed Jones money, and, identified through the bald head and the wart beside the nose, the figure of Charles Darwin. The author of *The Origin of Species* was perfectly suited to be the person who could enlighten young Ernest on the problem of "origins" – especially as it was clear Jones was not certain if he was a dog or a boy – and Darwin also represented an ideal of the gentleman of science, free of financial worries through the generosity of his father, with whom Jones compared his own father unfavorably. Now, Jones amalgamated Darwin with the benign doctor figures in his family romance: it was the family doctor (Darwin's father was a doctor and Jones, mistakenly and significantly, claimed in his dream-analysis that Darwin himself was also a doctor), the "'bringer of children' *par excellence,*" who had given him the dog Fanny; Mr. A was also a medical figure of destiny, being "the head of an agency for the sale of medical practices" (ibid., 241). The two dreams were thus two sides of one coin: the first was ruled by the wish to have a child (Ernest and his then partner Loe Kann were unable to have children, a preoccupation of his at the time) and the second by "the desire to be free from monetary cares" (ibid., 240).

Freud's response on reading the paper was to the point:

> The dream which could easily be recognised as your own interested me highly though you may have altered some of the material relations. It would be matter of much talk which I hope we will have together. (Freud and Jones 1993, 28 April 1912, 137)

Freud was already well aware of the complex deceptions to which Jones was prone when it came to money. More to the point, he would easily recognize himself in the figure of Mr. A., the head of the agency for sale of medical practices: was not Jones looking to Freud to set him up in business in a new medical practice, that of psychoanalysis?

Jones replied to Freud:

> With regard to the dream article I do not think I made any material alterations, so that I am quite revealed in it. I do not expound the anal complex in the second dream, though it is plain enough to a *Kundiger* [expert]. (Ibid., 7 May 1912, 141)

However, by reading Jones' own autobiography, we can establish one element of distortion. The 'head of the agency for the sale of medical practices' was in fact

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Mr. E. S. Weymouth, "who ran an extensive business of coaching for medical examinations by correspondence" (Jones 1990, 111–12), for whom Jones worked for several years in London as the busiest tutor for aspiring doctors. Freud knew better than most that no one tells the whole truth, especially in print. A year after the publication of his paper, Jones would go into print in the "Preface" to his *Papers* in 1913 with the curious turn of phrase: "half a century had to pass before the advent of a Darwin of the mind; now, thanks to Freud, we have for the first time a purely naturalistic theory of mental evolution" (Jones [1913] 1918, 6). Quite clearly, behind the figure of Mr. W., Mr. A., and Charles Darwin lurked Sigmund Freud. September 1911, the month when Jones dreamt this anal dream preoccupied with birth and money was the moment when he persuaded his wife Loe Kann to have analysis with Freud – which Freud interpreted as a gift on Jones' part (Appignanesi and Forrester 2005, 228–32). Jones' finances were by then firmly linked to the fortunes of Freud and his "medical practice."

Pear, Rivers, and Jones each deployed Freud's dream theory in different ways, and each negotiated rather different relationships to Freud. The list does not end with them. I have already written about a number of other early English Freudians who engaged with psychoanalysis and often did so through epiphanic dreams. Arthur Tansley dreamed a dream in 1916 which changed his life: proud of being relatively untutored by Freud's dream-book, he analyzed the dream himself, but then needed to learn more about psychology. This eventually led him to Freud's consulting-room, to resigning his lectureship in botany at Cambridge, and to becoming an analyst (Cameron and Forrester 1999). Lionel Penrose heard a lecture on dreams by T. H. Pear – again, Pear! – while an ambulance driver in France in 1917; he decided there and then to study psychoanalysis at St. John's College, Cambridge, eventually ending up in Vienna in 1924 in analysis with Siegfried Bernfeld, and presenting the fruits of his analysis back in Cambridge as a paper on the analysis of a chess dream (Cameron and Forrester 2000, 195–213). The dream, the commitment to psychoanalysis, and the relationship to Freud: these are the themes I've been exploring. A final example will demonstrate the manner in which Freud figures in another psychoanalytic pioneer's dream life.

After World War I, the organization of the psychoanalytic movement in Britain was taking shape. A Society was established in 1919; by late 1921 there were 40 members. The *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, edited by Ernest Jones, first appeared in 1920. In 1920, Alix Strachey accompanied her new husband, James Strachey, to Vienna, where he began analysis with Freud; when she displayed some of her perennial symptoms of agoraphobia and palpitations, Freud agreed to take her on too. Her analysis was interrupted by Freud's commitments to others and by her falling ill with pneumonia; however, at the end of June 1922, Freud pronounced both her and James fully ready to take on the tasks of analysts and active members of the British Society. They had already both started what would become their life-work: translating Freud's work from German into English (Appignanesi and Forrester 2005, 365–71; Caine 1998).

Just as her analysis with Freud was coming to an end, Alix Strachey's "Analysis of a Dream of Doubt and Conflict" appeared in the second number of the 1922 volume of

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the *Journal*, issued in June of that year.[5] It is a simple text, more a story than a scientific paper. It refers to no "literature" or "scientific papers." It recounts a sequence of three dreams of a woman "patient" in analysis and then unfolds an interpretation in line with her associations; the interpretation simply clarifies and exemplifies some of the accepted psychoanalytic theses concerning dreams and their interpretation: how the dream is based on a double conflict, one intellectual, the other "affectual"; how Silberer's functional phenomena – dream representations of the process of thinking – are manifested in the dream; but also how the dream's intellectual sophistication is principally based on sophisticated thinking during the evening preceding the dreams. More striking is the manner in which the dream represents the work of analysis being conducted at the time, with the analyst.

The paper is curiously indefinite and reticent, containing not a single proper name (save that of a "Colonel's wife" who appears in the third dream, if "Colonel" is taken to be a proper name, and a bracketed reference to Freud). Part of the reason for that stems from Strachey's attempt to conceal the identities of the protagonists. Strachey portrays the patient as engaged in the intellectual work of translating from German into English, work which spills over into her dream-life; the patient is also engaged in a struggle with her analyst, in part stemming from her doubts about the validity of psychoanalysis.

Nobody to my knowledge has ever remarked on the identities of the patient and her analyst, which is surprising; but then it has been entirely unread – this paper has never been cited in any English-language periodical. The protagonists, however, are clear: the patient is Alix Strachey herself, and the analyst is Sigmund Freud; the paper, through its analysis of the three dreams, is an account of a critical moment in her analysis with Freud. It also represents, through its publication, Strachey's entry into the professional world of psychoanalysis.

The first dream introduced the theme of eating and the theme of doubt:

> *I had eaten a slice of cake that had been put by in a tin. My husband commented on the fact. I replied that he would still find the slice there; that it was not eaten. He again pointed out that I had eaten it. I wanted to tell him that I thought I had only eaten it in my dream; but all I could say was that I had somehow not really eaten it, and that he would still find it in the tin.* (154)

The dreamer's first association was of her husband, who had suggested the previous evening that she should not eat cake, since it would affect her digestion; she had complied and put it away in the tin. She then interprets the "eating" in accordance with the "common symbolism" of becoming pregnant. But it was by addressing the word "really" that she was led to her doubts about psychoanalytic theory. The affirmation of reality is not that she is pregnant, but that she does have a fantasy of becoming pregnant

[5] All references to this paper are to Strachey 1922; page numbers are given in brackets directly following the quotation. Passages quoted in italics are in italics in the original.

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through eating. "Eating the cake, in other words, may stand for having had (and still having) an infantile phantasy of pregnancy, of being with child in phantasy" (155).

Strachey then proceeds to the second dream:

> *'I was correcting some manuscripts and asked my husband, concerning some word, whether it would "wo" in italics, or whether it was "wo" in italics—I can't exactly remember the words I used. I think I asked him more than once, and did not use exactly the same words each time.'*
>
> *Then I awoke and remembered this and the first dream. The word "wo" rhymed with "go".*
>
> *Associations:*
>
> *The night before I had been occupied in correcting a manuscript of a translation from the German with my husband. A certain sentence had been very obscure in the English version, and I had had to read it aloud several times over . . . It contained a word in italics, so that every time I repeated the passage I had had to emphasize the word.*
>
> *In italics*: . . . "In italics" also introduces a play upon the patient's own Christian name, which was Alix ("in it, Alix") (155–6).[6]

The revelation of the patient's name, Alix, is strong support for the identification of the patient with the author of the paper, A. S. Strachey. We can also be pretty certain of the manuscript translation on which she was working, namely translating Freud's work into English.[7]

Strachey goes on to specify further associations of the word: "wo," linked to "woe" and concealed behind that "throe," patently alluding to the phrase "the throes of childbirth"; indeed she remarks that the word in German "cognate" with "woe" was "Weh" ("pain") – and she added "that in that translation there had been a description of childbirth and that the word 'Wehen' had been used." Strachey attempted to conceal the exact passage in question by describing it as a scene of childbirth at which a nine-year-old boy had been present (157). However, it is almost certain, in part because "Wehen" is a word that Freud uses extremely rarely, that the passage is the following, from Freud's "Analysis of a phobia in a five-year-old boy":

> the great event of Hans's life was the birth of his little sister Hanna when he was exactly three and a half. His behaviour on that occasion was noted down by his father on the spot: 'At five in the morning', he writes, 'labour began [*mit dem Beginne der Wehen*], and Hans's bed was moved into the next room. He woke up there at seven, and, hearing his mother

[6] Strachey's use of italics is rather unconventional but has a specific purpose. The passage pointing out the ambiguity of the sound 'in italics' is meant to be in the 'voice' of the author of the paper, the analyst, and not, as in the previous association, in the 'voice' of the patient.

[7] The correspondence of Freud and Jones reveals that in early 1921 Alix Strachey was translating two of Freud's case-histories, of 'Dora' and the 'Ratman,' while James was engaged on other works, including the Wolfman (Freud/Jones 1993, 19 May 1921, 423). There is no information as to which of them took on 'little Hans'; the translations were published in 1925 with the translators of all five major case histories named as 'Alix and James Strachey'.

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> groaning, asked: "Why's Mummy coughing?" Then, after a pause, "The stork's coming to-day for certain."... After the baby's delivery the midwife came into the kitchen and Hans heard her ordering some tea to be made. At this he said: "I know! Mummy's to have some tea because she's coughing." He was then called into the bedroom. He did not look at his mother, however, but at the basins and other vessels, filled with blood and water, that were still standing about the room. Pointing to the blood-stained bed-pan, he observed in a surprised voice: "But blood doesn't come out of my widdler." (Freud [1909] 1953–74, 10; see also Freud 1941, 247)

With her preoccupation with the translation of this passage as background, and her obvious consequent identification with the child, Strachey summarizes the second dream's message as follows: "the patient seems to be asking herself whether the pains of childbirth are very excessive in reality, or are only supposed to be so." The third dream makes explicit these themes in its content:

> *A woman told me that she was with child, and begged me to give her some of the drug that I possessed, so as to alleviate the pangs of childbirth. She appealed to my sympathy, saying that she was already elderly, so that her pains would be very severe, and that she was a colonel's widow. I refused, although there was enough of the medicament for her and for myself. At the same time I was ashamed of my hardness of heart and could not understand it. During this scene I saw the Colonel's wife before me in the shape of a heavy cart-horse with its hindquarters turned towards me so that its anus was plainly visible.* (157)

In analyzing the dream, the figure of the mother finally comes to the fore: she recalls how the ten-year-old Alix felt no sympathy for her mother's attacks of colic and diarrhoea, which she identified with the pangs of childbirth. Other associations point to the enigma of childbirth and its pain, including the carthorse, well suited to represent the pregnant mother – and we can add, which the author did not, no doubt in an attempt to preserve her anonymity, little Hans' phobia of horses in the case-history she was translating. She sums up this dream as preoccupied with her mother's pain in childbirth – both recognizing it but also questioning its reality – as presaging her own. And then she summarizes the series of thoughts emerging in the series of dreams:

> 'Provided that I am not with child myself – that my pregnancy is only an infantile phantasy, which I admit to having – and I have nothing to apprehend that way' (first dream), 'I am prepared to begin to doubt whether, after all, child-birth is such a dreadfully painful business in reality' (second and third dreams), 'As my mother has led me to suppose' (third dream). (159)

This elegant dream-analysis opens out onto a discussion of the dreamer's life at that time: "Her conscious attitude towards pregnancy and everything connected with childbirth

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was one of fear and aversion" (159). And now it becomes clear how this theme was being activated and examined in the course of her analysis with Freud:

> Now in view of the fact that she suffered from chronic constipation and was in the habit of taking laxative pills regularly for it, and in view of other facts connected with her constipation, the analyst had come to the conclusion that it was psychologically determined, and that it expressed a phantasy of pregnancy, in which taking the pills symbolized conception. A few weeks before the dream happened, accordingly, he had recommended her to stop taking them, hoping thus to bring the conflict to a head. The patient had followed his advice, although by no means convinced of the truth of his view or the wisdom of taking such a course. Her dream is a reaction to this abstinence. (159)

This active interventionism was by no means uncharacteristic of Freud. One might judge that her dreams and their rendition into a published psychoanalytic paper was proof of its efficacy. Strachey identifies two strands of conflict in the dream, the intellectual and the "affectual": the intellectual conflict concerns her doubt about the claims of psychoanalysis, specifically with regard to the existence of infantile fantasies concerning childbirth, and the emotional conflict concerns her own struggles over the prospect of pregnancy and birth. On the intellectual level, the paper and the dreams recounted in it indicate Strachey's acquired conviction of the reality of infantile phantasies of birth, and of the lucidity of psychoanalytic dream-analysis. Strachey summed up the second dream as asking a question of the dreamer:

> 'Is this "wo" (i.e. childbirth) in it, Alix ?', meaning 'Are your thoughts engaged upon the subject of giving birth to a child?'. . . . We therefore see that in its more general aspect – taken, that is, in relation to the patient's analysis – the dream is of great importance as marking the step from a repudiation of an unconscious phantasy to an acceptance of it. (161)

The series of dreams represent three different views of the same change of attitude to her own phantasy of being pregnant, of going through with it, and finally how the analyst's dismissal of her apprehensions is linked to her change of attitude to childbirth consequent upon accepting the existence of her own unconscious phantasy.

We have been able to fill in details concerning this paper: the author of the paper is herself the thinly disguised dreamer, the dreamer's translation work is that of translating Freud's account of children's attitudes to childbirth; and the analyst who intervenes in her treatment of her constipation and then analyzes the dream that this provokes is Freud himself. We could add further information concerning Alix Strachey: how she in fact did not have children in later life; how she continued her work as translator, being the author of *A New German-English Psycho-Analytical Vocabulary*, published in 1943, and how she assisted her husband from 1920 to 1966 in the production of the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, and, after his death in 1967, helped see the project through to its completion; how her relation to food

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would be a conspicuous topic of comment in many of her friends' descriptions of her. But my purposes are different here: considering the use by early twentieth-century English readers of Freud of his account of dreams.

As a dreamer, Alix Strachey is as far inside the "Freudian world" as one can go: her dreams transform her work of translating Freud into enigmatic puns which express her unconscious phantasies concerning childbirth; these dreams are then analyzed by her analyst, Freud himself, whom she supplants (and suppresses) as the author of a paper describing these dreams. She even makes quite clear, while not analyzing it in detail, her ambivalent transference to Freud and to psychoanalysis: her balking at giving up her laxatives, her scepticism about psychoanalytic theories of unconscious phantasy.

As author of the paper about a patient's dreams, one would expect her to be the analyst of those dreams. In one sense she was; in another the analyst was Freud. She allows complete ambiguity concerning the identity of the analyst, herself or Freud; the third dream even spells out this confused identification: the dream text runs: "I refused, although there was enough of the medicament for her and for myself." In her commentary, she notes:

> Finally, in the third dream, there is the woman – herself – who shrinks from the idea of bearing a child; and then there is the dreamer – the analyst – who refuses to give her the drug, who dismisses her apprehensions. (161–2)

This third dream thus enacts her identification with the analyst who refuses the drug (the laxative) which relieves pain and allows her to give birth (pass a stool). This identification with the analyst-Freud extends even to the somewhat sparse theoretical conclusions of her paper; she makes two points, both simply endorsing views Freud had put forward in *The Interpretation of Dreams*: "[the dream] furnishes another instance of the rule that a dream within a dream represents reality. In the second place it goes to support the theory that dream-work is essentially of an uncreative character" (162), since the ingenious plays on words to be found in the dream simply reproduced work that had gone on with her husband the evening before. The slipperiness of the position of analyst is made entirely clear in the following gnomic footnote: "The dispute between her and her husband in the first dream represents this difference of opinion between her and the analyst. The substitution of her husband for the analyst needs no explanation." (159n3).

So the publication of the paper represents something like a resolution of this conflict with Freud, or at least a further twist in the confrontation between her contradictory impulses and judgments. Freud certainly recognized this: he wrote to Ernest Jones in June 1922, around the moment when her paper was published:

> As regards Rickman and the Stracheys I send them back to you within a week. Both will prove of great help to you if you treat them generously. I propose the Stracheys should become members (full) of the Society as they have gone through 1½ years of serious

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> analysis, are theoretically well informed and people of a high order. To be sure their conflicts have not been decided, but we need not wait so long, we can only instigate the processus which has to be fed by the factors of life. . . . Do not put back her for him, she is very valuable. (Freud and Jones 1993, 25 June 1922, 491–2)

Pear and Rivers published their dream analyses under their own names, with no disguise. Jones, Tansley, Penrose, and Strachey chose anonymity, conjuring up an unnamed "patient" (and, in Penrose's case, delivering a paper to a select group, framed pseudonymously, but desisting from publication).[8] What is the effect of these two different authorial strategies? Rivers and Pear kept their dream analyses within a narrow range of professional or strictly personal concerns. No sex, no intimate others, no rage at the nearest or dearest, no murderous thoughts, and no adventurous erotic fantasies. The pseudonymous dreams of Jones and Tansley, more committed to those theories of psychoanalysis in which sexuality was prominent, were far more revelatory, yet even they withheld on the "transference" dimensions of their dreams: both to psychoanalysis and to Freud. Strachey's dream-analysis included substantive recognition of the "transferential" aspect, although even she attempted to disguise this, in particular disguising the fact that it was Freud who was her analyst and the translation of Freud's work which was the immediate matter of the dream.

What is most striking is the epiphanic element of all the writers' responses, with the possible exception of Jones. They each crystallized an overwhelmingly positive response to Freud's work in the personal analysis of a dream of their own, even if they would, as did Pear and Rivers, formulate considered public criticisms of his theses. And they each felt the only honest, scientifically upstanding thing to do was publish their personal dreams, as the most certain and most striking evidence in support of Freud's views. But the differences in their approaches are as illuminating as the similarities. The academics (Pear and Rivers) remained true to the canons of public data, public science; those more implicated in psychoanalysis as a movement and as a treatment found themselves obliged to conceal the true identities of the dreamers. Do they reveal a paradox about the engagement of scientists and intellectuals with psychoanalytic dream theory: that the more engaged, the more convinced by their personal experience they found themselves, the less able they were to take up a direct public, conventional authorial, and scientific position in relation to Freud's theories and practices? It does appear that the more their lives and inner worlds became engaged with psychoanalysis, the less capable they were of making this engagement visible. Of the four dream-analyses I have discussed, that most engaged with Freud, Alix Strachey's, is the one that "forgets" Freud the most.

[8] Tansley published only an abbreviated version of his dream analysis in *The New Psychology* (1920); the fuller version, indicating how it changed his life, was lodged with the Sigmund Freud Archives in 1953 (see Cameron and Forrester 1999 for details).

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Was this a part of her idiosyncratic internal dynamics? One might think so if a letter from her second analyst is evidence. After a few weeks' work with her in the autumn of 1924, Karl Abraham wrote to Freud:

> Perhaps, dear Professor, you may be interested in hearing something about Ψα from Mrs Str.[achey] from London. It struck me from the very beginning that the long period of work with you has been, as it were, obliterated. We have to discover everything afresh, as all the facts elicited by the first analysis have disappeared, while the general knowledge of Ψα is intact. You will remember that the patient lost her father in the first weeks of her life and has no memories of her own of him. Apart from other motives for the amnesia, there is a complete identification of your person with the father – she has no memory of either. On the other hand she has directed towards you the same rescue phantasies as towards her father. (Abraham [1924] 2002, 519)

Whether Alix Strachey's forgetting of Freud was specifically connected to the father she never knew is undecidable; a moment's reflection, however, reminds us that such forgetting is exemplary of the course of a psychoanalysis. The dialectic of remembering and repeating in the transference that Freud highlighted from 1914 on was in substantial part developed in order to give a clearer picture of the course of treatment:

> we regularly succeed in giving all the symptoms of the illness a new transference meaning and in replacing his ordinary neurosis by a "transference-neurosis" of which he can be cured by the therapeutic work. The transference thus creates an intermediate region between illness and real life through which the transition from the one to the other is made. The new condition has taken over all the features of the illness; but it represents an artificial illness. (Freud 1914, 154)

The dissolution of the "transference-neurosis" as the path to cure entailed that the content of the analysis and the relation to the analyst (Freud, in the case of both Tansley and Strachey) would always be ideally consigned to oblivion. Psychoanalysis aims at its own auto-destruction, its cleansing of the Augean Stables ideally leaving behind no trace of the flood. On a smaller scale, this is the aim of dream-analysis. What is striking is to see how influential were Freud's theories on the scientific and personal lives of the writers I've been considering and yet how obliged they felt to finesse his influence, to find a path that obliquely sidelined that influence. All of these dreamers who found themselves practicing the new method of dream-interpretation they learned from him found that this method was indubitably and verifiably a secure means for establishing self-knowledge. And then each of them forgot Freud in their own way, even as they were being faithful and acknowledging him.

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