

READING POETRY AND DREAMS IN THE WAKE OF FREUD

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## ABSTRACT

Adapting the question at the end of Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale', this thesis argues that reading poetic texts involves a form of suspension between waking and sleeping. Poems are not the product of an empirical dreamer, but psychoanalytic understandings of dream-work help to provide an account of certain poetic effects. Poetic texts resemble dreams in that both induce identificatory desires within, while simultaneously estranging, the reading process. In establishing a theoretical connection between poetic texts and dream-work, the discussion raises issues concerning death, memory and the body.

The introduction relates Freudian and post-Freudian articulations of dream-work to the language of poetry, and addresses the problem of attributing desire "in" a literary text. Interweaving the work of Borch-Jacobsen, Derrida and Blanchot, the discussion proposes a different space of poetry. By reconfiguring the subject-of-desire and the structure of poetic address, the thesis argues that poetic "dreams" characterize points in texts which radically question the identity and position of the reader.

Several main chapters focus on texts - poems by Frost and Keats, and Freud's reading of literary dreams - in which distinctions between waking and sleeping, familiarity and strangeness, order and confusion are profoundly disturbed. The latter part of the thesis concentrates on a textual "unconscious" that insists undecidably between the cultural and the individual. Poems by Eliot, Tennyson, Arnold and Walcott are shown to figure strange dreams and enact displacements that blur the categories of public and private. Throughout, the study confronts the recurrent interpretive problem of reading "inside" and "outside" textual dreams.

This thesis offers an original perspective on reading poetry in conjunction with psychoanalysis, in that it challenges traditional assumptions about phantasy and poetry dependent upon a subject constituted in advance of a poetic event or scene of phantasy. It brings poetry into systematic relation with Freud's work on dreams and consistently identifies conceptual and performative links between psychoanalysis and literature in later modernity.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the main text:

P.F.L - Sigmund Freud, The Penguin (and Pelican) Freud Library, eds. Angela Richards and Albert Dickson. Particular volumes are identified below:

AL - Art and Literature (P.F.L. 14)

CRS - Civilization, Society and Religion (P.F.L. 12)

ILP - Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis (P.F.L. 1)

OM - On Metapsychology: the Theory of Psychoanalysis (P.F.L. 11)

TID - The Interpretation of Dreams (P.F.L. 4)

SE - Sigmund Freud, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychoanalytic Works, trans. James Strachey. 24 vols, 1953-74

E - Jacques Lacan, Ecrits: A Selection

FFC - Jacques Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis

ECP - T.S. Eliot, Collected Poems 1909-1962

## POETRY AND DREAMS: AN IN(TRO)DUCTION

Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' closes by asking itself an unanswerable question: "Do I wake or sleep?" The "waking dream of poetry" has long been a beguiling motif for writers and readers who readily translate dream as pleasurable escapist fantasy. Both writer and reader can treat the text as safe play, a space in which to stage "other" worlds. Yet in Keats's poem the border between waking and sleeping, familiarity and strangeness, order and confusion is profoundly disturbed. Its undecidable question implicates the reader, who is neither securely inside or outside the textual "dream". This thesis considers how we might compare poems and dreams, and to whom we might attribute "desire" in poetry. It asks who or what might "fall asleep" in a poetic text, a question that has implications for the reading process, the subject of poetry and the subject of desire. It examines poems that explicitly refer to acts of dreaming and also those that manifest a similar disturbance between waking and sleeping to that in 'Ode to a Nightingale'. In the attempt to establish who or what might be "dreaming" in the work of poetry, the discussion engages with a number of related issues to do with desire, death, history and the body. This opening chapter reviews the ways in which the relationship between poetry and dreams has been read by literary criticism, psychoanalysis and cultural theory, and closes by offering a different conception of the space and subject of poetry.

The title of this thesis denotes a certain "coming-after" Freud, an act of commemoration and a concern with the effects and legacies of his departure. This coming-after could be read as an act that wavers between violent interpretive intent, reverent procession and recognition of the uncanny resonances that Freud bequeaths to us. This study will read Freud's work alongside poetic texts, tracing the strange genealogies, hauntings and repetitions that link literature and psychoanalysis in reading dreams in the wake of Freud.

### Literature and Psychoanalysis

Freud claimed that writers discovered the unconscious long before psychoanalysis, self-effacingly stressing the secondary and derivative status of many of his ideas. It is not necessary to accept or reject Freud's false modesty or his tracing of the history of ideas to discern a link between Freud's speculative, conceptualising endeavour and "imaginative" or "creative" activity in art. Texts are not embodiments but figurations of "interior" and "exterior" reality. For psychoanalysis, the unconscious is already conceived as a fictional construct, a "matter" of imagination, anecdote and intuition before it becomes clinical fact. This in no way denies the value or purchase of Freud's explorations of psychic disorders, fixations, symptomatic behaviour and phantasy structures, but stresses how deeply psychoanalysis is indebted to and invested by the fictive nature of reading and writing. The relation between literature and psychoanalysis is not a decidable question of priority or superiority: neither discourse definitively "discovers" the unconscious or the constitution



of the mind; both produce or figure versions of that hidden economy, field of desires or web of traces that characterizes the unconscious. Dreams, the royal road to the unconscious, offer a privileged, fictional scene in which to encounter (both in terms of observation and affect) the workings of the insistent, elusive effects of desire.

In the historical shifts in understanding of dreams and the unconscious, it is implicit that dreams are always figured, recorded and theorized in writing. The "history" of the unconscious is presented by Freud as a textual history. The Interpretation of Dreams opens with a summary of other dream-literature; he deploys mythical and literary parallels throughout his work; and he displays a recurrent fascination with aesthetic creativity (dealt with at length in Chapter Four). In Freud's theoretical writing, this textual or linguistic history consistently brackets the impulse to name and scrutinize the structures of the mind for science. From the dream-books and keys to dream-interpretation produced in ancient cultures, to the institution of psychoanalysis as a theoretical or scientific discourse, dreams have been a matter of inscription. Voice may have been privileged in the recounting of dreams, particularly in the analytic situation (Lacanian psychoanalysis is still described as the talking cure), but in literature and psychoanalytic theory dreams are always marked by the effects of writing. This is more than an historical alignment: attempting to understand dreams through or in writing is inextricably bound up with conceptualizing dreams as a form of writing. Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress "graphically" illustrates the inextricable relation of dreams and writing in its opening paragraph:

As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a den, and laid me down in

that place to sleep; and as I slept, I dreamed a dream,  
I dreamed, and behold, I saw a man clothed with rags  
standing in a certain place, with his face from his own  
house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his  
back, I looked, and saw him open the book, and read  
therein.,<sup>(1)</sup>

As Jon Stratton points out, dreams become the site of Bunyan's text; whereas Freud treats dreams as a provisional and limited representation of truth that is concealed from the "world", in The Pilgrim's Progress "the dream provides a site of a truth which is already in the world, already known".<sup>(2)</sup> Yet as this example demonstrates, any truth in a textual dream is necessarily mediated through reading and writing in a series of ways. Firstly, this textual dream places the book as a central image and figures an act of reading; secondly, this dream is already inscribed within a literary text; thirdly, both of these inscriptions are part of a process of reading and interpretation. The ragged man and the dreamer are not the only readers implicated here, and the "certain place" of this dream is thus rendered considerably less certain.

Freud's theory of dreams posits a scientific framework in which the dream-process could be marked and analysed. At its outset, however, psychoanalysis is not a science of observable data, barely a science at all, in fact. It proceeds by risk-taking, imagination, speculation and thinking limits. It foregrounds its interpretive and creative qualities in an explicit fashion, qualities that empirical science tends not to acknowledge as part of its methodology or conceptual framework. The interrelation of science and art has a direct bearing upon psychoanalytic dream-theory. On the one hand, psychoanalysis turns dream-interpretation into a body of knowledge: dreams are decisively mapped and brought to the light of objective scrutiny. On the other

hand, Freud acknowledges the provisional status of dream-analysis, emphasising how dreams retain their mystery and resist the colonizing tendencies of conventional science. Dreams remain at the fringes of discursive practice. Just like dream-work, dream-analysis is a *form* of thought, creative and speculative. This hovering between the scientific and aesthetic is not merely a symptom of the inadequacy of psychoanalysis: it is an ineluctable part of its theoretical venture to contaminate boundaries between "official" and "unofficial" knowledge. To "comprehend" the unconscious requires both deductive and speculative, "scientific" and "artistic" thought. Literary criticism and psychoanalysis are related, but in no way identical enterprises. Since Freud, the consonances between literature, criticism and psychoanalysis as discourses have become clearer. They are situated in a structure of mutual contamination, since there is no clear way that any of these discourses can be said to remain definitively outside the others.

Shoshana Felman seeks to unseat the domination of one field of enquiry over the other:

While literature is considered as a body of language - to be interpreted - psychoanalysis is considered as a body of knowledge whose competence is called upon to interpret. Psychoanalysis, in other words, occupies the place of a subject, literature that of an object; the relation of interpretation is structured as a relation of master to slave...<sup>(3)</sup>

Felman argues that neither literature nor psychoanalysis can claim the position of privileged or metalinguistic discourse and that each discourse represents an integral part, even the unconscious, of the other. Literature can be read as psychoanalysis and psychoanalysis can be read as literature: neither has autonomy or inherent authority:

Literature is therefore not simply outside psychoanalysis, since it motivates and inhabits the very

names of its concepts, since it is the inherent reference by which psychoanalysis names its findings.<sup>4</sup>

In Freud's essay on Jensen's Gradiva, a sliding between these "poles" occurs; psychoanalysis operates at times like literature, and Freud is attracted to a literary text that operates like psychoanalysis. In his act of speculation, he writes about another creative work. The master-slave relation is never displaced, however; despite Freud's deference and collaborative claims, psychoanalysis reads the text from a position of authority. Literature and psychoanalysis perform double movements, each defending their specificity as discourses while reading and being read in terms of the other. Thus there exists a power relation between the two, whereby each discourse is drawn to assume the place of the other; this appropriative, identificatory desire is not to be understood as appropriative in the sense of obtaining an object of desire, but as an act of taking the place of an other.

#### Reading Dreams - a brief history

Since Freud states that creative writers and artists discovered the unconscious before psychoanalysis, it is perhaps instructive to consider the ways in which dreams are represented in literature before Freud's psychoanalytic investigations begin. From the earliest cultures, right through to the Romantic and Victorian periods, dreams have assumed a prominent role in literature. As Manfred Weidhorn points out, dreams often constitute both the manner and matter of a text:

The dream has been commonly used as a literary device because it offers the poet a ready way to rearrange reality, to present things that cannot take place in actuality, or to account for strange actions by a sort of "as if" statement. The function of the dream thus

approaches the function of metaphor,<sup>(5)</sup>

Here the textual "dream" is regarded as a conscious and convenient formal device, part of an explicit and delimitable textual strategy. Its "strangeness" explains away lacunae and contradictions in the text; the "otherness" and ambiguity of the literary text depends upon the textual dream. By employing the mysteriousness and seeming impenetrability of dreams, the writer also gains access to the forbidden and "unspeakable" areas of public and private existence. This use of dream, apart from its formal convenience, provides a pretext for the writer to explore "deeper" levels of experience and meaning. Yet Weidhorn's comment exemplifies a traditional notion both of dream-poetry and the figuration of the unconscious in literature. His reading of dream as a literary device assumes the conscious control and authority (in a strict sense) of the writer. Thus the poet is held to have priority over the text, anticipating, authenticating and delimiting the process of writing and reading. In this way the poet can "rearrange reality", a rearrangement presupposing that reality is "in" the text, and that the poet is outside this reality, strategically employing it for aesthetic effect. Here reality is something easily manipulated, something a writer and a text is "beyond"; you can take or leave reality, move in and out of it when you choose. This view also implies that writer and reader remain distanced and uninvolved in the work of a text, moving unproblematically inside and outside its "world". The "strange actions" of the text, which take place under the description *of* and are excused as a "dream", are taken to be a direct result of the poet's deliberate intent.

The issues raised by Weidhorn's rationale for literary dreams will be a recurrent concern in this study. Do poetic dreams, in their

figuration and theorisation, offer private, pleasurable escape or do they constitute a problematic engagement with the "world", with radical implications for questions of identity and representation? To raise the question of literary texts and dreams is to confront the work of desire in reading and writing, work radically unmanageable and intangible in comparison to conventional notions of literary metaphor. Desire is that which disrupts, transforms, exceeds the control of any conscious writing or reading endeavour. It is a non-presence that functions as a generative absence and a necessary supplement of writing.

A survey of dream-theories across different historical periods is necessarily somewhat sweeping, but several main features can be established. Dream-theories, up to and including Freud, engage with similar and recurrent questions: are dreams a matter of body or mind, private or social, and are they meaningful or meaningless? Ancient dream-theories concentrate on the heuristic and mantic nature of dreams. Dreams, whether emanating from the individual subject or bestowed by divine intervention, prophesy future events, relive the distant past and grant moral or religious insights. In The Epic of Gilgamesh, Enkidu's oneiric descent into the underworld produces radical social and political reversals and transgressions:

I entered the house of dust and I saw the kings of the earth, their crowns put away for ever; rulers and princes, all those who once wore kingly crowns and ruled the world in the days of old. They who had stood in the place of the gods, like Anu and Enlil, stood now like servants to fetch baked meats in the house of dust to carry cooked meat and cold water from the water-skin.<sup>67</sup>

Artemidorus of Daldis, one of the earliest and most notable dream-interpretors, stresses that dream-analyses depend upon the rank of the dreamer.<sup>67</sup> This hierarchical structure situates not only the act of

interpretation but also the process of dreaming in the realm of the social and the representational. As Freud acknowledges in an extensive footnote in The Interpretation of Dreams, Artemidorus was keenly attentive to punning and verbal play in dreams: Freud cites in particular Artemidorus's translation of Alexander's "satyr" dream (TID 173n). Callimachus treats the dream as private phenomenon, but still links it with representation, explicitly identifying the dream-state with the artistic experience and equating the mystery of artistic creativity with the mystery of dreaming.<sup>(9)</sup>

In the medieval period, dreams are subject to elaborate classification, and the medieval dream-poem becomes a convention.<sup>(9)</sup> In medieval thought, sleep liberates irrational thought-processes but also co-operates with rational day-thought. A.C. Spearing emphasises that dream-poems are not direct expressions of the unconscious but do employ the "methods" of dreams. Langland's Piers Plowman, for example, presents a world of dreams that is "a wilderness at times, a world in which everything is slippery and problematic, nothing is what it seems, and rational analysis is defeated". In Langland's text, allegorical figures are interchangeable, and concepts can become places and people.<sup>(10)</sup> Kathryn Lynch comments that the liminal status of medieval dream-visions raise "ontological" questions about the interpenetration of flesh and spirit and the margins of social organisation. Importantly, also, the function of the dream-poem is to demand a complex process of interpretation. The dream-poem does not derive its "ambiguous power" from subjective fancy or purely conscious intent:

Even when divinely inspired, the imagination was a kind of prerational realm of consciousness, and as such, its vision was suggestive rather than conclusive, chaotic

rather than controlled.<sup>(11)</sup>

In the early modern period, the debate on the source and nature of dreams is more clearly structured around dreams as idle, escapist fantasy and serious intent. For Ben Jonson, dream provides intellectual and emotional release from daily anxieties and rationality:

Phant'sie is the healthy imagination - a product of  
'bloud, and naught of flane' - unchecked by reason and  
best known to us in dreams, during which it frees us from  
the preoccupations of the day.<sup>(12)</sup>

Conversely, Cowley employs a dream dialogue to bring political theories into conflict in A discourse by way of vision, concerning the Government of Oliver Cromwell.<sup>(13)</sup> Here dream embodies not an escape from but a thoroughgoing engagement with issues in the "real" day-world. Jonson sees dreams as a necessary and pleasurable escape from daytime "reality"; Cowley uses dream as a literary device to frame a political discussion without acknowledging the fundamental difference of dream-thought to waking thought. These conceptions of dream as a psychic phenomenon and a literary device appear totally distinct: dreams either retreat from or confront the day-world. Yet Jonson's notion of dream as wish-fulfillment and Cowley's implication that dream can be an ideological battleground need not be mutually exclusive nor oversimplistic. Dream-material consists of unconscious wishes, day-residues and structures of thought that are necessarily ideological. Weidhorn suggests that Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress, with its various narrative perspectives, unfixed subject positions and multiplicity of abstract and composite figures may resemble most closely the modern understanding of dream-work.<sup>(14)</sup>



Romantic engagements with dream tend to reinforce ideas of poetry as day-dreaming (in which, of course, the unconscious still manifests itself) and an occasion for fantasy. Keats terms poetry "a vast region to wander in", a medium for day-dream (Chapter Three conducts a more extensive consideration of this phrase). Dreams are a source of fascination and "creative" potential for Romantic literature, a fascination that had been growing throughout the previous century.<sup>(15)</sup> The poetic dream represents a vehicle for "unleashing" the imagination, a recourse to "deeper" psychic levels. Dreams function ambivalently in Romantic poetry, provoking both terror and pleasure. (De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium-Eater<sup>(16)</sup> is a notable example.) The Romantic poetic dream tends towards subjective fancy and escape while searching for a vatic, trance-like state that invokes an unbidden source of inspiration and meaning. This implies two different conceptions of phantasy in poetry, a tension between the poetic dream as a product of conscious design and unconscious determination. Towards the end of his short career, Keats comes to question his early conception of the poet as day-dreamer. Though the poet enters a dream-world to confront Moneta in The Fall of Hyperion, the text concludes: "The poet and the dreamer are distinct, / Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes".<sup>(17)</sup>

Charles Lamb also articulates this tension between the poetic dream as pleasurable but conscious phantasy, and as the site of overdetermined drives and structures of desire that constitute psychoanalytic definitions of phantasy:

...the true poet dreams being awake. He is not possessed by his subject but has dominion over it...where he seems most to recede from humanity, he will be found the truest to it.<sup>(18)</sup>

Lamb perceives the poet as having "dominion" over her/his dream "subject", and the dream appears to be a literary device. Nonetheless, it is the phrase "where he seems most to recede from humanity" which suggests that perhaps Lamb regards the dream of which he speaks as more than a formal device. A psychic area furthest from "humanity" or conscious experience is precisely where the unconscious operates; the unconscious remains radically distinct from consciousness, and "possesses" the day-world in strange and disruptive ways. The aesthetic recession from humanity means that the poet cannot exercise total control over a "waking dream". The Victorian period manifests this uncertain relationship between dream as a literary device and as an autonomous psychic act. Much of the poetry remains dream-heavy, indolent, yet the strategic textual "deployment" of the unconscious produces unsettling and ambiguous effects within poetic discourse. Bernard Richards remarks that Tennyson's work is a prime example of "the mysterious and even anti-social origins of poetry in madness, dream and reverie".<sup>(19)</sup> It is as if Victorian poetry longs to "sleep", yet fears a loss of "control".

Freud's study of dream-work at the turn of the century, and subsequent revisions of his theories of the unconscious, bring the processes of dreaming and poetry into more systematic relation. During this period psychoanalysis heavily influences conceptualisations of reading and writing; indeed, Freud stresses the "poetic" character of psychoanalytic theory and interpretation. Robert Young outlines how Jacques Lacan's revisionist return to Freud continues this poeticisation of psychoanalysis, shifting it "from a seemingly self-referential body of technical knowledge into a metaphoricity of language".<sup>(20)</sup> This study

concentrates mainly on poetic texts post-1850, implying a certain historical conjuncture between poetry and psychoanalysis, but in the wake of Freud it is possible to read *before* and *after* Freud. Psychoanalysis, after all, necessitates different readings of history. One famous Romantic text, Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale', is examined since it anticipates the problematic of the thesis: how to think about dreams in poetry, and how to think the unconscious in terms of language, history, the subject and the body. The thesis follows through the two "poles" marked out in the brief history of dream-theories and literature, concentrating on the textual "dream" both as intrasubjective and intersubjective, a distinction that is seen to be contaminated and dissolved in the work of poetry. First it is necessary to examine more closely the relationship between dreams and language, particularly poetry.

### Poetry and the Unconscious

Several "commonsense" points can be made immediately about the differences between dreams and poetry. A recounted dream represented in speech or writing has undergone various stages of transformation and revision, subject to the demands of different modes of articulation. There is no dreamer "behind" the poem - either writer or reader - whose total mental existence can be adduced to freely associate, filling in the gaps and assisting the analysis of the text. Even if a poem appears to identify the sources of dream material as part of its own "making" (such as Robert Frost's 'After Apple-Picking' in Chapter Two), the work of that poetic text is irreducibly different. Equally, how can a textual

"dream" be attributed to an author, character or reader? No poetic text functions as a result of "individual" desire. Yet such objections do not resolve several important issues, namely those of interpretation and communication. Firstly, does literary interpretation read a text more "finally" and completely than psychoanalysis reads a dream? Literary analysis might be said to be strictly interminable: there are always other readings, and like a dream, a poem remains "excessive to its translatability into language".<sup>(21)</sup> Secondly, is it possible to argue convincingly that dreams do not communicate and poems do? Dreams and poems are not identical but share similar (dis)figurative poetics that draw to the point of fragmentation and breakdown. Like a dream, a poem simultaneously articulates and deforms meaning, remaining ineluctably other to itself.

At one stage Freud is tempted to identify language not only as the primary interpretive medium for dreams but also as constituting the materiality and structuring force of dreams: "Language, in its unrivalled wisdom, long ago decided the question of the essential nature of dreams.." (AL 136). He focusses on the dream-work, which "speaks" the language of desire. Dream-work represents the forms taken by desire; the mechanisms of dream-work operate through a "multiplicity of conceptual relations" (SE VIII 172) and verbal devices. John Forrester points out that Freud does not distinguish between linguistic and thought mechanisms, and that his discussion of "trains of thought" always suggest verbal chains possessing a grammar and certain linguistic properties like ambiguity:

The processes he conceived of as specific to the dream-work - condensation, displacement - have close affinities with strictly linguistic devices (metaphor, metonymy,

tropes etc),<sup>(22)</sup>

Such affinities lead Lacan to state that "the unconscious is structured like a language" (FFC 20). The emphasis must be placed on "like" in Lacan's assertion; the unconscious can only be read as discourse in terms of affinities and analogies, since there remain differences between the discourse of the unconscious and other "day-world" discourses, as will be seen later. Yet the insistence of desire in all registers of discourse means that the dream-work bears important implications for the interpretation and analysis of poetry. Lacan stresses that from its opening reference to the dream as a rebus, The Interpretation of Dreams is a thoroughly linguistic project, "the proportion of analysis of language increasing to the extent that the unconscious is directly concerned" (E 159). The dream has the structure of a form of writing, and, for Lacan, the elaboration of the dream can be read in terms of various categories of rhetoric.<sup>(23)</sup>

Condensation, displacement, indirect representation and secondary revision are the chief mechanisms of dream-work identified by Freud in The Interpretation of Dreams. Condensation, the first achievement of dream-work, involves the creation of composite structures and figures within the manifest dream, which "has a smaller content than the latent one, and is thus an abbreviation of it" (ILP 205). It is brought about either by the total omission of latent elements, by fragments of the latent dream being allowed to pass into the manifest dream, or by linked latent elements "being combined and fused into a single unity in the manifest dream" (ILP 205). Condensation provides a means of connecting disparate dream-thoughts, ensuring that as little as possible of the latent dream is omitted. This involves "overdetermination", a method for

"representing in a single piece of content thoughts and wishes which are often widely divergent in their nature" (TID 470). Condensation is characterized by the multiple use of similar material, verbal puns and focus on similar sounds, a process equated with rhyming and poetry by Freud (SE V 650). The dream-work seeks out an ambiguous word to condense two different thoughts:

The most convenient way of bringing together two dream-thoughts which, to start with, have nothing in common, is to alter the verbal form of one of them, and thus bring it half-way to meet the other, which may be similarly clothed in a new form of words. (SE V 650)

The process of condensation also disrupts the distinction between word-as-symbol and word as actual sound. Words are treated and combined as though they were things in the manifest dream. The work of condensation depends upon ambiguity and multiple meanings, which assist dreams in remaining inaccessible and uninterpreted. This renders it impossible to interpret a dream completely:

Even if the solution seems satisfactory and without gaps, the possibility always remains that the dream may have yet another meaning. Strictly speaking, then, it is impossible to determine the amount of condensation. (TID 383)

The process of displacement forms an "essential portion" (TID 417) of the dream-work and, in Freud's words, "might equally be described (in Nietzsche's phrase) as a 'transvaluation of psychological values'" (SE V 655). A dream has to evade censorship in order to satisfy the dream-wish, hence the "displacement of psychological intensities to the point of a transvaluation of all psychological values" (TID 650). In dream displacement, a psychological force strips elements of high psychological value of their intensity and creates new values from elements of lower psychological value. The most intense elements of psychological value are

prevented from entering the dream-content by dream-censorship. The intensity of a thought or idea passes to another idea, with little apparent relation to the original psychical element:

...in the course of the dream-work the psychical intensity passes over from the thoughts and ideas to which it properly belongs on to others which in our judgement have no claim to any such emphasis. (SE V 654)

Displacement achieves the necessary distortion to permit the latent, unmodified dream-thoughts to pass over into the manifest dream. As a result of this displacement the dream "appears differently centred and strange" (ILP 208) and "the difference between the text of the dream-content and that of the dream-thoughts comes about" (TID 417). The manifest dream thus gives only a distorted version of the dream-wish which exists in the unconscious. Dream-displacement sets itself free from this restriction:

...the dream-censorship only gains its end if it succeeds in making it impossible to find the path back from the allusion to the genuine thing. (ILP 209)

**Considerations of Representability**, or the transformation of thoughts into visual images, is described by Freud as "psychologically the most interesting" achievement of the dream-work (ILP 209). This process "results in a colourless and abstract expression in the dream-thoughts being exchanged for a pictorial and concrete one" (TID 455). The unconscious "speaks" through thing-presentation, employing a mode of iconic expression. Freud conceives the transformation of thoughts into visual images as resembling a shift from alphabetic writing to picture-writing: "the dream-work reduces the content of the dream-thoughts to its raw material of objects and activities" (ILP 211). This process of representation observes no logical or syntactical relations: contraries

are treated as conformities. Such displacement assists the work of condensation, increasing the ambiguity and multiplicity of words which convey the dream-thoughts, a process equated with "the whole domain of verbal wit" (TID 456). Representations also employ symbols derived from a variety of cultural sources. These symbols in dreams can facilitate and obscure interpretation, and their ambiguity again links with overdetermination. Most symbols are conventional and recurrent, but are not merely subject to decoding by a given, rigid interpretive key: "as with Chinese script, the correct interpretation should be arrived at on each occasion from the context" (TID 470).<sup><24></sup>

**Secondary Revision**, the final distorting activity of the dream-work, acts as both censor and editor of the dream. Secondary revision can operate in the course of the dream itself, the censorship working "in a conducive and selective sense upon the mass of material present in the dream-thoughts" (TID 641). Equally, the revision process operates when the dream is presented in a verbal or written account. The revision is responsible for interpolations and additions to the dream-work and is not simply a censoring agency which limits and omits portions of the dream-work. Secondary revision makes something coherent and intelligible from the dream-work; under its operation, the dream loses its appearance of absurdity and disconnectedness, approximating "to the model of an intelligible experience" (TID 630). This ordering of irrational dream-material by the conscious mind actually contributes to the work of the three other distorting mechanisms. Interpretation is thus another disordering transformation.

Freud stresses the importance and interrelatedness of the mechanisms of condensation and displacement:



Dream-displacement and dream-condensation are the two governing factors to whose activity we may in essence ascribe the form assumed in dreams, (TID 417)

Following Jakobson's identification of similarity and contiguity as the fundamental poles of language, Lacan relates metaphor and metonymy to condensation and displacement. Freud makes no distinction between associative links dependent on similarity (or likeness) and those dependent on proximity (or contiguity). Lacan reworks Freud's description in order to confine condensation to "metaphoric shifts of association (based on similarity) and displacement to metonymic ones (based on contiguity".<sup>(25)</sup> Condensation, in particular, is the mechanism "connatural with poetry" (E 160). (See Chapter Two for a more extensive discussion of metaphor in relation to poetry and dream.) Malcolm Bowie comments that literature, in offering a plenitude of meaning, betrays its debt to the unconscious:

Its ambiguities, its nodal points and knotted structures, are no more than local instances of what language at large inveterately supplies; and condensation, disguise and displacement go on relentlessly within the unconscious mind, irrespective of the cues and inducements that language may offer.<sup>(26)</sup>

Poetry in particular "offers the psychoanalyst a working model of the unconscious considered as an unstoppable and self-pluralizing signifying chain".<sup>(27)</sup> Lacan argues that unconscious discourse, like poetry, is polyphonous, in contradistinction to Saussurean models of linearity in the chain of discourse (E 154).

The other aspects of dream-work raise further questions about the relation of dreams and poetry. Considerations of representability bring in issues of social and historical influences on the unconscious, while secondary revision relates directly to questions of reading. Freud

emphasises that the unconscious employs a "particular symbolism" in dreams:

...this symbolism partly varies from individual to individual; but partly it is laid down in a typical form and seems to coincide with the symbolism which, as we suspect, underlies our myths and fairy tales, (SE XI 36)

A dream can be individual and intersubjective; it has a particular meaning for the dreamer but it is also conveyed through a shared system of representation, a vocabulary of symbols. Dream-symbolism derives from a wide range of cultural sources: "There can be no doubt that the connections between our typical dreams and fairy tales and the material of other kinds of creative writing are neither few nor accidental" (TID 345). Therefore, considerations of representation in the dream-work mean that the dream is only ever relatively "private". Terry Eagleton compares secondary revision with literary criticism which orders, makes coherent and explains the text under examination, briskly resolving ambiguities, questions and irregularities so that the text may be consumed by readers.<sup>(28)</sup> In a sense, secondary revision disorders and renders incoherent, and Elizabeth Wright emphasises its distorting and foreclosing capabilities whether this mechanism is encountered in the work of dreams or literary texts:

Secondary revision shows that it is a danger for all systematic thinking to ignore elements that do not fit into a desired pattern. Reading shares this danger with the reporting of a dream,<sup>(29)</sup>

Considerations of representation and secondary revision are elements of the dream-work closer to the wish-fulfilling functions of phantasies and day-dreams. These portions of the dream-work are closer to conventional notions of aesthetic production, yet it is the primary mechanisms of the

dream-work - condensation and displacement - that are more thoroughly *poetic*.

In linking dream-work to poetry, the emphasis is on analogy rather than homology, similarity rather than identity. Freud attempts to establish a direct link between dreaming and literature in 'Creative Writers and Daydreaming'. The artist resembles the child at play: "He (sic) creates a world of phantasy which he takes very seriously - that is, which he invests with large amounts of emotion - while separating it sharply from reality". (AL 132) This childhood play (*spiel*) transforms into adult phantasy but the playful activity remains, since the yield of pleasure gained from play is never renounced, merely replaced by a substitute or surrogate form of pleasure. Thus the adult "builds castles in the air and creates what are called *day-dreams*" (AL 133). Freud charts a clear continuity between night and day-dreams: both are phantasies whose motive forces are unsatisfied wishes ("wish" can be translated here as desire). Day-dreams are wishfulfilments like night-dreams, the only separating factor being dream-distortion (AL 136). As Lacan comments, the "efficacy of the unconscious does not cease in the waking state" (E 163). Unconscious desire takes different forms in, but is common to night-dreams, daydreams and art, its voice "low" but "indestructible" (FFC 255). Thus Freud is justified in claiming that the imaginative writer is comparable to "the 'dreamer in broad daylight'" (AL 137). The artist makes the egoistic phantasies of day-dreams more socially acceptable, and overcomes the "feeling of repulsion" in others, by a process of dilution and transformation:

The writer softens the character of his egoistic day-dreams by altering and disguising it, and he bribes us by the purely formal - that is, aesthetic - yield of pleasure which he offers us in his phantasies. We give

the name *incentive bonus* or *fore-pleasure* to a yield of pleasure such as this, which is offered to us so as to make possible the release of still greater pleasure arising from deeper psychical sources. (AL 141)

The writer offers initial pleasure in the play of language, and greater pleasure derives from the work's content. Freud thus addresses the question of the pleasure of the text, but his reductive schema proposes the normative view of poetry as liberating and escapist "idle fancy" criticized earlier.

Lacan deploys structural linguistics to conceptualise unconscious discourse in a more rigorous strategy aimed at bringing the unconscious and the field of representation into stricter relation. Yet in his critique of Lacan's use of Jakobson, Jean-Francois Lyotard argues that metaphor and metonymy in regard to dream-work must themselves be understood "metaphorically"; equally, Lacan's theory of metaphor is "a theory of the metaphor of the subject".<sup>(30)</sup> The "work" of desire cannot be assimilated to the constraints of discourse: each of the operations of dream-work elaborated by Freud "is conducted according to rules which are in direct opposition to those governing discourse" (3). Thus, for Lyotard, Lacan's attempt to read dream-work according to strict linguistic models is flawed: the "'language' of the dream seems to be nothing more nor less than the language of art" (22). Lacan's theorisation of the language of desire remains "poetic".

Conversely, Antony Easthope uses discourse as the means of distinguishing dreams and poems. He points out that phantasy, as it moves from unconscious discourse to poetic discourse, loses its relatively "narcissistic" quality and necessarily takes on "a social feature denied to it in dreams".<sup>(31)</sup> In poetry, phantasy becomes

publicly available, intersubjective. Subject to the obligations of oral and textual discourse, "*phantasy in poetry is always already socialised* compared to the relatively private phantasies experienced in dreams".<sup>(32)</sup> Elsewhere Easthope contends that, unlike dreams, poems are "necessarily committed to significance in a temporal dimension and so to syntagmatic relations".<sup>(33)</sup> Several points can be taken up here. There are discursive dissimilarities between dreams and poetry: dreams are subject to greater distortion and illegibility, while day-dreams partake of inner discourse.<sup>(34)</sup> Desire in dream-work does not conform to the laws of "day-world" discourse, and Lacan's "oneiric discourse" might be better understood in figurative terms. Yet just because dream-work cannot be accommodated within the rules of discourse, it does not follow that desire does not "work" in poetry in a similar manner to that in which it works in dreams. To contend that the unconscious is not actually a language does not mean that its effects, however faint or strange, cannot be discerned *in* discourse. Desire simultaneously recognizes and transgresses the law of the signifier, and does not obey the "obligations" of the order of representation. The unconscious "speaks" in the sense that its imprint and performativity may be understood as an absent presence that insists in discourse, eluding "final" analysis. Desire works on dream-texts and poetic texts in a violently disfigurative manner, as Lyotard articulates:

Desire does not manipulate an intelligible text in order to disguise it; it does not let the text get in, forestalls it, inhabits it, and we never have anything but a worked-over text.,<sup>(35)</sup>

Easthope's careful qualification that phantasy in dreams is only "relatively" private invokes the contentious debate surrounding the

sociality of dreams and the unconscious that is dealt with below. It is the nature of poetry's "obligations", coherence and its "temporal dimension" that are at issue. Any projected homology between dreams and poems must confront questions of "communication" and socialisation. Freud stresses constantly the irreducible difference between unconscious and conscious thought:

The dream-work is not simply more careless, more irrational, more forgetful and more incomplete than waking thought; it is completely different from it qualitatively and for that reason not immediately comparable with it. It does not think, calculate or judge in any way at all; it restricts itself to giving things a new form. (TID 650)

Dreams are not intended for communication to or interpretation by another agency: "A dream does not want to say anything to anyone. It is not a vehicle for communication; on the contrary, it is meant to remain understood (sic)" (ILP 270). Freud also casts light on the "social" aspect of dreams in his comparison of dreams and jokes. Although identifying similarities - condensation, displacement and indirect representation - between the mechanisms of dreams and jokes, Freud draws a major distinction between the two activities. A joke

is the most social of all the mental functions that aim at a yield of pleasure. It often calls for three persons and its completion requires the participation of someone else in the mental process it starts. (SE VIII p.179)

Jokes also "retain the precondition of intelligibility" (ILP p.208). On the other hand, a dream has no need to communicate itself or to prove intelligible: "it is a completely asocial mental product..it must actually avoid being understood, for otherwise it would be destroyed; it can only exist in masquerade" (SE VIII 179).

Freud makes explicit the shared, social aspect of jokes, in that they depend upon a network of social relations for their operation. For example, a tendentious joke requires three people for its functioning: a teller, an object of "hostile or sexual aggressiveness" (SE VIII 100) and a third person (analogous to a reader or an audience) in whom pleasure is produced. Each joke needs a "a public of its own" (SE VIII 151) in order to release inhibitions and gain pleasure. Tendentious jokes "exhibit the main characteristic of the joke-work - that of liberating pleasure by getting rid of inhibitions" (SE VIII p.134). These inhibitions, although taking a particular form in the individual subject, derive from social sanction and censorship, but tendentious jokes relieve repression by lifting inhibition temporarily, subverting society's repressive activity. A tendentious joke's intention is both public and private, "psychic" and "ideological", acting at once as a safety valve to relieve the demands of the unconscious and as a potential challenge to group unity, undermining or rejecting social restraints. Unlike a dream, a joke bears the traces of unconscious processes and generates social meanings.

Employing puns and allusions, ambiguities and shifts of context, joke-work operates at the level of textual play; jokes "insist on maintaining play with words or with nonsense unaltered" (SE VIII 172). Jerry Aline Fliieger argues that this "double-dealing" aspect (SE VIII 155) links the poet and the joker; both profit "from a double vision in order to play creative games with double talk, deploying the layers of meaning that resonate both in pun and in metaphor." (35) As Samuel Weber observes, however, the "developed play" (SE VIII 179) of joke-work is not in the service of "pure" pleasure. Weber demonstrates how Freud's

work on jokes comes to acknowledge that there is no wholly "free" play in the unconscious. Freud initially contends that the essential structure of the joke lies in its verbal or conceptual form. Adult jokes are an attempt to retain the childish pleasure of pure play, "intrinsically independent of the constraints of meaning and its logic".<sup>(37)</sup> Yet he goes on to argue that a good joke depends upon an impure form or play and pleasure: a joke must consist of playfulness and an appeal to reason. In Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious, Freud's description of play - involving a conception of economy or saving (*Ersparung*), a reduction of psychic energy - contradicts the conception of pleasure outlined in The Interpretation of Dreams: here pleasure, the *Lustprinzip*, "is conflictual in nature...a relation of forces, a state of tension".<sup>(38)</sup> This might equally characterise the "impure" form and the conflictual forces of the dream-work. Extrapolating this onto literature, it is clear that such a notion of pleasure would not support the idea of the pleasure of text as deriving from a play of genuinely "pure" textuality or from the ideal metaphoricality of writing.

Freud emphasises that dreams are not impervious to culture or society; indeed, they come into conflict with social constraints and inhibitions. In this way, dream-work resembles joke-work. Moreover, in comparing secondary revision to political censorship, Freud foregrounds the problematic issue of ideology and the unconscious. Francesco Orlando links ideology, poetry and the unconscious in contending that "literature or poetry is the seat of a socially institutionalized return of the repressed".<sup>(39)</sup> He argues that the predominance of the letter or



signifier characterizes the operation of the unconscious, dreams, jokes and poetic language:

...who could fail to notice that the predominance of the letter, the dominance of the verbal signifier, though now controlled by the conscious ego, equally decisively characterizes poetic language? (6-7)

Orlando problematically assumes that the conscious ego controls the work of the signifier, an assumption that as will be seen below, underpins ego-psychological approaches to literature. Orlando argues that literature postulates an addressee and thus poetry, even lyric poetry, possesses a "minimum of self-sufficiency lacked by the semiotic manifestations of the unconscious" (130). For Orlando, the communicative capacity of poetry separates it from the "language" of the unconscious: to rehearse the earlier debate, poetry is discourse, dream-work is not.

In Writing Degree Zero, Roland Barthes rejects the conceptualisation of modern poetry as social or functional communication. Barthes draws a distinction between "classical" poetry, which makes a "gesture of intellection, that is, of communication", and modern poetry, which "destroys the spontaneously functional nature of language, and leaves standing only its lexical basis".<sup>(40)</sup> Fixed connections between words are abolished, and the consumer of poetry faces a poetic word that is "an act without immediate past, without environment": "The Word is no longer guided *in advance* by the general intention of a socialized discourse" (58). Modern poetry has

destroyed relationships in language and reduced discourse to words as static things. Modern poetry is a poetry of the object. In it, Nature becomes a fragmented space, made of objects solitary and terrible, because the links between them are only potential. (59)

In this fragmentary space a strange, unassuageable hunger roams, making poetic speech "terrible and inhuman":

It initiates a discourse full of gaps and full of lights,  
filled with absences and overnourishing signs, without  
foresight or stability of intention, opposed to the social  
function of language. (58)

This desocialization of poetic language renders it "hardly possible to speak of poetic writing, for this is a language in which a violent drive toward autonomy destroys any ethical scope". Barthes stresses that "there is no humanism of modern poetry" and, beyond the spiritual and social, modern poetry thus approaches "the splendour and freshness of dream language" (60). For Barthes, modern poetry foregrounds the materiality of language, of words-as-things, which recalls the form of picture-writing deployed in the dream-work. Treating words as objects, foregrounding its language as a play of absence and presence and refusing the social, the textuality of modern poetry is "truest" to the language of dreams.

Although this characterisation of an hermetic "poetry of the object" does not resolve the social/ psyche impasse, the idea of the psyche as a writing-machine haunts Freud, as Jacques Derrida points out.<sup>(41)</sup> The "terrible and inhuman" voice of poetry raises the spectre of a textual machine that returns throughout this thesis, a machine that moves to efface the forms of history, social life and the "natural" body that modern poetry, in Barthes's account, can sidestep. By comparing the work of poetry with dream language, however, Barthes necessarily raises the question of desire, which involves a conflictual relation between body, psyche and the "external" world. There appears to be no place for a desiring subject in this poetic language that resembles dreams; yet, as Robert Young stresses, if desire "is the desire of the Other, this means that desire is a social phenomenon".<sup>(42)</sup> Nonetheless, in

interrogating the definition of poetry as functional "communication" or socialised discourse through analysis of its textuality, Barthes's work is highly significant in this discussion. Poetic language offers plenitude and lack (the structure of desire), and its meaning is not constituted or decidable in advance: it is "without foresight or stability of intention". In the light of Derrida's conception of the "poematic", it might rather be proposed that poetry (and dream-work) figures a strange telepathic foresight, bringing the "reader" into being. The "poematic" also offers a way in which disruptive textual effects of poetry can be brought into relation with the social.

Orlando presumes an uninterrupted chain of communication in the poetic event, with two material subjects - speaker/listener, author (or text)/reader, poet/audience - constituted before the act of communication takes place. Yet the nature of poetry's addressee and its mode of communication must be questioned in terms of Derrida's reconfiguring of the structure of address. In his work on telepathy, Derrida posits an addressee who does not exist *in advance* of a text. The risk of the postal system is that letters (and poems) may go astray or never reach their destination. In 'Che Cos'è la poesia', Derrida's notion of the poematic refutes Orlando's empiricist designation of poetic communication. The "poematic experience" disrupts experience and subjectivity, constituting and deconstructing the subject in its "call" to an anonymous, unspecified addressee. Derrida avoids terms like author and poet, instead concentrating on "you", "I" and "other". As Timothy Clark points out, "[t]he movement of poetic communication, or rather experience, cannot be mapped onto a familiar tripartite division of sender, a relay and a receiver"; the poem brings "what it relates into

being by force of its own event".<sup>(43)</sup> Derrida conceives of the poetic as a singular apostrophe:

..someone writes *you*, to you, of you, on you. No, rather a mark addressed to you, left and confided with you, is accompanied by an injunction, in truth it is instituted in this very order, which, in its turn, constitutes you, assigning your origin or giving rise to you..<sup>(44)</sup>

In the poetic structure of address, the authority, destination and desire of a text is ineluctably bound up with the indeterminacy of its addressee. The poetic event is a two-way process, constituting and being constituted by its addressee:

The poetic is the chance of an event of interruption whose arrival constitutes its receiver, even as it simultaneously institutes itself and is contaminated, risking effacement, by the force of this reception,<sup>(45)</sup>

The poetic is an address "singularly to you"<sup>(46)</sup>, a vocative "you" that may even be self-communing.<sup>(47)</sup> This "inward turn" is not an asocial or ahistorical gesture, however; the poem is "obliged to address itself to someone", a subject intimate and anonymous, public and private.<sup>(48)</sup> Thus the poem is entrusted, in complex fashion, to the thoroughfares of language. (See Chapter Three for a more extensive consideration of the poematic.)

This reflects on Freud's assertion that a dream "does not want to say anything to anyone. It is not a vehicle for communication". By "communication" Freud appears to be denoting an exchange between two empirical subjects; dreams do not make constative statements, do not intend to say anything directly and do not establish a recipient in advance. Yet Freud is impelled to read dreams, an attraction or injunction that he points out is common throughout the recorded history of oneiro-criticism. If Derrida's notion of the poematic is applied,

neither dreams nor poems are securely or decidably destined to anyone. A dream is a psychic event, a form of enunciation that is not purely private or abstract, and which, in a sense, calls "you" into being, whether "you" may be the dream-interpretor or the subject who dreams. A dream comes from the other, the "other" place of the dream-work that figures the "other" of desire. For Derrida, the poetic also comes from the other, yet this other is near and distant, singular and multiple, an other that is irreducibly part of the "I" and "you" that make up the poetic event. Desire is elsewhere in the work of a dream or a poem, but comes into complex relation to "you", "I" and "other" in either instance: it implicates "dreamer" and "interpreter", "author" and "reader". The dream, like the poem, makes an appeal to the "I", "you" and "other" that categorize the subjects of desire, an appeal that simultaneously disturbs precisely such distinctions or categories.

The structure of address, and its inextricable connection with alterity, challenges the distinctions between public and private and brings poetry and the unconscious into a different relation to the social. Despite Freud's insistence on their associability and impenetrability, dreams take place in historical time in a network of social relations. Elizabeth Wright sees psychoanalysis as exploring "what happens when primordial desire gets directed into social goals, when bodily needs become subject to the mould of culture".<sup>(49)</sup> For Wright, dreams exemplify this clash of social and individual, "natural" and cultural:

Dreams, par excellence, reveal themselves to be boundary phenomena, in that they occur where intentions are in opposition, where bodily desires have to come to terms with society.<sup>(50)</sup>

The question of the unconscious in reading and writing is a matter of relations: social, familial and sexual relations, and the relationship between public and private bodies. The distinctions between public and private, collective and individual, desire and repression, body and culture remain relative and provisional, shifting points of difference. The next section returns to the question of the subject of desire, considering whose desire or unconscious can be said to "insist" in a poetic text.

### The Desire of a Text

Does a text fulfil a wish and whose desire is at stake in the reading of poetry: the desire of an author, a reader or a culture? One could say, paradoxically, all and none of these. Thinking the unconscious is problematic precisely because analysis encounters the unconscious as a concept that is unfixed, resists clear demarcation, eludes easy description and might be strictly characterised as unthinkable. According to Freud, "a dream is a (disguised) fulfillment of a (suppressed or repressed) wish" (TID 244) and he foregrounds wish-fulfillment in his general aesthetic speculations. In his most notorious statement, he relates the artist to a neurotic who satisfies an infantile wish in a work of art,

an activity intended to allay ungratified wishes - in  
the first place in the creative artist himself and  
subsequently in his audience or spectators, (SE XIII 187)

This presupposes a direct link between an artist's life and her/his aesthetic products. The writer fulfils a wish in textual form, rather as dreams fulfil unconscious wishes. Underneath the manifest level of the

text a latent, true meaning can be recovered. The "neurotic" author and the wish-fulfilling text thus become subjects for analysis. As Lacan points out, Freud's analysis of dreams reveals that the "laws" of the unconscious are equally applicable to the "normal" and the "neurotic" subject (E 163). In spite of this, Freud's work on aesthetics displays a tendency either to privilege or pathologise the artist. Hence symptomatic and intentionalist readings predominate in traditional psychoanalytic readings of literary texts and dreams.

Ego-psychology proposes a theory of creativity that shifts the emphasis from the notion that art expresses a neurotic infantile wish seeking to find expression to the manner in which the ego's preconscious operations modify that unconscious wish. Simon Lesser exemplifies this approach: art, although an intricate interplay between "spontaneous" creativity and "cool critical reflection", remains a matter of selection and control in the service of the waking ego. Artists try to "tap" into the "surging energies responsible for the formation of dreams", but this is a one-way process since dreams are "autistic" while "the artist is governed by the desire to communicate".<sup>(51)</sup> While Lesser's work is predominantly focused on fiction, Ernst Kris engages with the relation of dream and poetry:

The language of the dream, which is in force when we are asleep, becomes a tool of the creator. The trance or reverie in which it emerges has the capability of most efficient communication. What in the dream impresses us as "overdetermination" becomes the potential of the artwork.<sup>(52)</sup>

Aesthetic ambiguity is equated with overdetermination in the dream-work, an ambiguity particularly relevant to poetry. Kris suggests that a multiplicity of association acquires acute significance in modern poetry:

...here complexity of words tends to be maximised, multiple meanings abound, and uncertainty of interpretation tends to prevail. There can be little doubt that in this <sup>the</sup> modern poet is more than accidentally akin to the dreamer, (483)

For example, Kris notes the "spread of associations" in T.S. Eliot's poetry. This argument grants pre-eminence to the ego, and privileges the artist's conscious control over his/her artwork. Once more the stress is on poetry's capacity for determinable and delimitable communication. Unconscious strategies and the energies of primary process are tamed and shaped by the poem's formal design. Selecting, ordering, making comprehensible, the artist conforms to certain conventions in order to produce an intelligible, acceptable text for public consumption, an undertaking similar to that of secondary revision.

For Kris, the "multiple meaning" of poetry "constitutes richness", and "the dichotomy between appropriate ambiguity and hidden precision..becomes an important criterion in the study of poetic language (483). This advances an instrumentalist conception of language, and places the artist unquestionably in control of the work, interpretive orthodoxies that underpin ego-psychological approaches to art. Such a concept of ambiguity fails to take account of unconscious strategies and operations, which remain dynamically opposed to conscious thought. The latent ambiguities of dreams and poems can be dismissed or foreclosed by the ego only by ignoring the disruptive and transgressive tendencies of the unconscious. If dream-work is taken to be a representative (dis)articulation of the primary process, it is inimical to conscious direction, coherence and logic. Both/and alternatives co-exist without contradiction in the dream-work, and syntactical discontinuities and fragmentation are accommodated. The idea of



"appropriate" ambiguity is revealing; in order to diminish the disruptive potential of desire, the scope and intensity of the text's ambiguity necessarily must be limited. Kris proposes a safe, acceptable version of ambiguity which is regarded as a plenitude of meanings constituted by associations within defined cultural limits. For the reader, the poem depends upon "standards of correspondence", "standards of intent" and "standards of coherence" - all conventional ideas of reader-competence.<sup>(53)</sup> The reader must not construct the "wrong" poem. Kris posits the ego as managing the subversive unbound energies of primary process towards coherence and publically shareable significance; yet textual form and meaning cannot be limited or foreclosed by the "ego".

The dynamic between formal intention and unconscious influences has remained a complex, central concern for traditional literary criticism.<sup>(54)</sup> Lionel Trilling takes his cue from Freud, who argues that dream-thoughts are represented symbolically rather than prosaically, "by means of similes and metaphors, in images resembling those of poetic speech" (SE V 659). Trilling asserts:

The Freudian psychology is the one which makes poetry indigenous to the very constitution of the mind. Indeed, the mind, as Freud sees it, is in the greater part of its tendency exactly a poetry-making organ.<sup>(55)</sup>

Psychoanalysis, especially in its examination of dream-work, is for Trilling a "science of tropes, of metaphor and its variants, synecdoche and metonymy" (61). Nonetheless, poetry is not equivalent to the working of the unconscious mind and the analogy between dream and poetry must remain limited: "between the unconscious mind and the finished poem there supervene the social intention and the formal control of the

conscious mind" (80). Presumably "social intention" refers to the artist's strategies and designs to make the text communicable and publicly acceptable. Trilling echoes Kris by privileging the artist's formal, conscious command of his/her material, drawing a precise distinction between art and neurosis, formal control and unconscious impulsion: "The poet is in command of his fantasy, while it is exactly the mark of the neurotic that he is possessed by his fantasy" (53).

Graham Hough follows Trilling's conventional approach to a large extent. Like dream, poetry operates through clusters of associations, compression, multivalence: the "shifting boundaries of the symbol" represent the major effect of the modernist poetic project. The poet operates on a level close to that of the dreamer: "The poet is working as the mind of man works at its deeper levels".<sup>(56)</sup> Hough hints at the distinction between conscious design and unconscious determination present in the "deeper levels" of the psyche:

The poet's dominion is more over his craft than his conception or his material; it reveals itself in the linguistic embodiment, in the work of expression and revision, in all that makes a poem, because it is a verbal construct, something different from an unwritten dream. It is true that a poem is not simply the record of eavesdropping on the unconscious... But the element of the dictated, the unmodifiable, the given (given perhaps by the individual consciousness, but perhaps by the unrecognised pressure of a culture or a genre) is always present. And of this the poet is not in command.<sup>(57)</sup>

This acknowledges, albeit in vague and untheorised terms, that both poet and day-dreamer find some points in their separate modes of discourse which resist conscious alteration or direction, touching on the work of desire and ideology. Nonetheless, in contrast to the symptomatic approach of classic psychoanalysis, the primacy of the artist and the text remains intact.

Classic psychoanalysis adopts a "nosographic" approach, treating texts as symptoms or secondary manifestations of the writer's neurosis. The text's effect is dependent upon an uncontrolled return of the repressed that overflows the author's "conscious" control. The nosographic approach either explores the author's psyche, or treats a literary character as a subject to be psychoanalysed. This "classic" approach commits two major errors: the psychobiographic method presumes an unmediated link between writer and text, and does not begin to consider the role of the reader, while the characterological approach treats a character as a "real" patient manifesting "real" symptoms. No text is an unmediated or transparent expression of a writer's personality, nor is it a psychic notebook or confession. Like dream-interpretation, which as Freud emphasises cannot offer a "final" reading of the dream, literary analysis cannot ever recover an "essential" meaning from a text. A character in a text cannot be subjected to real analysis; the first person singular "I" occupies a constructed subject position within a poetic text, an effect of language rather than the embodiment of presence. As has been shown above, the "I" cannot be reduced to a single, empirical subject. So, both psychobiographical and characterological critical methods are conceptually flawed, and a textual "dream" cannot be attributed in a conventional sense to a writer or a figure in a text.

The symptomatic psychoanalytic reading reduces the text to a reservoir of clues revealing latent material and primal wishes. Christian Metz points out that such a reading pays no attention to the influence of social effects or the ideological "imprint" upon a text. (59) In addressing questions of history and ideology, materialist

critiques have consistently drawn on psychoanalytic models or terminology, but can be equally schematic in reducing a text to the status of symptom. In both of these cases, the author or text or becomes a patient to be analysed with potentially therapeutic results.<sup>(59)</sup> The emphasis shifts the perspective from the individual subject to the social, a move from the "I am" to the "It is" that has increasingly characterized a variety of critical and theoretical approaches to the reading of literature.<sup>(60)</sup> This shift mirrors theoretical developments in psychoanalysis, particularly Lacan's return to Freud. According to Terry Eagleton, Freud offers "nothing less than a materialist theory of the making of the human subject".<sup>(61)</sup> This is a useful corrective to the tendencies of cultural theories like Marxism to elide the fact that psychoanalysis is a theoretical "articulation of the subject with the social".<sup>(62)</sup>

Yet several years earlier, in Eagleton's Criticism and Ideology psychoanalysis dematerialises into a convenient metaphor for reading power and social relations. He posits the dream as a process of production and the site of conflict between society and desire: "The dream, as distorted and mutilated text, is a conflict and compromise between unconscious material seeking expression, and the intervention of an ideological censor".<sup>(63)</sup> Here the dream is reduced to the meeting-point between an unspecified and unattributed wish and a prohibitive "ideological censor". This conception of "dream" effaces several elements central to dream-work for psychoanalysis: the body, the subject and the unbound energies of desire. Robert Young dismisses this deployment of the literary dream-text as "the oldest trick in the psychoanalytical critical book", still indebted after Lukacs to a theory

of reflection and provoking "a seemingly endless hunt for 'gaps' in literary texts which could be arbitrarily proclaimed their unconscious moment of ideological conflict".<sup>(64)</sup> Materialist "treatments" of the symptomatic text betray a therapeutic interpretive urge similar to that of classic psychoanalysis. The text is perceived as a patient, revealing an ideological condition in need of critical diagnosis and cure, a remedial impulse rejected by Frederic Jameson.<sup>(65)</sup> Young illustrates the problems of substituting a model of the psyche for that of the state:

..it is an untheorised transference; the psychoanalytic model is precisely about the incommensurability of the psyche's relation to the social, and therefore it makes no sense to apply that model to the social as such,<sup>(66)</sup>

Conversely, however, psychoanalysis has tended to colonise the social, taking up Freud's challenge at the end of Civilization and its Discontents to "embark upon a pathology of cultural communities" (CRS 339). Andre Green notes how psychoanalysis is ineluctably drawn to individual and social, "interior" and "exterior" conditions:

The task of psychoanalysis is paradoxical; in psychoanalytical practice it strives to examine as closely as possible the singularity of a single analysand; on the other hand the result of its research and the ensuing theory seem valid only if they define the most general, even the most universal, traits of the human condition,<sup>(67)</sup>

Similar to the "master/slave" dialectic between literature and psychoanalysis outlined by Felman, there is a contest between cultural theory and psychoanalysis to synthesise conceptualisations of the public and private, bodily and cultural subject.

Antony Easthope negotiates between historical materialism and psychoanalysis via a concept of *social phantasy* that regards the insistence of phantasy in poetic texts as an imbrication of ideological and unconscious meanings. Poetry produces unconscious and ideological

meanings differently but simultaneously, and the attempt "to discuss a poetic text only with attention to one side is reductive and inadequate".<sup>(38)</sup> Easthope reviews unsuccessful theoretical attempts to establish a theoretically coherent synthesis between historical materialism and psychoanalysis. He contends that we have no right to expect such a synthesis, not least because at any given historical moment, the "time" of the unconscious and ideology may be relatively autonomous and distinct:

..there is no need to suppose that the time of the unconscious coheres with the time of ideology; each must be recognised as acting transformatively in their own specific effectivity according to their own autonomy. (32)

Easthope adapts Saussure's metaphor describing the connection of signifier and signified as a model of the imbrication of ideological and unconscious phantasy:

- (a) what is analysable as ideology and as phantasy follow their own autonomy;
- (b) they are necessarily by nature distinct and incommensurate;
- (c) but in history they are always produced together and in simultaneity;
- (d) a change in one is simultaneous with and corresponds to a change in the other. (42)

Social phantasy affords a means of reading the unconscious in poetry as enmeshed in discourses and relations of power, and neither historical materialism nor psychoanalysis need efface each other as discourses. Yet, as has been seen, Easthope draws fairly clear distinctions between dreams and poems, and his analyses of phantasy are dependent on pathological categories, offering an insufficient articulation of the subject of phantasy or the subject of poetry.

The reductive searching for latent content that lies "behind" the surface of the work of art has dogged psychoanalytic investigations of

aesthetics. Lacan notes that in The Interpretation of Dreams Freud is not engaged in tracking down repressed infantile wishes. Freud stresses that dreams are constituted as superimposed layers of meaning (TID 312), ambiguous, multiply-determined and suggestive of many readings. The wishes that dreams fulfil are complex and ultimately irrecoverable in an analytic sense, thus defeating the quest for pristine latent meaning or truth in the dream. Instead Freud is concerned primarily with dream-work, the forms employed by the "language" of desire. When analysing dreams, his main interest lies in their construction and processes of figuration, and he shows little inclination to uncover a primal wish or an essential meaning in the dream-text. Words are "predestined to ambiguity" and dreams are yet more elusive and distorted: "...we must not be surprised or at a loss if it turns out that a number of ambiguities and obscurities in dreams remain undecided" (ILP 270). Freud admonishes some of his followers for overlooking the distinction between latent dream-thoughts and the dream-work:

At bottom, dreams are nothing other than a particular *form* of thinking, made possible by the conditions of the state of sleep. It is the dream-work which creates that form, and it alone is the essence of dreaming. (TID 650)

Dreams are *processes*, acts of representation or deformation. As Jean-Francois Lyotard observes: "it is not the dream-content that fulfils desire, but the act of dreaming".<sup>(63)</sup> Cynthia Chase notes that Freud's interpretive strategy negotiates between hermeneutics and poetics. Freud initially sees the task of dream-interpretation as one which requires the reader to "plunge into the minutest details" of the patient's life. Yet Freud's theories of dream-work and transference emphasise the vital importance of exploring unconscious processes of production. As Chase

stresses, to "plunge" into the search for hidden meanings in a text risks obscuring its modes of expression and conditions of knowledge:

The transference 'peremptorily demanded' by the *hermeneutic* enterprise of interpretation, conflicts with the *poetics* of the enterprise of textual analysis, which would have to trace, by means of displacements or transferences, not the meaning but the devices of meaning, the transferential process, of the text.<sup>(70)</sup>

By shifting the emphasis onto form rather than content, psychoanalysis thus moves away from its preoccupation with locating a primal wish. Jeffrey Mehlman contends that searching for a repressed wish can itself become repressive. He argues that the hunt for latent semantic content in the dream overlooks the syntactical nature of the unconscious, "reducing the process of dream-work to a single moment in the overall series of transformations".<sup>(71)</sup> Mehlman adduces Freud's observation that dream-content seems like "a transcript of the dream-thoughts into another mode of expression" (TID 381), but this is a transcript that is also a translation. Rather than reducing dreams to a semantic core, interpretation must concentrate on the transformative processes involved in dream-work:

..dream analysis is concerned less with discovering 'the original' than with charting the transformation performed between 'original' and 'translation', less in search of a latent content beneath the manifest than a latent organization of the manifest.<sup>(72)</sup>

This has clear implications for reading poetry: instead of tracking down a essential meaning located in the psychology of an author or character, criticism should read psychoanalytically by tracing "latent" forms of organization in the text. Such an approach entails concentrating on ways in which poetic texts prevent readers "seeing", how they disturb and scramble attempts at critical translation. By focusing on



transformations, analysis can avoid schematic predictions about what it will discover. This offers a connection with Steve Connor's articulation of a deconstructive approach to poetry, an act of reading

characterized not by processes and effects that may be reliably predicted in advance, but rather what may ensue from a reading that does not in principle suspend itself at the point where coherence of meaning seems to have been achieved.,<sup>(73)</sup>

Dream-analysis and literary criticism must resist the temptation to operate like secondary revision in the dream-work, omitting what does not fit and rendering incoherent and ambiguous material more comfortingly intelligible. For Freud, poems and dreams require similar modes of interpretation: just as dreams

are capable of being 'over-interpreted',,so all genuinely creative writings are the product of more than a single impulse in the poet's mind, and are open to more than a single interpretation, (TID 368)

Analysis of a dream-text is partial, provisional, inexhaustible and strictly interminable, a "finely-spun web of linguistic interconnections".<sup>(74)</sup> The whole of the dreamer's mental existence is potentially relevant to the interpretation. Yet at certain moments analysis is halted, brought up against what Freud terms "nodal points", upon which a "great number" of the dream-thoughts converge and which have "several meanings in connection with the interpretation of the dream" (TID 388). For Freud, these nodal points ultimately prove unplumbable. Lacan renames these analytic moments *points de capiton* or anchoring points, "by which the signifier stops the otherwise endless movement (*glissement*) of the signification" (E 303). These anchoring points weigh and button down the "upholstery of speech"<sup>(75)</sup> and form the point at which need is represented in psychical life. Lacan conceives

the chains of the signifier and signified as being distinct orders connected only by slender dotted vertical lines, fine streaks of correspondence. The *point de capiton* forms a knot which closes signification, anchoring the two registers (S/s) to each other: it is a punctuation by the real. This represents the "mythical" point at which discourse hooks itself onto signification, and it is only here that the analyst might see the fish that s/he hooks (E 303). Nodal points in dreams and poetic texts are passing places or temporary resting points, moments that every reading posits but they are not the moments where signifier and signified finally unite. Dream-analysis cannot trace an originary desire or reveal the subject as "itself"; dream-analysis can no more exhaust the "meaning" of a dream-text than literary criticism can provide an ultimate interpretation of a text.

Thus the problem of attributing "desire" or an "unconscious" in a text remains, leaving its ambiguities as "undecided" as those which face Freud in the dream-work. Peter Brooks asserts that criticism

involves a willingness, a desire, to enter into the delusional systems of texts, to espouse their hallucinated vision, in an attempt to master (sic), and be mastered by their power of conviction.<sup>(76)</sup>

For all Brooks's problematic investement in critical "mastery", his comment foregrounds that fact that literary interpretation is not a matter of dispassionate and objective reading, but that the reading process draws readers "into" the text. This returns us to Freud's statement about the artist as neurotic allaying "ungratified wishes" in a work of art. Although Freud maintains the primacy of the artist, he also attributes the need for gratification to the audience. Texts involve strategies of persuasion and revelation, influencing and

coercing readers. They work on, and are worked on by texts, a "complex double dialectic of two bodies inscribed in language".<sup>(77)</sup> In this two-way process, readers' desires are at stake too. This bears some relation to the concept of transference, where the analytic situation brings into play the unconscious of both the analysand and the analyst. The psychoanalytic encounter becomes an exchange between two subjects who must "open up" the resistance involved in the transferential process. Analogously, the reading subject is drawn to read the other while the other reads the reader. Transference is not deployed here in order to reinstate the text as a patient, and the notion of transfer is not to be taken as suggesting the communication or imparting of meaning that exists in advance of the text. Transference marks, in a dynamic of interpretation and subjectivity, a certain similarity between psychoanalysis and literature.

Meredith-Anne Skura directly connects the limits of dream-interpretation with the endeavour of literary criticism:

What Freud's work established was not the existence of a simple battle between wish and censor but the fact that the dream is multiply determined and lends itself to multiple, contradictory readings. This conflict is less like the tug-of-war implied by the dream formula than like the perceptual conflict caused by ambiguous duck-rabbit drawings or the intellectual conflict in a debate or a sequence of textual interpretations.<sup>(78)</sup>

Any textual reading or dream-analysis is a point of departure and cannot claim to be total or foreclosing: it is rather "a polemical field of interpretive forces".<sup>(79)</sup> This interpretive field involves questions of the constitution of the subject "in" dreams and poems, the personal and social, the body and language, history and the "timeless" unconscious. As Lacan suggests, desire is interpretation.<sup>(80)</sup> The closing section

brings together the work of poetry and questions of interpretation, advancing a way of reading differently, or rather, of trying to read the difference and otherness that is ineluctably bound up with poetry and dreams.

### The Dreaming Space of Poetry

Thus far the discussion has centred on several associated theoretical difficulties in relation to dreams and poetry: the issue of "communication", the complexity of ascribing a place or identity to the subject of poetry, and the problem of attributing or interpreting desire in a poem or dream-text. The question of communication might be rephrased: how might dreams and poems be said to "pass" thought, and who is the addressee of a dream-text or a poetic text? Are there similarities in the ways that dreams and poems induce subjects to see, think and know in "hallucinatory" form?

In 'Dreams and Occultism' Freud discusses the phenomenon of thought-transference in which mental processes "can be transferred to another person through empty space without employing the familiar methods of communication by means of words and signs" (PFL 2 69). Here, "empty space" might equally be taken to refer to words and signs, their lack of "inherent" reference and the hollowness at the heart of representation. Télépathy can occur both in dreams and a waking state, but "the state of sleep seems particularly suited for receiving telepathic messages" (PFL 2 66). Freud emphasises that "what seemed to teach us something about telepathy was not the dream but the interpretation of the dream, its psychoanalytic working-over". Télépathy

is thus understood to be an effect of interpretation; nothing in the dream-texts under discussion are *in themselves* telepathic. The dream-texts possess no content as such. Telepathy is a process that is "hard to demonstrate" (PFL 2 86), traceable only in its effects. Yet those dream-texts force Freud to encounter strange transmissions and see things: telepathy works as an effect between reader and text, interpreter and interpreted. Reading is both an active and passive process, the "transfer" of meaning taking place across "empty" space, a transfer that occurs in the here and now, without a preexisting message waiting to be delivered, subject to delay, misdirection and non-arrival.

This has clear implication for the production of meaning in literary texts, particularly in view of Derrida's articulation of the poematic. The act of poetry comes from "elsewhere", but this other place or site is not embodied in an omniscient other - an author or a dream-subject - nor is it located in a reader or interpreter. It is always both elsewhere and in beguiling proximity, both inside and outside the subject, a threshold that Lacan terms "extimacy". The poematic involves all of the figures implicated in the structure of address. It brings a poetic "subject" into being, a subject that makes and is made by the poetic event and that cannot be reduced to conventional categories like poet, protagonist or reader. Thus it follows that the critic, reader or interpreter is never securely "beyond" the text. The one who reads becomes the one who is read; there is no position "outside" the text which interpretation can safely assume. Nicholas Royle proposes that the literary text operates telepathically, as "reading-machine, as reading effect, that is as always in advance including, foreseeing, its

addressee".<sup>(81)</sup> Royle links psychoanalysis and literature through this telepathic structure:

Whether it is a matter of the relationship between the psychoanalyst and his/her subject or between a literary critic and a literary text, the following also applies: the analyst or critic is being read, being determined by the text.<sup>(82)</sup>

It may be possible to conceive of dream-texts as operating under similar conditions of possibility to those of literary texts. In a highly provisional sense, then, dreams can be said to bring a "subject" into being: a dream-subject neither empirical nor self-identical, and an interpretive subject (the two are not clearly separable) constituted through the dreams s/he interprets.

What is the place of dreams, whose place is it, and what bearing might such a place have on desire and representation? In the course of his meditations on the space of literature, Maurice Blanchot draws a distinction between the place of sleep and the place of dream. In sleep, the "sovereignty of the 'I' dominates this absence which it grants itself".<sup>(83)</sup> The absent presence of the sleeping state assures the subject of its world, an "intimacy with the centre":

My person is there, prevented from erring, no longer unstable, scattered and distracted, but concentrated in the narrowness of this place where the world recollects itself, which I affirm and which affirms me. Here the place is present in me and I absent in it through an essentially ecstatic union. My person is not simply situated where I sleep; it is this very site, and my sleeping is the fact that now my abode is my being. (266)

In this paradoxical "ecstatic union" between presence and absence, the place of sleep institutes and is instituted by the subject. For Blanchot, this site starkly contrasts with the act of dreaming, which "is the reawakening of the interminable":

It is an allusion at least, and something like a dangerous

call - through the persistence of what cannot finish - to  
the neutrality that presses up behind the beginning, (267)

In the dream, the "emptiness and vagueness of the anterior" surfaces. In psychoanalytic terms, this anterior suggests the fleeting intangibility of primordial desire, the mythically original sources and objects of satisfaction, simultaneously accessed and obliterated by the elusive mobility of desire and its representations. Dream is a realm of substitution and repetition, of simulacrum, where the subject fades into imitation: the dreamer "is not another, some other person, but the premonition of the other, of that which cannot say 'I' any more, which recognizes itself neither in itself or others".<sup>(e4)</sup> Turned reflexively on itself, the form of the dream is its sole content. With no assigned subject, voided of substance, the dream cannot really "be":

The dream touches the region where pure resemblance reigns. Everything there is similar; each figure is another one, is similar to another and to yet another, and this last to still another. One seeks the original model, wanting to be referred to a point of departure, an initial revelation, but there is none. The dream is the likeness that refers eternally to likeness.<sup>(e5)</sup>

Ineluctably other and dispersed, both one and none, in the dream the subject cannot be synonymous with itself: it is present only in supplement and repetition, like desire "known" in its absence only through its representations.

In Studies on Hysteria Freud remarks that we are all "insane" in our dreams (PFL 3 64). If this is so, Freud proposes the dream as a place of hallucination, otherness and dispersal, where identity is both staged and effaced, a *mise-en-scène* of desire that is strangely intimate yet thoroughly misrecognised. Yet Freud's subsequent delineation of the dream-wish, and the designation of a dream-subject for whom desire is

staged, conflicts with the logical conclusions of his comments on the madness of dreams. In The Freudian Subject, Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen thoroughly reconfigures Freud's understanding of the dream-subject and the nature of the dream-wish. Borch-Jacobsen contends that wishfulfilment in dreams takes the form of, and the subject of the dream is constituted by, a rivalrous, even murderous identification with the other. The dream-wish is mimetic, manifesting a desire not to have or obtain the object, but to be it, possess and assume its place: "Desire..does not aim essentially at acquiring, possessing, or enjoying an object; it aims (if it aims at anything at all) at a subjective identity".<sup>(22)</sup> In its ambivalent identification with the other, desire is altruicidal.

Borch-Jacobsen points out that dream-representation shows an "enigmatic preference for resemblance", and there is a consonance between the "grammar" of phantasy and dreams in terms of simulation,

the same ambiguous *lexis* in which the 'I' speaks (and desires, and enjoys) in the name and in the place of another, without our knowing for certain whether that 'I' has ever been located anywhere except in resemblance, where it plays all the roles and simulates all identities. (22)

This mimetic grammar, where identity is always *something* and *somewhere* else, recalls Blanchot's "semblance" of dreams. Borch-Jacobsen delineates a "blind spot" of phantasy, the point of otherness from where the subject "sees", and yet which remains invisible to the subject. (This "blind spot" will be brought into sharper focus in Chapter Three.) The "subject's place in phantasy is always the place of another" (18), and the point of otherness, where the "I" is the "other", opens up a "space of adversity" (40). Wishfulfilment takes place on a displaced stage, and unconscious phantasy is not mounted for the benefit of a



subject offstage. The subject is no longer ascribed a position of exteriority in the *mise-en-scène* of desire. The subject of the wish has neither property nor identity prior to phantasy (23), and the desiring subject is brought into being by the act of identification:

The so-called subject of desire has no identity of its own prior to the identification that brings it, blindly, to occupy the point of otherness, the place of the other (who is thus not an other); an original alienation (which is thus not an alienation); and an original lure (which is thus not a lure, either).<sup>(87)</sup>

Borch-Jacobsen's work profoundly revises Freud's statement that dreams are "completely egoistic" (TID 370). By now, to question the place and identity of the subject of dream or phantasy is also to raise questions about the subject of poetry. Assimilating the other in an act of appropriation, the dream-wish observes precisely the motivation that Freud assigns to the writers and readers of popular novels in 'Creative Writers and Day-dreaming'. These works encourage identification with heroes and heroines, whereby the "I" stands in or assumes the place of the other: the real hero of these stories is "His Majesty the Ego" (AL 138). Appropriating the place of the other in order to constitute the "self" is a form of being "elsewhere", a move that institutes absence at its outset. Since "one" is not "one" in advance of the act of identification, there is no other whose place "one" assumes. The other institutes the "I"; as in Derrida's poematic, the distinctions between "I", "you" and "other" are traversed. Altruicidal desire is paradoxically suicidal. Thus desire's megalomaniac "will-to-be-a-subject"<sup>(88)</sup> is doomed to failure. In short, you cannot have one without the other.

Borch-Jacobsen shifts the emphasis away from the object-orientation of desire; a different model, that of identification, triggers desire. He stresses that there exists no essential bond between desire and its object: rather, "the desire for an object is a desire-effect", *induced* via a mediating other (26). This hypothesis invites a comparison with the reading-effect of poetry proposed above. To reconfigure the object of desire necessarily realigns the subject of desire. For the purposes of our discussion, however, it is possible to retain the notion of an object even if, as Borch-Jacobsen notes, it is "fundamentally lost, irremediably absent, lacking, missing in representation" (27-8). Here Borch-Jacobsen implicitly acknowledges that the object-as-trace haunts representation. The object of representation can be regarded not as thing or "originary" source of pleasure to be obtained or reclaimed, but in terms of identification, as possession of the object as an other('s) place. Object-orientation in dreams and poems articulates the desire to acquire a subject-position or the guise of identity.

Poetry, like the place of phantasy, is an "other" place. Writing about Wallace Stevens, Nancy Blake outlines a version of the "space" of poetry:

The 'subject' of poetry is not the ego, for the ego is fictional; it is not the self which is speaking through poetry. Nor is language as a pure reflection the subject of poetics. For Stevens (and others like him), poetry elaborates a *space*: the place of being. ('89')

Blake's ascription of poetry's space implies a metaphysics that must necessarily undergo radical revision in the light of the versions of poetic and dream-subjectivity that have been elaborated. Adducing Borch-Jacobsen, poetry might be understood as the place of a desire-to-be-the-other, even if it simulates the desire to be "oneself". However it

yearns for the impossible fusion of signifier and signified, poetry is not the place or event in which "being" is unveiled or affirmed in its fullness; rather, it places under erasure a punctual, unified self. Poetry is an event that interrupts or surprises experience: the poetic event suspends neither the iterability of language nor the sometimes violent, sometimes silent but always-elusive displacements of desire. Meanings and phantasies offer an illusion of substance, yet representation cannot institute satisfaction or desire "itself", since that would be to link desire to its "original" object. Similarly, in language, a "poetry of the object" aims at an impossible union between word and thing. Dreams, like the language of poetry, dramatize a failure in representation. Textual space implies potential and lack, the condition of possibility for the play of presence and absence. As Ellie Ragland observes,

figures cannot say, nor can signifiers reveal, that the true limits of discourse are those of missed encounters, desiring encounters that flee even as they occur, showing the slip of mortality, the void, the hole in the field of knowing and being.,<sup>(90)</sup>

For Lacan, language and desire are positioned around "originary" loss, a positioning which fundamentally connects representation and the death drive. The "real" object is lacking, unavailable, unrepresentable in pure form: as Ragland remarks, "it is a permanent *ab-sens* unattainable in any final resolution or permanent satisfaction" (84). In the dream, the *objet a* stands in for the real, unable to eradicate its difference: a representative of desire, it is not the *thing* itself. Like the object, the subject simultaneously appears and disappears in the chain of signification, "a missing link that is spoken or re-presented in its own blackout" (94). This representational iteration and obliteration of the

subject, netted and dispersed in an incessant semblance, links dream-work and the work of poetry. For Ragland, "[t]he dream becomes paradigmatic of the human subject disseminated in images and words that fade into enigma and anxiety" (101).

As Freud claims, psychoanalysis "seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house" (ILP 326), an eviction continued by Lacanian psychoanalysis. This decentring tendency has its corollary in the theorization and practice of literature in later modernity. As Michel Foucault argues:

In writing, the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is, rather, a question of creating a space into which the writing subject disappears.<sup>(91)</sup>

As Borch-Jacobsen and Blanchot illustrate in different ways, the semblance of dreams displaces, even effaces the subject, just as desire "kills" the object. These altruicidal gestures have their equivalent in the space of writing, particularly in a "poetry of the object", where the word enacts the "murder" of the thing. Language is that which instals and absents the subject, and it is a common feature of the poems under discussion that they figure moments of strangeness or absence of self, whether in dreams, hallucination, trance, madness or phantasy. In 'Ode to a Nightingale', the desire to dissolve the boundary between subject and object produces a radical estrangement, the loss or erasure of a "sole self" even as the text acknowledges the impossibility of subjective transcendence. Drifting between sleeping and waking, dreams and "reality", conscious and unconscious determination, the poetic 'I' comes into intimate relation to alterity. The poetic subject proves as spectral and dispersed in its otherness as the dream-subject.

Textual "dreams" might thus be understood as the nodal points at which poems most strikingly and insistently question the category of "identity" and the position of the reader in relation to the text. The "poematic experience" is one of suspension or interruption, disrupting clear demarcations between those figures implicated in the poetic event. Poems and dreams have already been tentatively compared as reading-machines, but they can also be seen to function as desiring-machines. Dreams lure the interpreter to read the unreadable and radically displace the subject-who-dreams. Poetic texts produce the reader's desires, inducing us to identify (impossibly) with the space of literature, to lose ourselves in its estranging networks. Poetic "dreams" characterise those spaces or moments where texts usher the subject towards a form of sleep, both suspending and making possible ways of "seeing".

### Footnotes

1. The Pilgrim's Progress (London and Glasgow: Pickering and Inglis, n.d.), p.11.
2. Writing Sites: A Genealogy of the Postmodern World (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1990), p.75.
3. 'To Open the Question', in Literature and Psychoanalysis, the Question of Reading: Otherwise, ed. S. Felman (Yale French Studies, 55/56, 1977), p.5.
4. *ibid.*, p.9.
5. Dreams in Seventeenth-Century English Literature (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), p.9.
6. N.K. Sanders trans., The Epic of Gilgamesh (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), p.89.
7. Weidhorn, pp.38-43.
8. *ibid.*, p.47.
9. See, for example, Constance Heatt, The Realism of Dream Visions: The Poetic Exploitation of the Dream-Experience in Chaucer and his Contemporaries (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), and Kathryn Lynch, The High Medieval Dream Vision (California: Stanford University Press, 1988).
10. A.C. Spearing, Medieval Dream-Poetry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.142.
11. Lynch, p.72.
12. The Vision of Delight (1617), cited in Weidhorn, p.71.
13. *ibid.*, p.77.
14. *ibid.*, pp.86-8.
15. A representative example is Janet E. Atkins's 'Accounting for Dreams in Clarissa: the Clash of Probabilities', in Psychology and Literature in the Eighteenth Century, ed. Christopher Fox (New York: AMS Press, 1987).
16. Thomas De Quincy, Confessions of an English Opium-Eater (London: Walter Scott, 1886).
17. The Fall of Hyperion, in The Complete Poems, ed. John Barnard (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p.440.
18. Cited in Lionel Trilling, The Liberal Imagination (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1953), p.172.
19. English Poetry of the Victorian Period 1830-1890 (London: Longman, 1988), p.4. See also his schema of the main oppositions of Victorian poetry, p.16.
20. 'Psychoanalysis and Political Literary Theories', in Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory, ed. James Donald (London: Macmillan, 1991), p.140.
21. Stratton, p.261.
22. Language and the Origins of Psychoanalysis (London: Macmillan, 1980), p.7.
23. "Ellipsis and pleonasm, hyperbaton or syllepsis, regression, repetition, apposition - these are the syntactical displacements; metaphor, catachresis, autonomasis, allegory, metonymy, and synecdoche - these are the semantic condensations in which Freud teaches us to read the intentions - ostentatious or demonstrative, dissimulating or persuasive, retaliatory or seductive - out of which the subject modulates his (sic) oneiric discourse" (E 58).
24. Freud puts forward a provisional typology of dreams, emphasising certain recurrent symbols, fantasmatic scenes and structures. The cryptographic method of decoding dreams, which provides a set of

interpretive keys, is a feature common to many cultures throughout history. Freud initially draws away from the idea of a dream-book in The Interpretation of Dreams (TID 171-4), yet is closer to accepting it later in the work (TID 467). His close readings of analysand's dreams, although situated as theoretical and practical models for psychoanalysis, reveal less a rigid determinism about dreams than a intricate play between a generalising impulse and a recognition of the limits of reading a dream-text.

25. Elizabeth Wright, Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice (London: Routledge, 1989), p.23.

26. Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.137.

27. *ibid.*, p.125.

28. Literary Theory: An Introduction (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp.181-2.

29. Wright, p.26.

30. 'The Dream-Work Does Not Think', in *Oxford Literary Review*, 6, 1 (1983), pp.16-19. (Further references given in main text.)

31. Antony Easthope, Poetry and Phantasy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.23. (Henceforth PAP)

32. *ibid.*, p.14.

33. Poetry as Discourse (London: Methuen, 1988), p.144.

34. In Thought and Language (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1962), L.S. Vygotsky establishes a difference between external discourse - oral or textual - and inner speech. According to Vygotsky, inner speech is not internalized public discourse, but follows its own laws and logic: "Our experiments convinced us that inner speech must be regarded, not as speech minus sound, but as an entirely separate speech function. Its main distinguishing trait is its peculiar syntax. Compared with external speech, inner speech appears disconnected and incomplete" (pp.138-9). From his examinations of children's egocentric speech, Vygotsky highlights the semantic characteristics of inner speech. One characteristic concerns the manner in which a word's sense is privileged over its meaning. Here "sense" refers to all the associations connected with the word and the psychological events it arouses. Hence the sentence is predominant over the individual word and the context is privileged over the sentence. Another aspect of inner speech is combination, or agglutination, where a compound word is formed to express a complex idea. A third trait is described as an "influx of sense", whereby the associative values of words combine and unite: "Thus, a word that keeps recurring in a book or a poem sometimes absorbs all the variety of sense contained in it and becomes, in a way, equivalent to the work itself (p.146). Working through juxtaposition, fragmentation and condensation, with its own syntax and logic, inner speech is difficult, if not impossible, to translate into external speech or writing.

35. Lyotard, 'Dream-Work', p.32.

36. 'Baudelaire and Freud: the Poet as Joker', in Psychoanalytic Approaches to Literature and Film, eds. Maurice Charney and Joseph Reppen (London: AUP, 1987), p.269. Francesco Orlando sees this "double-dealing" aspect of jokes as "the only case in which the return of the repressed, or the semiotic manifestation of the unconscious, may be grasped in an act of socially institutionalized verbal communication";

Toward a Freudian Theory of Literature (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p.124.

37. 'The Divaricator: Remarks on Freud's *Witz*', in Glyph 1, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p.15.

38. *ibid.*, p.19.

39. Orlando, p.138.

40. A Roland Barthes Reader, ed. Susan Sontag (London: Vintage, 1993), p.57. (Further references given in main text.)

41. Jacques Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1993), pp.196-231. Chapter Three discusses this issue at some length.

42. Young, p.141.

43. 'By Heart: A Reading of Derrida's "Che cos'è la poesia" through Keats and Celan', in Oxford Literary Review, 15, 1-2 (1993), p.67.

44. 'Che cos'è la poesia', in A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds, ed. Peggy Kamuf (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1991), p.227.

45. Clark, pp.69-70.

46. Derrida, 'Che cos'è la poesia', p.223.

47. Clark, p.58.

48. Derrida, 'Che cos'è la poesia', p.223.

49. Wright, p.1.

50. *ibid.*, p.18.

51. Fiction and the Unconscious (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp.160-2.

52. The Selected Papers (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), p.482. (Further references given in main text.)

53. Wright, p.59.

54. Cary Nelson refers to the critical compact that psychoanalysis established with New Criticism to maintain the privileged status of literary texts. He notes a prevailing tendency to valorize authorship, to see major authors "as uniquely courageous in giving detailed verbal witness to psychic development. Writers in effect become the culture's symbolic representatives in working through the traumatic material of psychic life". Found in 'Psychoanalysis as an Intervention in Contemporary Theory', in Psychoanalysis and..., eds. Richard Feldstein and Henry Sussmann (London: Routledge, 1990), p.13.

55. The Liberal Imagination, p.60. (Further references given in main text.)

56. Image and Experience (London: Duckworth, 1960), pp.124-6.

57. *ibid.*, pp.109-10. The "pressure" of a culture echoes T.S. Eliot in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'; see Chapter Five.

58. Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier, trans. Celia Britten et al (London: Macmillan, 1982), p.25.

59. Since its institutionalization psychoanalysis, no less than other totalizing discourses, has been marked by the desire for a transcendental signified. As a form of language, psychoanalysis is ineluctably haunted by a nostalgia for origins and presence even as the movement of difference places such nostalgia under erasure. Psychoanalysis is drawn to trace the aetiology of the human condition, to search for the lost word, event or trauma that brought about the analysand's Fall and to repair the subject's inaugurally wounded relation to the world. As such, psychoanalysis is redemptive, looking back to origins in order to move forward to a "cure". For Geoffrey Hartmann, this quest for totality betrays the logocentricity of



- psychoanalysis, "a displaced religious or metaphysical discourse in search of the logos or 'nom unique', of a single defining wound for which life, or else death, is the cure": see Saving the Text: Literature/ Derrida/ Philosophy (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), p.107.
60. Young, p.142.
61. Literary Theory, p.163.
62. Young, p.140.
63. Criticism and Ideology (London: New Left Books, 1976), p.90. Eagleton establishes resemblances between dream-texts and literary texts as modes of discourse: "The problematical relation between them and their conditions of production results in both cases in an inherently ambiguous discourse, such that the terms in which Freud characterizes the devices of dream suggest 'literariness' - dream as a degrammaticised language with shifting semantic emphases, operating through 'loosely related compressions' blendings and condensations of its materials which may entail the suspension of elementary logical rules. It is an ambiguity appropriate to the displacement and elision of meaning, and it is therefore an equally appropriate mode for the literary text" (p.92).
64. Young, pp.147-8.
65. In The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (London: Methuen, 1981), Jameson problematizes the notion of an ideological "cure" for consciousness and argues that the search for a mythical moment of full ideological self-awareness has its counterpart in psychoanalytic theory: the Freudian model of the unconscious "is everywhere subverted by the neo-Freudian nostalgia for some ultimate moment of cure" (pp.282-3).
66. Young, p.148.
67. 'Oedipus, Freud, and Us', in Charney and Reppen eds., p.236.
68. Easthope, PAP, p.43. (Further references given in main text.)
69. Lyotard, 'Dream-Work', p.10.
70. 'Transference as Trope and Persuasion', in Discourse in Psychoanalysis and Literature, ed. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (London: Methuen, 1987), p.212.
71. 'Trimethylamin: Notes on Freud's Specimen Dream', in Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader, ed. Robert Young (London: Routledge, 1981), p.179.
72. *ibid.*, p.180.
73. 'Points of Departure: Deconstruction and John Ashbery's "Sortes Vergilianae"', in Contemporary Poetry Meets Contemporary Theory, eds. Antony Easthope and John O. Thompson (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1991), p.16.
74. Martin Thom, 'The Unconscious Structured as a Language', in The Talking Cure: Essays in Psychoanalysis and Language, ed. Colin MacCabe (London: Macmillan, 1986), p.13.
75. Malcolm Bowie, Lacan (London: Fontana, 1991), p.74. See Samuel Weber's discussion of Freud's term, the "navel" of the dream-thoughts, pp.10ff.
76. 'The Idea of a Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism', in Rimmon-Kenan ed., p.16.
77. Wright, p.17.
78. The Literary Use of Psychoanalytic Process (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), p.141.
79. Mehlman, p.186.

80. Ellie Ragland, 'Lacan, the Death Drive, and the Dream of the Burning Child', in Death and Representation, eds. Elisabeth Bronfen and Sarah Webster Goodwin (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p.93.
81. Telepathy and Literature: Essays on the Reading Mind (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p.26.
82. *ibid.*, p.33.
83. 'Sleep, Night', in The Space of Literature, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p.264. (Further references given in main text.)
84. *ibid.*, p.267. This displacement or fading of the "I" in the semblance of dreams can be compared to Foucault's portrayal of the dream-subject's coming-to-being in dreams: "The subject of the dream, the first person of the dream, is the dream itself, the whole dream. In the dream, everything says, 'I', even the things and the animals, even the empty space, even objects distant and strange which populate the phantasmagoria. The dream is an existence carving itself out in barren space, shattering chaotically, exploding noisily, netting itself, a scarcely breathing animal, in the webs of death. It is the world at the dawn of its first explosion when the world is still existence itself and is not yet the universe of objectivity. To dream is not another way of experiencing another world, it is for the dreaming subject the radical way of experiencing its own world". From 'Dream, Imagination and Existence: An Introduction of Ludwig Binswanger's "Dream and Existence", trans. Forrest Williams and Jacob Needleman, in *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry*, 19, 1 (1986), p.59. Foucault's articulation of the "empty space" of dream is seen to differ markedly from that of Blanchot.
85. Blanchot, p.268.
86. The Freudian Subject, trans. Catherine Porter (London: Macmillan, 1989), p.28.
87. *ibid.*, p.48. In terms of the stage of fantasy, Lyotard stresses that the "scenic space" of the dream is not governed by the rules of perceptual or sensory space: see Driftworks, ed. Roger McKeon (New York: Semiotext(e), 1984), pp.62-3.
88. Borch-Jacobsen, p.48.
89. 'Poetics and Psychotic Experience', in Compromise Formations: Current Directions in Psychoanalytic Criticism, ed. Vera Camden (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1989), p.136. For an account and critique of recent phenomenological approaches, in particular "destructive" criticism, see Vincent B. Leitch's Deconstructive Criticism: An Advanced Introduction (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp.60-86. See Richard Boothby's Death and Desire: Psychoanalytic Theory in Lacan's Return to Freud (London: Routledge, 1991) on the connections between Lacan and Heidegger, where Heidegger's version of the subject-in-process comes into relation with Lacanian models of subjectivity and desire, particularly in terms of the death drive (pp.203-14).
90. Ragland, p.94. (Further references given in main text.)
91. 'What is an Author?', in The Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p.102.

## JUST SOME HUMAN SLEEP

When I reached manhood, I saw rising and growing upon  
 the wall shared between life and death, a ladder barer  
 all the time, invested with an unique power of evulsion;  
 this was the dream., (1)

., creative writers are valuable allies and their evidence  
 is to be prized highly, for they are apt to know a whole  
 host of things between heaven and earth of which our  
 philosophy has not yet let us dream.

(Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*, AL 34)

This chapter offers an analysis of a poetic text, Robert Frost's 'After Apple Picking', which explicitly "stages" a dream. Three main issues are considered: how a poem can be read as a "dream"; how desire is understood as being "figured" in a text, and to whom it might be attributed; and how Frost's poem appears to link up with Freud's essay Beyond the Pleasure Principle, published seven years after 'After Apple Picking' was written. Central to these issues is the question of whose desire is at stake in a psychoanalytic approach to literary criticism, a question that opens out to include the issue of identification in the reading process. There is also an analysis of the poem's entropic trajectory, its falling "asleep", which is mediated through Derrida's discussion of Freud's speculations on the so-called "death drive" in Beyond the Pleasure Principle.

## Adequate Satisfaction

### After Apple Picking

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree  
Toward heaven still,  
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill  
Beside it, and there may be two or three  
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough,  
But I am done with apple-picking now,  
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,  
The scent of apples; I am drowsing off,  
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight  
I got from looking through a pane of glass  
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough  
And held against the world of hoary grass,  
It melted, and I let it fall and break,  
But I was well  
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,  
And I could tell  
What form my dreaming was about to take,  
Magnified apples appear and disappear,  
Stem end and blossom end,  
And every fleck of russet showing clear,  
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,  
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round,  
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend,  
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin  
The rumbling sound  
Of load on load of apples coming in,  
For I have had too much  
Of apple-picking; I am overtired  
Of the great harvest I myself desired,  
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,  
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall,  
For all  
That struck the earth,  
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,  
Went surely to the cider-apple heap  
As of no worth,  
One can see what will trouble  
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is,  
Were he not gone,  
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his  
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,  
Or just some human sleep.<sup>(2)</sup>

Read as part of a plain-speaking, commonsense poetic tradition, 'After Apple-Picking' presents an idyllic view of New England, a world of rural simplicity and homespun, earthy wisdom. The tradition of rural

toil and humble faith looks back to Piers Plowman, who is granted a dream vision after his exhausting work induces deep slumber. Unpretentious, without apparent linguistic complexity, the subject-matter of Frost's poem seems straightforward and unproblematic. The apple-harvest forms part of a lower-intensity Keatsian autumn, with a concentration on fruition, abundance, russet tones. New England autumn provides subtle contrasts in colour and temperature, mingling early frost and lingering warmth. Steady-paced, even-toned, emotionally-temperate, the poem depicts a cherished, domestic and familiar landscape. Reviewing the day's repetitive activity, registering the ache of physical fatigue, the speaker records a commonplace unambiguous aspect of human experience. The feeling of winter sleep and hibernation pervades the natural world. Not every apple can be picked, a recognition suggesting the countryman's patient awareness of the seasons and the transience of existence: in a real harvest, some fruit inevitably falls and spoils. Exhausted by the day's labours, it is perhaps inevitable that the speaker is preoccupied with thoughts of apple-picking.

Philip Gerber's remarks exemplify this conventional and normative reading of the poem:

So accurately and economically does Frost capture the essence of apple harvest that one cannot be faulted for finding adequate satisfaction within his portrayal of the apple-picking itself, needing no more. The sights and sounds are all there. Every sensation is recorded vigorously. No one who has used a ladder or laboured long hours driven by desire, or nodded in the heavy drowsiness of Indian summer, is likely to forget soon the achievement of this verse. As rural idyll, it gratifies.<sup>(3)</sup>

Yet the poem remains far from straightforward in its structure or meaning, as these comments tacitly suggest. Gerber emphasises the familiarity of the scene depicted in the text, yet any sense of

comforting familiarity is vitiated by "No one..is likely to forget soon." If the poem "achieves" an easily recognisable and comforting evocation of rural simplicity, should its forgetting be likely at all? Richard Poirier comments that Frost's poem is so familiar that it is difficult to recognise its strangeness, a comment that combines memory and forgetting.<sup>4</sup> The familiar, the known and commonplace masks the strange and unfamiliar. Since Freud's work on *das unheimlich*, the familiar, known and homely often becomes the most unsettling site of otherness.

The extent to which the familiar scene represented in Frost's poem is satisfying for the reader is rendered problematic. The references to pleasure and fulfillment, attributable both to text and reader, are striking and insistent: "adequate satisfaction", "needing no more", "driven by desire", "it [the text, the actual activity, the effect upon readers and critics?] gratifies". Gerber affirms the satisfying elements of the poem in decidedly negative terms: "one cannot be faulted", "no more", "no one". Absence and ghostly traces haunt Gerber's critique, just as Frost's poem is haunted. His reading becomes implicated in a network of desire, though the location or structure of that desire remains unspecified, just as desire remains elsewhere, traceable only in its passing in the poetic text he reads. Rather than maintaining an objective distance, his critical response, like the text itself, is an invested, situated reading.<sup>5</sup> Whose desire is referred to here by Gerber? Can a dream, or a poem, be reducible to a core phantasy? Freud's dream-analyses can be construed as interpretations of a text, rather than offering definitive understandings of particular dreams. Equally, the reading of a poem cannot be "concrete". Reading subjects are defined

in a web of relations that are both public and private, individual and collective. Reading Frost's text is not a case of tracking down an elusive wish or desire that can be identified with any particular author, character or reader. Rather, this reading attempts to indicate precisely how difficult (but inescapable) it is to attempt to locate or attribute "desire" in the act of reading.

Gerber's commentary does recognise that the text revolves around insistent *memories* of satisfaction. Desire and phantasy are also bound up with memory, the mental recreation of a past event. Leo Bersani highlights Baudelaire's mnemonic concept of desire, which suggests that desiring memories are essentially phantasies.<sup>(6)</sup> The very act of remembering activates desire. In Frost's poem, the harvested apples take on the representation of desire, but the nature of that desire necessarily remains ambiguous and elusive. The memory of picking apples is one version of desire rather than its concrete objectification. The endless mobility of desire strives to recover an original source of (known, remembered or phantasised) pleasure. Incomplete, inadequate but irreducible, desire never finds concrete satisfaction, and must instead seek out derivatives or substitutions to appease the demand. An activity within a lack, desire seeks to recreate lost pleasure, partially satisfying need while anticipating real satisfaction. Thus desire is based on a fictional recreation of original pleasure, what Bersani terms an "appetite of the imagination":

The activity of desiring is inseparable from the activity of fantasizing. There is no scene of desire which is not an elaboration, a kind of visual interpretation, of other scenes.<sup>(7)</sup>

Reformulating and revising other desires, the operation of desire in phantasy or dreams is also interpretive:

If sexual desire is inseparable from fantasy, then it is always already an interpretative movement, and any originally exciting object or event gets lost in the very excitement which it produces. The work of fantasy in desire makes impossible the historical tracing of presumed sources of desire.<sup>(8)</sup>

Critical inquiry can only speculate on the location or nature of an original source of pleasure: it cannot trace a primal wish that underlies the text. Interpretation can be argued to constitute another itinerary of desire. Phantasy is already an interpretation of that initial wish or desire and analysis, a further stage of interpretation, needs to concentrate on tracing the various forms that desire takes. It can be argued that objects of desire are less objects than "creative processes" (42). Critical attention should focus as much on the *form* as on the *meaning* of desire in a text or phantasy. If apples are taken as symbols of desire, part of a reproducible system, then a typology of "fantasy" could be used to immobilize author and readers into a scheme of fixed desires and sexual scenarios. For Bersani, this reductive classification highlights the failings of traditional Freudian criticism. He offers an alternative approach:

A psychoanalytic theory of fantasy can be most profitably brought into analyses of literary texts not in terms of specific sexual content, but rather in terms of the mobility of fantasy, of its potential for explosive displacements. (6)



### The two-pointed ladder

In 'After Apple Picking', references to dreaming are explicit. The poem considers the relationship between dream and writing, often in a highly self-conscious manner. The ladder pointing "toward heaven" in the opening lines unmistakably alludes to Jacob's ladder in Genesis 28:11-15, where Jacob dreams of angels ascending and descending a ladder to heaven. By referring to a dream figuratively represented in another text, the poem draws attention to the significance of its own textual dream. People do not climb literal ladders to reach to heaven. In the introduction it was indicated that throughout literary history dreams have been used both as a convenient formal device and as a way of investing texts with figurative or symbolic meaning. In 'After Apple-Picking' the dream represents both a formal figuring device and a potential means of interpreting the text itself. For Richard Poirier, the poem is a "dream vision"<sup>(9)</sup>, thus aligning it with some of the earliest literary texts.

To Freud, dreams recorded in ancient sources prove the ahistorical value and truth of psychoanalytic dream interpretation: "The respect paid to dreams in antiquity is...based upon correct psychological insight and is the homage paid to the uncontrolled and indestructible forces in the human mind..." (TID 775). Classical dream-interpretation seems to confirm for Freud the timeless and universal "language" of dreams, and the passage from Genesis appears readily susceptible to a "typical" Freudian interpretation:

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth,  
and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels  
of God ascending and descending on it,

And, behold, the Lord stood above it. (Genesis 28; 12-13)

Staircases and ladders "are representations of the sexual act" (TID 472) while "a supremely phallic, flying father" presides over and transcends this phantasy of sexual intercourse.<sup>(10)</sup> Thus the dream appears to provide clear evidence of the eternal and universal validity of psychoanalytic concepts and interpretation, yet this conclusion assumes that subjectivity is a constant, beyond history or at least coterminous with the history of the human species. In addition, the dream is part of a written text, a text rewritten many times: its textual status, cultural significance and meanings have changed throughout its historical transmission. It needs to be read in its "own" moment of production (and that itself is highly problematic for any classical source) and also to be reinterpreted in the present moment. Freud appears to elide a network of differential relations that crosses time and texts, but the "confirmation" that "original" sources offer Freud are in fact reworkings and reconfigurations of older scenes of writing by the new "science" of psychoanalysis.

The "confirmation" from antiquity of Freud's dream-theories is quite clearly a problematic rewriting, deriving from a complex interplay of influences and strategic reappropriations. It is more than a case of Freud's entrapment in universalising or totalizing discourse, or his logocentric presuppositions. Freud continually demurs to the authenticity and priority of ancient writings on dreams; his observations, footnotes, disclaimers and introductory passages imply that antiquity has anticipated or foreseen psychoanalysis, waiting for Freud to confirm findings and discoveries already established but long ignored or concealed. These "early" thinkers privileged and insisted

upon the force and value of oneiric prophesy and foreseeing, precisely the sort of superstition or naive belief about dreams that Freud both rejects and acknowledges. In the name of scientific positivism, Freud sought a theoretical schema for the study and comprehension of dreams during the early development of psychoanalysis, yet his apparently rationalist endeavours were regarded in many fields of established, conventional knowledge as invalid, irresponsible or vulgarly speculative. Despite its early reception, psychoanalysis strove for authority and institutionalality, which necessitated significant reversals and elisions, a strategy to limit or marginalise those areas so important to Freud's early thought: hypnosis, telepathy and the occult. Yet much of Freud's work tests the limits of science and reason, its logical conclusions moving into precisely these superstitious areas excluded from or dismissed by conventional science and philosophical thought, with its positivist or empiricist tendencies. The non-linear temporality of dreams, the interweaving of past, present and future is transposed onto a "history of ideas", a transposition disrupting, if not wholly overturning, the concept of progress and chronology.

Nevertheless, Jacob's dream reveals one psychoanalytic "truth" that may be loosely termed "universal" or "timeless" and which offers a valuable point of contact with Frost's text. The allusion to Jacob's ladder not only indicates the poem's subject matter, it enacts a pattern - the endless mobility, deferral and repetition of desire - that structures the whole text. The angels continually *ascend* and *descend* the ladder, suggesting the constant movement and transformation that defines dream-work. The ladder "still" sticks toward heaven, suggesting that it is to be climbed continually. The opposite ends of the ladder represent

heaven and earth, but such dualities become transformed or erased. Travelling along the ladder, the angels engage in a ceaseless interchange between poles that are never absolute distinctions but moving points of difference, precisely the boundaries that become blurred in dreams: mental and physical, conscious and unconscious, mortal and immortal, rational and irrational, social and individual, material and ethereal, literal and figurative, day-world and night-world. Are the angels the ghosts of desire, the traces of the body in the text, the only way in which dreams can be read or desire encountered in texts?

### The Form that Dreaming Takes

Since it seems such a revealing, unveiling text "on" dreams, can 'After Apple Picking' be examined like a dream? Is it possible to map the contours, trace the direction and follow the shifts and transformations of the dream-work by examining a literary representation of a dream? The text seems to identify all the formative elements, the ingredients that constitute the raw material of dream-work, offering a description of dream-formation not unlike that outlined by Freud, who identifies several sources of dream-material. The first source is found in recent and indifferent material, or day-residues: "...in every dream it is possible to find a point of contact with the experiences of the previous day" (TID 249). Memory-traces are derived from the previous day's events and actions, or may emanate from a more extensive period of the recent past. These remnants of experience need not appear important; in fact, the triviality of the remembered experiences may result from

the distorting activity of the dream-work, which displaces psychic significance or energy from one event to another. The dream-work connects psychically significant impressions and indifferent experiences by setting up ideas between them. Day-residues - memories of picking apples - occupy a central role in the poem, filling the speaker's mind:

Magnified apples appear and disappear,  
Stem end and blossom end,  
And every fleck of russet showing clear.

A second source of dreams lies in somatic stimuli or "excitations of the sense organs" (TID 314). These excitations consist of chance stimuli during sleep and strong sensory impressions "such as cannot fail to impinge even upon a sleeping mind" (TID 314). Freud indicates that "the dream-work is under the necessity of combining into a unity all instigations to dreaming which are active simultaneously" (TID 323). As has been seen, the dream-work combines day-residues by means of certain connecting ideas. As another "instigation" to dreaming, somatic stimuli are added to the currently active psychical material in the sleeping mind. This need not always take place - there are other ways of reacting to a somatic stimulus in sleep - but this combination occurs when ideational material is found to represent both sources of the dream. This description of dream-formation seems to offer some explanation of the textual dream. The various associations that surround apple-picking can be seen to combine with insistent physical excitations aroused by previous activities - there are many references to smell, touch and sound in the poem - into some sort of determining chain of ideas and impressions. It can be read in terms of the hypnagogic state (a term that will be encountered in a more radical sense shortly), where a person hallucinates while falling asleep or feeling great fatigue; in

such a "dream", someone who has just fallen asleep reworks their most recent thoughts and perceptions. Yet, for all the representations of physical experience, who (or what) might be construed as possessing a "sleeping mind" in 'After Apple Picking'? Is it possible to refer to a "speaker", or should we refer to the memory and body of the *text*? The body of the speaker - or should it be the text - bears the marks of repetition:

My instep arch not only keeps the ache,  
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round,  
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend,  
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin  
The rumbling sound  
Of load on load of apples coming in.

Read experientially, the speaker's physical condition shows the effects of the day's labour. Undoubtedly, the body makes its mark and is marked in the text, but is it possible to locate this marking solely in the corporeal presence of a character? Where does that leave the reader, the movement of language, even the author?

The third source of dreams identified by Freud is infantile material, which consists of childhood memories and impressions of distant events. Dreams permit a privileged regression to the origins of childhood memory, resurrecting buried memories. Often an infantile wish deriving from a childhood event underlies other meanings in a dream:

...a succession of meanings or wish-fulfillments may be superimposed on one another, the bottom one being the fulfillment of a wish dating from earliest childhood. (TID 312)

The insistence on an infantile wish underpins Freud's speculations on art; it is at once the most alluring and most problematic facet of aesthetic production. There are a convenient stock of "typical symbols" in Frost's poem to assist a symptomatic reading. Freud points out

various symbols that commonly appear in dreams. There are obvious phallic images - tree trunks and branches (pulling off a branch is identified with masturbation or "tossing off") and picking or biting can be interpreted as a variation on rape. Steps and ladders, ascending or descending them, represent the sexual act (TID 472). The allusion to Jacob's ladder underlines this sexual connotation. Yet again, the apples attract multiple associations, insisting pervasively in the text: one of the merits of this approach is its close attention to figures of repetition. The apples may correspond either to male genitals or female breasts (ILP 190). Equally, they could be an analogue of defecation, as they fall into the cellar bin (thus representing the repressed drive since defecation may be an early source of pleasure). The lulling warmth and drowsiness, the maternal, nurturing environment may suggest a memory of the womb, a desire to return there which finds expression in the preoccupation with death that haunts the poem. Attempting to trace infantile material in a literary text is fraught with difficulty and raises highly contentious issues (as well as critical hackles). If no due regard is paid to the context of "typical symbols", the practice proves naively intentionalist and reductive. More fundamentally, the question once more arises of where to attribute desire or locate an unconscious in a text. Instead of tracing an individual history, it is more productive and valuable to consider a textual memory or history, one that involves readers, other texts, voices and bodies. In this history, what remains and what returns is a different form of haunting. Thus, although the text suggests a recognition of the formative elements and processes of dreams, it is clear that any tentative homology between Freud's work on dream-formation and a poetic figuring of a dream-state

will hit major stumbling blocks. The next approach will consider the poem/dream's signifying capacity.

### Honest Duplicity: Metaphor and Ambiguity

'After Apple Picking' appears to manifest that "honest duplicity" of which Frost himself speaks: it is "all hint".<sup>(12)</sup> The motif of the ladder provides a tempting but traditional depth metaphor for the processes of literary criticism and dream analysis, a metaphor that is alluring and pervasive.<sup>(13)</sup> Within this lexicon, criticism is regarded as looking "beneath" the manifest surface of the text, tracing its latent meanings; attention is also paid to the interrelation of these levels. Similarly, psychoanalytic dream-analysis moves "down" from the rational light of day to the shadowy depths of the unconscious. Such a process tests the knowable limits of the psyche, sounding the "unplumbable" depths of dreams, an interpretive project that travels as close as possible to Lacan's mythical point, where discourse hooks itself onto signification (E 303). Interpretation represents itself as being conducted from a privileged position above, outside, uncontaminated by the text, gesturing towards a final profundity, a stable resting point for the reader. Yet, although it attempts to plumb the unplumbable, reading has always already fallen from its position of mythical unity, objectivity and authority. The spatial metaphor of reading seeks to uncover another dimension of meaning behind the text or under its surface, an approach exemplified by Meredith-Anne Skura:

There is a connection between dreams and certain kinds  
of literature that insist, like the dream, on a gap  
between what the text seems to mean and the deeper



meaning it seems to imply.<sup>(14)</sup>

According to this schema, both dreams and poems say one thing while suggesting something else: meaning resides in another place, deeper than the surface of the text. A traditionally instrumentalist approach to poetry would see metaphor as forming part of a conscious textual strategy, satisfying formal obligations. Reading the text as metaphor simultaneously recognises and effaces its materiality, and privileges content over form. Skura refers to the gap between apparent and implicit meaning in the text, yet fails to acknowledge that the act of interpretation thus depends upon reading absence, and that interpretation must attend to the gaps that the text makes visible.

As David Murray stresses, the operation of metaphor suppresses difference, privileging elements that can be connected and brought into unified patterns. Metaphor enacts the "ruthless subordination of difference in the name of a single unified focus".<sup>(15)</sup> The univocal, totalising tendency of metaphor effaces the work of metonymy, although the effects of both of these figures are at work in language and the unconscious, as has been shown in the opening chapter. In conventional terms, a metaphorical reading of 'After Apple Picking' would interpret the apples as substituted for another layer of meaning, offering a symbolic or figurative equivalence. The apples also signify metonymically, however; they are a *form* taken by desire, a provisional link in the chain of desire. Again, the concentration rests as much on how the poem works as what it means. Significantly, the ladder is described as "two-pointed", an image suggesting separate lines of meaning running parallel to, not above or beneath, each other. The spatial figure is thus lateral, a matter of contiguity as well as

similarity. Interruptions to the rhythmical pattern and syntactical inconsistencies attest to the displacements of desire that transform the surface of the poem. This conception is faithful to the original sense of metaphor as *transfer*, a bearing-across or constant movement. (This is not to argue the case for the metaphoricity of all writing, or the endless deferral of meaning.) Instead of reading metaphorically in terms of depth or univocality, the ladder can be seen to represent a form of the royal road to the unconscious, a "transcribing" of the unconscious, with transformations - of meaning and desire - taking place across the surface of the text.

As has been discussed earlier, in the textual "dream" apple-picking is not merely an aspect of the coherent, orderly day-world: it is invested with figurative significance, an investment that is both intra- and intertextual. Just as the orderliness of the day-world is disrupted and put in question by the processes of the unconscious, so the transformative movements of desire in language undermine commonsense readings and unground any reading position that claims to be securely outside the text that is being read. Apple-picking is a memory in the poem, albeit recent, aching and pervasive: it is a representation, in the dual sense of displaying and replaying. Just as that memory alters in the poem, so a memory becomes changed in a dream. In dreams any memory changes in terms of status and significance. It joins other raw material in the dream-work, where anxieties, desires, other ideas and recollections can combine, interact with or radically alter that original memory. Indeed, it may be impossible to write of an "original memory" in a dream or a text. In a dream, a memory is a transformed mental product, something other than itself. It may have assumed greater

or lesser significance, perhaps even altered almost beyond recognition. The question of textual memory imbricates the individual and the collective, with implications for the ownership and authenticity of memory.

Foregrounded as the central, overbearing image of the textual dream, apple-picking denotes more than picking fruit from a tree; it is the focus of numerous ideas and associations in the poem. In an actual dream, this image would be understood as an overdetermined element, possessing "multiple connections with other elements in the latent dream-thoughts".<sup>(16)</sup> This definition of an overdetermined element is analogous to poetic metaphor, "a single word with multiple resonances, the meeting point at which overdetermination surfaces".<sup>(17)</sup> The polysemy of any word is central to both linguistics and dream interpretation: "...words, since they are the nodal points of numerous ideas, may be regarded as predestined to ambiguity" (TID 456). Conceived of as provisional, open to the play of difference, the figure of metaphor provides an important theoretical link between dreams and poetry. The networks of meaning in poems and dreams are potentially endless and always deferred, but nodal points allow a space for determinate, provisional readings of dreams or texts, whatever the distinctions between those two activities. This "poetic" point, the impossible moment of hooking desire or knotting down strands of meaning, may be the only site of reading dreams and texts, though this is not a case of arguing for "creative" or relativistic interpretations.

As Christian Metz acknowledges, poetic language bears a relation to the primary process, but the language of poetry differs radically from the "language" of desire. This difference is illustrated by the

successive distinct stages between the primary process, dream-work and conscious thought. The primary process plays a major part in the formation of both dreams and literary products, but in itself this common factor cannot bridge the gap between the dream-state and poetry. These two discourses operate at different levels, and the effects of the primary process differ accordingly in each discourse. The primary process represents that activity of unconscious desire which seeks to repeat achieved satisfaction by locating the perception that accompanied it. Dreams arise when an unconscious impulse seeks to fulfil a desire not satisfied in waking life. The force of repression cannot allow this impulse to find representation in its original form. The unconscious material is instead transformed into a series of images in the dream. The initial impulse manages simultaneously to obey and escape censorship by assuming a form that is not immediately recognisable, a guise that is "other" than itself. In this fashion, the dream makes a compromise between the desire and the strictures of the repressive force. Unconscious material is subject to the flow of the primary process, which makes irrational and absurd connections between ideas and images. The first two mechanisms of dream-work, condensation and displacement, distort and deform these images, which are then further subject to secondary revision. This revision makes something intelligible and coherent from the dream-work, although it too is understood as a distorting process. Rational day-time reality (when a dream is recounted, for example) reinforces this censorship by imposing sense and coherence on the "absurd" dream. Dream-work and conscious thought includes secondary revision, which is absent in the primary process.

Freud initially considers condensation and displacement as aspects of dream-work, serving the censoring force. Yet, since these mechanisms perform a distorting activity, they are subsequently regarded as manifestations of the primary process (TID 753-6). Condensation and displacement serve both primary and secondary processes, adopting roles which are subversive and defensive, disruptive and controlling. Hence Freud's division of primary and secondary processes becomes problematic. In equating condensation and displacement with metaphor and metonymy, Lacan seeks to untangle this problem. Language is seen to be more radically subject to the influences and workings of the unconscious: "every single utterance, spoken or written, is invaded by the unconscious".<sup>(18)</sup> Lacan's equation seems to offer an homology between the primary process, dream-work and poetic language. This conceptualization is far from straightforward, however. The dream-work does not think: it is anti-thought, attempting to make its elements unrecognizable, giving them a new form. Its mechanisms can only distort, deform, bring pressure to bear. Condensation and displacement are illogical operations of a non-discursive nature; their relation to conscious language (relatively secondary, rational, ordered) is only approximate.<sup>(19)</sup> These two mechanisms are distinguished from oral and textual discourse by the third stage of dream-work, considerations of representability. Lacan likens the dream's operations to a dumb-show, an evolutionary stage of writing. Speech is only one element of representation in a dream (E 161).

Nonetheless, Lacan crucially highlights the continuity through each level of discourse. Only a provisional distinction exists between free and bound energy, unconscious and conscious meanings in dreams, speech

and written language (something taken up more radically by Derrida). There is an ongoing exchange and negotiation between the primary and secondary processes. The primary process represents a psychological substructure apparent only in its effects, an itinerary of always absent presence.<sup>(20)</sup> It constantly informs, pressurizes, subverts, acts on conscious material. The primary process is active day and night, whereas dream-work assumes the economic conditions of sleep. Derivatives of the repressed drive still appear in language, although greatly distorted in order to overcome censorship. These derivatives function in altered form, as something "other", and it is this alteration that resembles poetic metaphor:

This persistence and insistence of a repressed chain  
is precisely what gives poetry the quality of saying  
what it says as much by what is not there as by what is,<sup>(21)</sup>

Metz argues that meanings or valencies which surround any particular element in dreams or language are not all equally prominent or apparent. In the dream-work, some associations may not be easily accessible to consciousness; in language some acceptations are theoretically eliminated by context, but nevertheless remain present. It is this multivalence that suggests poetry's proximity to unconscious processes:

...the eliminated acceptations (which are actually  
never eliminated; a definition of over-determination)  
inhabit a zone closer to the unconscious in the case  
of dreaming, closer to the preconscious for ordinary  
polysemies, and somewhere between the two for poetic  
resonances...<sup>(22)</sup>

Metaphor represents the interaction of similar and dissimilar elements; it is the reader or interpreter who enacts the transition from "literal incongruence to metaphorical congruence".<sup>(23)</sup> The split reference is still retained and this semantic clash attests to the subversive

activity of metaphor, disrupting the logical discourse of the rational mind. Secondary revision can be seen as analogous to reading, but both activities carry traces of primary process: they are not acts of pure rationalization or conscious reordering. The activity of reading is part of the transformation of meanings that takes place in a text.

For both literary criticism and psychoanalytical dream-interpretation, not only the manifest appearance of a text, but what remains unspoken and how that text is figured, proves of vital importance. Clearly the oppositions of primary and secondary, irrational and rational, unconscious and conscious can be only provisional, relative. The difference between dream and waking experience is seen to be relative and contingent. The meaning of a poem can be characterized by what it leaves tacit, discontinuous, occluded - that which constitutes the unconscious of the text. Poetic discourse operates through compression, elision and multiple associations, transforming its elements into something "other". At a different level, the dream-work functions in similar fashion. Thus the framing of 'After Apple-Picking' within some sort of textual "dream" invites, even necessitates, a reading of its otherness, to acknowledge the ways in which it resists any unifying "metaphorical" decipherment. Frost's poem "is an occasion when the precondition of metaphor itself seems to be that the normal distinction between dreaming and waking be suspended".<sup>(24)</sup> This suspension throws the poem's status radically into question, and unseats any comfortable notion of a fully conscious, controlling reading process. Poetry acts as an interruption rather than a replication of experience, constituting as well as being constituted by the subject who reads.

## Troubled Sleep

The text represents varying and often confused states of consciousness, modulating from conscious, waking thought to day-dream, "troubled sleep" and night dreams. The distinction between "conscious" and "unconscious" thought is indeterminate. For example, it is uncertain whether the transformative morning vision through the pane of ice is located in a waking or sleeping state. Even the connotations of sleep become ambiguous and unfixed: an undecidable "it", sleep comes to stand variously for physical rest, day-dream, night dream, winter and death. Richard Poirier comments: "By the end of the poem it is impossible to tell memories of waking fact and sleepy distortions apart".<sup>(25)</sup> In the poem, just as the waking and sleeping states interchange and become barely distinguishable, so the meanings and the status of the text become blurred. In part, this confusion, distortion and transformation of thought resembles the operation of dream-work which, according to Freud, "does not think, calculate or judge in any way at all; it restricts itself to giving things a new form" (TID 650). It is left to secondary revision to edit the dream-work and make the dream into something intelligible, but this confusion and transformation traverses both the work of secondary revision and the work of dream-analysis. Similarly, although traditional theories of literature might attribute the work of secondary revision variously to the author or the critic, those acts of "conscious" reworking are equally marked, traversed by otherness, an unconscious not decidably attributable to an individual psyche.



How can the reader securely decide when to read the text "as" a dream? How might the text induce the reader to sleep? Who or what is asleep, or slipping in and out of various states of consciousness, within the text? Poirier's remark about "waking fact and sleepy distortions" situates the reading process in a sleepy state, as if the poem itself causes the reader to "drowse off". This would be to argue the case for a poetics of reading which suspends any conventional or privileged textual logic.<sup>(25)</sup> The "other" side of the text, its "honest duplicity", is not derivable from the intention, self-conscious artifice or even the "unconscious" of the author. The textual dream in 'After Apple Picking' is not simply a strategic device that lures the reader into its spell, a device satisfying the obligations of poetic discourse or a strategy arising from a contractual agreement between writer and reader to suspend "reality" and enter a safe site of "play". To borrow T.S. Eliot's phrase, this poetic dream "is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation".<sup>(27)</sup> To read a "dream" in poetry brings about a more extreme form of disruption, what Nicholas Royle characterises as "[t]he notion of a hypnagogics or hypnopoeitics, a radical disturbance of sleeping and waking, reading and dreaming".<sup>(28)</sup> This radical disturbance enacts a suspended state or state of suspense, a hovering or wavering at the borders of sense, a tottering before the text falls (asleep) into an "other" side of thought or writing.

There are repeated instances of "falling asleep" or slipping into different states of consciousness within the text, indicated both by formal shifts in rhyme, syntax and rhythm, and by rhetorical shifts of emphasis. An initial sense of weariness is evoked:

...I am done with apple-picking now,  
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,

The scent of apples; I am drowsing off,  
Soft "s" sounds and lulling rhythms enact this drowsiness, blurring the distinction between waking and sleeping. The force of "done with" signals a shift in register, and the drift into sleep is either interrupted or succeeded by (there is a confused sequence of "events") a discomfoting vision:

I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight  
I got from looking through a pane of glass  
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough  
And held against the world of hoary grass.

The sibilance and hard-edged diction contrasts sharply with the previous lines. The pane of ice becomes a hard, precise window on the world; this perspective is startling, at once magical and disconcerting. The ice is "held against" the world, both as an aid to vision and as a protective barrier, although it is a barrier already breached. What the text "shows" is unclear, since the vision is a mixture of clarity and vagueness, yet such "strangeness" is a vision of alterity, the otherness of perception, the realm of phantasy.

The icy vision abruptly shatters: "It melted, and I let it fall and break." This fall leads to a strange prophetic sight of the future, as if familiar and recurrent, an anticipation of "What form my dreaming was about to take". The repetition and insistence of the chiming rhymes "well", "fell" and "tell" suggest the immanent force of this dream, as if the text cannot help itself, cannot avoid "drowsing off". The rhymes sound a knell similar to the "toll" at the end of Keats's Nightingale Ode. Here, however, there is no return to a "sole self": it will be seen that the "self" in the text is rendered ineluctably other to itself in the strange vision through the ice. The text performs a hesitant or

oscillating movement, wavering on the edge of trance, of losing control. The text has slipped into past tense, implying that the dream took place immediately after the morning vision. This confusion - whether the passage records the original morning experience or is a later reworking of the "vision" - has troubled critics, inviting some interpretive gymnastics. Poirier suggests that the change in tense helps to suspend the distinction between waking and sleeping:

It is as if he woke before work into a kind of reality that had all the strangeness of dream, and he looks to sleep after work almost in the hope of dispelling the dream, <sup>(29)</sup>

The moves of desire are traceable in terms of new relations and forms, and the dream of apple-picking may be regarded as a new form of desire, another mental representation or arrangement of images that supports that original desire. It is highly significant that the text anticipates the form of the dreaming rather than the content, as though the dream rehearses a familiar scenario but the meaning is not readily accessible. Even if the apples are an analogue of an original wish or desire, the location of that desire need not (cannot) be sought, for the dream or phantasy of apple-picking is already an interpretation, a recreation of pleasure, adhering to no strict chronology or original wish.

Let us (as ever) return to Freud's terms for a moment: "recent material" - picking apples - combines with existing elements to give this dream its particular vivid and immediate form. The phantasmagoric swirl of "magnified apples" presents a scene more mobile but as graphic and strange as that observed through the pane of ice. The play of distortion, shifting intensities, displaced energies, repetition and mix of sharp detail and imprecision is characteristic of dream-work. The

"pressure" of the ladder-round and the insistent rhythms of the accumulating apples as they slide into the cellar bin are more than sensory impressions; they are mental recreations, part of a disturbed sleep. Once again there is an abrupt syntactical shift: "For I have had too much/ Of apple-picking" seems to be the response to a question or proposition, as if the text is constructing an argument. The rhetoric echoes "done with" earlier in the poem; "too much" could refer equally to the dream or the day's exhausting activity. This dismissal is countered immediately by the enamoured way in which the text considers the unpicked fruit. Apple-picking is anything but forgotten: "There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch, Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall".

The nostalgic pleasure in the wake of this fall is fractured by another sudden syntactical disruption, suggested by the broken lines, jagged diction and intimations of violence and oblivion:

For all  
That struck the earth,  
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,  
Went surely to the cider-apple heap  
As of no worth,

This jars against the previous moment of reflection, a disjunction underlined by the pessimism and vehemence of "As of no worth". The gentle caress of "Cherish in hand" is replaced by the rough edges of "struck" and "spiked with stubble". With crushing finality, "As of no worth" brings this trope or chain of memory to a halt. The text hovers on the threshold of revelation, not disclosing "what will trouble/ This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is". The self-referential manner in which the text anticipates the onset of "sleep" - "As I describe its coming on" - implies that the text will finally disclose what it really

means by "sleep", but the question of what is "coming on" (rest, winter or death) remains unresolved. The traditional reinstatement of rational control in dream poetry - the textual phantasy disavowed as only a dream or "just some human sleep", the impersonal and self-conscious use of "One" - does not enact an immediate or secure return to reason or "sense". Human sleep brings dreams, the realm of desire. Sleep and dreams do not necessarily provide pleasurable escape and rest. As in the closing lines of Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale', the poem remains in a state of suspension, between sleeping and waking, leaving unresolved what "sleep" really means. Whatever sleep it is, the closing lines perform an even more radical falling asleep, a more extreme lapsing, than the "drowsing off" in the early part of the poem. The next step "beyond" is to consider further the "it" that constitutes the text's troubled sleep.

Hillis Miller describes Wordsworth's 'Dream of the Arab' in The Prelude in terms that are reminiscent of 'After Apple-Picking':

..the relation between dream and waking is so immediate and is made so explicit that the dream may almost be called a daydream, or at any rate a so-called 'hypnagogic' dream, that sort of dream which provides an immediate reworking by a man who has just fallen asleep of what he has been perceiving and thinking, rather than the rising up within deep sleep of buried images and memories.<sup>(30)</sup>

Royle notes several sideways substitutions in Miller's remarks, arguing that the notion of the hypnagogic dream is "immeasurably complicated" in several ways. One complication concerns Miller's experiential reading which does not confront "the question of the identity 'of the dreamer' and what happens to this identity through the dream".<sup>(31)</sup> The represented thoughts in the text do not correspond to the operations of an actual sleeping mind: as has been shown earlier, the dream-subject

and the subject of writing are both problematic categories. A second complication noted by Royle relates directly to Wordsworth's poem but can be extended persuasively to 'After Apple Picking'. This complication arises through

the way in which the text of the 'dream itself' - if it were ever really possible to say such a thing - is embedded and encrypted in a context of other texts and dreams, books and readings; it is cryptaesthetic; it buries itself, uncannily performing what it describes,<sup>(32)</sup>

Frost's poem does not so much describe as "perform" a peculiar type of dreaming that is to do with prophesy, intertextuality and death. It is a feature of this thesis that certain texts will be seen to "dream" of each other, and Frost's poem echoes other texts, including Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' and Freud's essay Beyond the Pleasure Principle. A poetic dream embeds itself, falls asleep in the networks of literature, losing itself in the crypt of reading. Yet the poem is not just a matter of the buried traces of texts; it involves a thanatographic movement, a writing or ciphering of one's death by burying one's own name, entrusting it in cryptic form to posterity. Since, in its iterability, the name carries death, death writes through the text, an unnamed "it" that is never presentable but never truly absent. Frost's thanatography will be considered through Freud's speculations on the death drive and the notion of the entropic pull.

### **Speculations on Frost: the Dream of an Afterlife**

Derrida's re-reading of Freud's Beyond the Pleasure Principle, which discerns a connection between a certain strategy or performativity of writing and the "death drive", offers an intriguing link with Frost's

poem. Freud's and Frost's texts derive from a particular historical moment and in different ways are concerned with encrypting or encoding the kernel of a name (that carries death) and entrusting it to the future. John C. Kemp dates the writing of 'After Apple Picking' between May and July 1913.<sup><33></sup> Freud began work on a first draft of Beyond the Pleasure Principle in March 1919 and completed it in 1920. However, as Angela Richards notes in her editorial comments, the essay derives much of its material from earlier work on metapsychology, namely 'The Two Principles of Mental Functioning' (1911), 'Narcissism' (1914) and 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915) (OM 272). For a work of speculation so concerned with genealogy, Freud's essay itself has a long history, a complex (re)birth. This reading is not a case of speculating on Frost's familiarity with Freud's work; it is rather an attempt to trace the faltering movements and speculative ventures of 'After Apple Picking'.

Although the title of the essay broaches the possibility of crossing thresholds and boundaries, of making advances (not least on the reader), Derrida argues that Beyond the Pleasure Principle is a particularly halting, risky endeavour for Freud. Lacking secure footing, it occupies an uncertain space between scientific objectivity and abstract theorising. Hesitant and uncertain in its movements and tentative conclusions, the essay proceeds a-thetically, tending "to bring out what makes it elude the appeal of a 'last instance'".<sup><34></sup> For Derrida, speculation "is not only a mode of research named by Freud, not only the object of his discourse, but also the operation of his writing".<sup><35></sup> Frost's poem too tests limits, positing and depositing, an oscillation that is actually a stasis. There is a similar sense of

restance or drifting (to sleep), and the text is never sure of its definitions: definitions are used here in the dual sense of findings or deductions and textual limits.

Derrida considers what is at stake in Freud's theoretical speculations about what (if anything) lies beyond the pleasure principle. In doing so, Derrida advances a reconception of autobiography which tests the limits of the categories "life" and "work". There is a well-documented biographical supplement to the writing of Beyond the Pleasure Principle: the death of Freud's daughter Sophie, Freud's long struggle with cancer, and his deep pessimism in the "wake" of the First World War. These deathly "shadows" are assumed to inform the gloomy reflections throughout Freud's later work. Yet there are also issues of contest and priority at stake, both "personal" - an ambivalence towards Sophie's husband - and "professional" - an anxiety over the future direction and disposition of psychoanalysis. The nodal point of Freud's essay, the description of the fort/da game that Ernst plays with the wooden reel, meshes together the "theoretical" and "autobiographical" trajectories of the discussion. Indeed, this witnessed scene, "a legendary argument that is neither story nor history nor myth nor fiction"<sup>(36)</sup>, traverses the distinctions between personal and professional. Ernst's game functions not only as a theoretical proposal but also as an autobiography of Freud; Derrida thinks of autobiography here not so much as testamentary writing as a "more or less living description of his writing" (119).

In the *fort/da* (gone..there) episode, where Freud's grandson Ernst repeatedly winds and unwinds a reel or bobbin as a form of exercising mastery over his absent mother, Freud looks on as an "interested



witness". His interest, argues Derrida, is the result of more than personal or intellectual curiosity. He is a "busy" witness, "busy..producing the institution of his desire, making it the start of his own genealogy" (116). Freud reconstructs this domestic event in such a way as to secure his heritage:

..the speculating grandfather...produces his text,  
making a contract with himself so as to be left holding  
all the strings of his line, descendants and ascendants,  
in an incontestable ascendancy. (134)

Christopher Norris comments on the calculated risk of Freud's provocative thesis:

Like little Ernst, he wants to venture on to dangerous ground, experience the provisional loss of mastery, so long as he can pull on the string, so to speak, and recover his powers of theoretical command.<sup>(37)</sup>

Yet, what Ernst's game "reveals" is the death drive, the beyond which overruns the pleasure principle. A pervasive, unnameable otherness invades the household, the site of heritage and authority, and challenges the law of the *oikos*. So, too, an invisible, silent other invades the "familiar" rural setting of 'After Apple Picking'.

The dream of Jacob's ladder in Genesis performs a projective movement that perhaps confirms the "incontestable ascendancy" that Freud envisages for his name as psychoanalysis. This ancient dream-sequence invents or invests in a future, wondering at a beyond, an afterlife. Like a dream-text, it weaves between past, present and future. As a represented dream inside a literary text, Jacob's dream is doubly displaced from conventional notions of causality and linear time. In the dream, God declares that Jacob's descendants will multiply and prosper: "and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen 28: 14). God confirms Jacob's patriarchal sovereignty and

also assures his earthly "immortality", in that Jacob will live on through his line of descent. God's promise ensures that Jacob can transmit his name, marked already by repetition and death, through his descendants. The emphasis on patrilineal descent, an assured masculine legacy, finds an echo in the "great harvest" of 'After Apple Picking', an abundance that is measured in Biblical proportions: "There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch". In the poem, apple-picking can be seen to operate as an analogue of prosperity, a means of displacing the finality of the cellar bin, as if anxious to ensure that the work will not be fruitless, of no worth. Frost's writing is saturated with Christian echoes of a futuristic or projective character. In 'Education by Poetry' he claims: "Belief in God is a relationship you enter into with Him to bring about the future".<sup>(39)</sup>

These two strangely linked examples of speculation - one from the Old Testament and the other from the new testament of psychoanalysis - form a tentative yet suggestive intertextual framework for Frost's poem, which performs another speculative venture. Poirier says that in his poetry "Frost is mostly an older version of himself looking at a younger".<sup>(39)</sup> Wallace Martin outlines Frost's thanatographic strategy, the writing of one's own death:

The poem, in Frost's view, is for its maker always a double reading (of past experience, and of other texts) and hence always a double repetition. The poet is thanatographer, perpetually rediscovering a dead self and finding that it provided for a future - the "now" of its verbal memorial.<sup>(40)</sup>

In this way Frost ironises the humanist "self", but this thanatography remains self-conscious artifice, a rhetorical strategy. The vision through the sheet of ice in 'After Apple Picking' opens onto a more radical thanatopoetics, beyond any traditional notions of conscious

authorial intention. The "strangeness" of sight cannot be erased after looking through "a pane of glass". If the glass is a window on "a world of hoary grass" it depicts an icy morning, but "frost" is the one obvious descriptive word missing from this wintry perspective. This is not simply an oversight, or poetic licence, in a poem turned towards a beyond, that speculates, transmits to the future. "Hoary" stands in for frost and, not incidentally, also connotes great age and ancient lineage, a genealogical association that echoes the "promise" of Jacob's dream. Faithful to the traditions of dreams in "classical antiquity", the vision is prophetic: as the glass falls, "I could see what form my dreaming was about to take." This moment of dreaming acts as an encoding and bequeathing, a projective message or a signature to the future that detaches itself from the singular moment and intention of its production.<sup>41</sup> Writing acts as the carrier of death but in its iterability also enables the endurance of a name, even one that is buried, secret or cryptic. Such a reading is not proposing a more sophisticated psychobiographical approach, but attempting to adhere to a different "topography" of autobiography suggested by Derrida, who argues that Beyond the Pleasure Principle writes the auto-biographical differently:

A "domain" opens up in which the "inscription" of a subject in his (sic) text is also the necessary condition for the pertinence and performance of a text, for its "worth" beyond what is called empirical subjectivity...<sup>42</sup>

This complex inscription of the subject is ineluctably caught up by, and in, the performativity of a text, an inscription of readers and writers.

Yet the specular morning scene records the dispersals of writing, name and identity. If the "glass" is a kind of mirror or frame for

identity, then it refracts the gaze, dividing the "I" that looks from the "I" that is reflected. Lacan emphasises that the imaginary structuration of the mirror stage is "fundamentally alienating" and tied in with death.<sup>(43)</sup> As the pane of glass shatters, it offers not a reflection but a fracturing of identity (not that the mirror-image of a double would be any less disconcerting). The subject cannot render itself in terms of faithful representation: the glass does not reflect how s/he "truly is". Instead, the subject is forced to render up its self-image, being made strange, other to itself, precisely how the dream-subject (and the subject of writing) is defined. The "world of hoary grass" is other, producing a reciprocal estrangement in the one who speculates through the pane of glass. Just as the poem's scenes (imaginary, remembered, dreamt?) shift and transform, always strange to sight, so the subject, like the magnified apples, appears and disappears from the field of vision.

This disappearance and return performs a similar movement to that witnessed by Freud, a reeling-in like the bobbin or spool that little Ernst repeatedly winds in and throws away. In its way, the various discarded interpretations of the game resemble the inconclusive speculations and reflections on the nature of "sleep" in the poem. The visual connotations of speculation and reflection are particularly apposite when the chain of references to seeing and looking in the text is considered. This poetic version of *fort/da* induces a different sort of "reeling", however; in its heady projective vision, between waking and sleeping, the text spins and swirls uncertainly as it posits the future of a name, steps around the limits, the beyond of the subject. In doing so, it is traversed by the beyond of writing, which can be

categorised variously as the real, the body or death. The text's speculations do not unleash the work of the "death drive", since that work (if it can be termed work) is always already taking place in the space of a text. Rather, to unravel further the string motif, the text permits a certain weaving or rhythm to be traced. Might this suggest, in the manner of much of Frost's poetry, that death "is the rhythm of life"?<sup>(44)</sup> The visionary moment of the breaking glass intensifies (it cannot be said that it *produces*, since difference is already lodged in the text) a difference or strangeness that inhabits the text. Lacan stresses that aggressivity corresponds to a splitting of the subject against itself; the text can be read as opening onto a difference or foreignness leading to a dream of self-annihilation that flits through the drifting, entropic rhythms of the closing lines. The next section will consider another type of fall that will lead directly onto questions of sleep and death.

### Apples in the Fall

'After Apple-Picking' may be termed a "dream vision" with some justification; like a traditional "dream vision", it appears as if the poem is building up to some revelation or spiritual truth. Apples evoke Eden, temptation and the Fall. This Christian, sacralizing reading is advocated assertively and unequivocally by Poirier: "To speak of apples is to speak of the Fall".<sup>(45)</sup> Reading the text is thus a case of interpreting and *knowing* the meaning of the images that begin to unground or suspend the distinction between waking thought and dreaming. Yet the text simultaneously frustrates understanding, rendering the act

of elucidation uncertain and speculative. The Fall from Grace functions as a necessary reminder of the sinful state which any Christian aspires to leave, but it is also a reminder of the transgressive potential of desire and sexuality. This duality marks the intent contemplation of the unpicked apples, and the lingering ache of remembered satisfaction suggested by "Cherish" looks back to the temptation in Eden:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat,

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked... (Genesis 3: 6-7)

Looking, desiring, knowing: these are the crucial determinants of original sin. Adam and Eve aspire to absolute, transcendent knowledge, but in that very aspiration human insufficiency has already been recognised. The desire to know the other, in order to know what the self desires, underlies all quests for knowledge.<sup>(46)</sup> God has created Eden to satisfy every human need: the activation of desire, the supposition of demand, is a transgressive force, disrupting the stability of this perfect and endlessly pleasurable existence. Knowledge, a guarantee of existence for the subject, also institutes difference, a falling away from origins. The desire for the Logos and the imaginary plenitude of presence can never be fulfilled, an irretrievable and haunting loss.<sup>(47)</sup>

Eating the apple expresses a desire to know what more is to be desired than can be satisfied by the "perfection" of Eden. In the Garden it is not the physical act of sex, but the mental awareness of sexuality and incompleteness, that D.H. Lawrence polemically terms "sinful":

Why were we driven out of Paradise? Why did we fall into this unappeasable dissatisfaction? Not because we sinned. Ah, no. All the animals in Paradise enjoyed the sensual passion of coition. Not because we sinned,

but because we got our sex into our head, '48)

Lawrence argues from within a narrow conceptual framework that is heterosexual and phallogentric. '49) He contends that the will to "know" sex is a prohibitive endeavour, repressing all that is joyful and intuitive. Lawrence's commitment to the heterosexual genital act leads him to conclude that "coition is the essential clue to sex". '50) He views the unconscious as "by its very nature, unanalysable, undefinable, inconceivable". '51) Illuminatingly in the context of the remarks on Eden, Elizabeth Wright comments that Lawrence "sees the Freudian enterprise as a second Fall; the will to know the unknowable becomes a mission of doom". '52) Despite Lawrence's misreading of Freud, his attack on psychoanalysis raises important questions: can the unconscious be "known" and is it possible to know or recognise desire? To ask what desire "is" presupposes a metaphysics and yet the place of desire is *both* empty and constitutive. '53) Desire can be mapped or traced only in its absence or its passing, through the transformations and displacements it enacts. Furthermore, for all the limitations of Lawrence's argument, "unappeasable dissatisfaction" acknowledges an irruptive, conflictual itinerary of desire that can be traced in Frost's poem.

This "unappeasable dissatisfaction", the insufficiency and irresistibility of desire is a fundamental part of the human organism, the seed of the forbidden fruit of knowledge. All fruit, however cherished, must fall. Every stimulus of desire, however unwillingly relinquished, remains ultimately unsatisfying, incomplete, an inadequation of pleasure. Desire is always elusive, somewhere else. The picked apples excite the senses and this tremor of apparently innocent

desire inevitably recalls the earliest Fall. The apples become a locus of the desire that pervades the text. Luring the gaze, the fruit has already instituted the return of desire, subverting the yearning for stability, for a state of original innocence expressed by "Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall." The desire activated by the apple-harvest is only acknowledged by the text in its absence. Like the fallen fruit, it has already slipped through the fingers: "not let fall" is uttered retrospectively, in the wake of desire. Representative of all that is homely and long-familiar, the fallen fruit induces a nostalgic yearning for an "original" source of pleasure.<sup>(54)</sup> This nostalgia accords with Richard Boothby's comments on Lacan's reworking of Freud's *das Ding*:

For Lacan, human desire is forever haunted by the dream of 'the thing', the dream of re-finding a primordially lost object, of recovering an original source of plenitude...human desire longs to 're-find' an object that was in fact never possessed, an object that existed only as a mirage, indeed, that may have existed only as the shadow of a mirage.<sup>(55)</sup>

Jane Gallop demonstrates how, in Lacan's topology of the human subject, the mirror stage is another version of the "tragedy" of Adam and Eve, "a fleeting moment of jubilation...doomed glory, a paradise lost".<sup>(56)</sup> Adam and Eve are already created before being expelled from Paradise, thus truly entering the human condition; the child is already born but does not become a "self", cast out into the world, until the mirror stage. The mirror stage offers a sense of ideal completeness, "a perfect control that assures immediate satisfaction of desire".<sup>(57)</sup> Like the eating of the apple, the mirror stage is an ambiguous moment of revelation, signifying both the entry into knowledge and the irreparable loss of original innocence, the inaugural wound in the human relation to



the world. As Gallop argues, the Fall and the mirror stage are mythic moments of (mis)recognition, illusory self-knowledge and mastery:

When Adam and Eve eat from the tree of knowledge,  
they anticipate mastery. But what they actually  
gain is a horrified recognition of their nakedness.  
This resembles the movement by which the infant,  
having assumed by anticipation a totalized, mastered  
body, then retroactively perceives his (sic) inadequacy  
(his 'nakedness'),<sup>(58)</sup>

Adam and Eve discover difference and desire; similarly, the subject's subsequent quest for the lost "self" is also predicated on this original loss and the discovery of difference.

This longing for a return to an original condition can be characterized as an entropic pull, the desire to return to an undifferentiated state. The entropic pull looks back to the prelinguistic, pre-oedipal primitivism of earliest infancy, before the child begins to separate out from its surroundings. The child is "l'hommelette", not yet a "self" but an uncoordinated, amorphous jumble of impulses, a matrix of unsymbolised somatic excitations. This chaos predates the mirror stage, the acquisition of identity and the insertion of the subject into language. A striking feature of the Garden of Eden as described in Genesis is its child-like innocence and freshness, a geographical representation of the primal state.<sup>(59)</sup> Freud describes this nostalgia for an Edenic state of absolute satisfaction as a longing for Nirvana, where all tensions are reduced. Freud first refers to the Nirvana principle, a term attributed to Barbara Low, in Beyond and Pleasure Principle, then elaborates on the term more fully in 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1923):

..we have unhesitatingly identified the pleasure-unpleasure principle with this Nirvana principle. Every unpleasure ought thus to coincide with a heightening, and every pleasure with a lowering, of mental tension due to

stimulus; the Nirvana principle (and the pleasure principle which is supposedly identical with it) would be entirely in the service of the death instincts, whose aim is to conduct the restlessness of life into the stability of the inorganic state, and it would have the function of giving warnings against the demands of the life instincts - the libido - which try to disturb the intended course of life. But such a view cannot be correct. (OM 414)

(The last sentence attests to Freud's inability or unwillingness to take that step "beyond" the pleasure principle, his "a-thetic" hesitation or wavering.)

Lacan identifies the longing for unity, the zero point of entropy, as the profoundest desire of the subject: "an eternal desire for the non-relationship of zero, where identity is meaningless".<sup>(60)</sup> The state of entropy inclines towards an end to all tension but, as Leo Bersani argues, the entropic impulse is profoundly ambivalent:

If pleasure results from the reduction of tension due to stimuli, the ultimate pleasure is the elimination of all stimuli, and the wish to die is a fantasy of ecstatic inertia.<sup>(61)</sup>

In the pursuit of "ultimate pleasure", the "elimination" of stimuli, this fantasy of "ecstatic inertia" can be seen to contain elements of the erotic and aggressive drives of the organism. Although conflictual and irruptive, the entropic pull also signifies a tendency to move towards quiescence and stability. Plenitude will replace absence, reducing difference and distinction; the constant circulation, disruption and explosive displacements of desire can be arrested. (This desire for plenitude can also be traced in the paternal "fullness" promised to Jacob in his dream.) Rosemary Jackson characterises this oscillation: "[m]ovement and stillness, life and death, subject and object, mind and matter, become as one."<sup>(62)</sup> Strictly, entropy could be

described as a desire for rebirth without the rebirth of desire, an echo of the Christian concept of eternal life. Janus-like, it looks back to "Eden" and forward to the ultimate satisfaction of desire. Similarly, the infant subject is set on its path, compelled to look forward to the satisfaction of desire and back to its own origins.

It is tempting to categorize the apparently contrary impulses that characterize the entropic pull as progressive life instincts and reactionary death instincts. Yet this opposition is problematic, not least because both drives move towards the end of desire, albeit in different directions. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud hypothesises the relationship between Eros and Thanatos, coming to see these instincts not as diametrically opposed but intricately linked. Freud emphasises the conservatism of all instincts, which seek to bring back earlier states of living substance. Nevertheless, a clear distinction is drawn between the death instincts and life instincts, which are subdivided into sexual and "self-preservative" instincts. The death instincts seek to return life to the inorganic stage that precedes life itself, a state that "totally undoes the organism."<sup>(63)</sup> The sexual instincts also seek to bring back an earlier state but Thanatos seeks a return to an earlier state than Eros. As Gallop points out, Freud immediately contradicts himself, asserting that the sexual instincts do *not* seek to restore an earlier state. This seems to represent an attempt to separate out the life and death instincts, to make clear the "great opposition" between Eros and Thanatos. The self-preservational instincts struggle against dangers that would facilitate death, the ultimate return, more rapidly. In this sense, these instincts are not reactionary. Logically extended, however, this self-preservative

tendency does not protect life but ensures that the organism can look forward to death in its "own fashion":

The instincts of self-preservation, of self-assertion and of mastery...are component instincts whose function it is to assure that the organism shall follow its own path to death, and to ward off any possible ways of returning to inorganic existence other than those which are immanent in the organism itself...Thus these guardians of life, too, were originally the myrmidons of death. Hence arises the paradoxical situation that the living organism struggles most energetically against events (dangers, in fact) which might help it to attain its life's aim rapidly - by a kind of short-circuit. (OM 311-12)

Mastery is drawn precisely to that which will end all mastery. Freud can only account for this paradoxical situation by concluding that the life instincts appear to serve the death instincts, at once denying and anticipating death. The life instincts, supposedly set on the pursuit of satisfaction, actually defend the organism's preordained path towards the end of desire, fulfilling its original life plan. Thus the impulse to return to origins and the drive towards complete satisfaction are not opposed movements but rather different trajectories of desire, performing a radical oscillation between violence and quietude, disorder and stability: "...desire merely conveys what it maintains of an image of the past towards an ever short and limited future" (FFC 31).

The text's nostalgic yearning is doomed: the Fall is final, and Paradise can never be regained. Any act of thought or representation, although it carries death within it, must necessarily elide the impulse towards non-being, the desire for the ultimate satisfaction (elimination) of desire. The entropic pull supposes the completion of desire yet phantasy, the recreation and support of desire, must not reach the end of desire since it cannot function without a lack or gap,

however it strives to satisfy demand. That is why death remains unspoken, traceable only by its silence.

### A Sleep of Death

A common facet of Frost's poetry is to present death as brutally final, stripped of any occasion, yet as Catherine Belsey argues, death is "the supreme fear of the modern self". The subject cannot easily contemplate its own extinction: "To say, 'I want to die' is simultaneously to produce the self and to will the abolition it dreads".<sup>64</sup> Of course, the "death drive" is not simply a case of the subject consciously willing its abolition. As Freud's tortuous reasoning demonstrates, any impulse towards self-annihilation does not follow a straightforward path. Death, the limit of the subject's historical function<sup>65</sup>, remains extra-discursive, unnameable, outstripping language. The subject desires to remain immortal as a knowing self but death literally cannot be known, because it exceeds and brings an end to consciousness:

That our own death is unknowable thus marks the sovereign subject as finite in more than a merely chronological sense. The fear of death is the recognition of the limits of the subject's imaginary sovereignty.<sup>66</sup>

Death is the end of difference, but it is also the end of the coherent "self". Death weaves through writing as difference, and the shadow of death looms over the text, representing an insistent other or the silent "centre" of the poem, drawing attention to itself precisely through its significant absence. Never referred to explicitly, its presence acknowledged indirectly by hints and allusions, death may be the unnamed

"what" that will trouble the speaker's sleep. Meanings are offered by the text only through a process of indirection and constantly deferred revelation, and Bersani terms this lack or absence a "fantasmatic supplement":

There is a fantasmatic supplement, an absent extension of itself which a text never explicitly articulates but incessantly refers to, which it makes imperative only, as it were, by the high visibility of significant lacks.<sup>(67)</sup>

This visibility relates to what Derrida terms the inaudibility of the "death drives" in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. They are "already at work", "written in silence" in Freud's essay long before they are named.<sup>(68)</sup>

The interpenetration or imbrication of life and death, desire and the end of desire in the text is suggested by the ambiguous meanings attributed to "sleep" in the closing section:

One can see what will trouble  
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is,  
Were he not gone,  
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his  
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,  
Or just some human sleep.

Who or what is the one that sees or overlooks: the one that witnesses the strangeness of sight, the one that observes the text's shifting scenes of phantasy, the reader? Indeed, is it/s/he "one" or multiple? If dreams are a matter of seeing, then seeing is also knowing: sleep is a state to be classified *and* a state of revelation. What is described or written down here? It is not sleep, since that enigmatic state resists conclusive description. Equally, death can be "defined" only in its elusive mobility and shadowy presence, as it flits through writing. It is possible to argue that death "in" writing performs a de-scribing but cannot itself be described. Describing is also a venture, "a setting

forth in words" (OED). Returning to its Latin roots, de-scribing may be defined here as an entropic writing-down or away from, a drifting-off. Is the text sliding into the cellar-bin, into a final resting place, a closure, abolition or erasure that is simultaneously resisted by its own iterability? The text would then be testing its limits, playing a last gambit or enacting a final, reeling instance of *fort/da*.

The whispering, entrancing phantom of death that flits through the text sends out a faint, muffled echo of Hamlet's famous speech:

To die, to sleep -  
No more, and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished, To die, to sleep -  
To sleep - perchance to dream; ay there's the rub,  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil  
Must give us pause...<sup>(69)</sup>

This passage, pausing reflectively before "sleep", raises precisely the question of what sleep, the "it" of Frost's poem, might be. There are several persuasive similarities between the poem and Hamlet's soliloquy. Firstly, the dreaming "sleep of death" represents the ultimate "consummation" of erotic and aggressive drives. Secondly, and more strikingly, the insistent repetition of "sleep" echoes through both passages, a rhythm that is both thematic and somatic. The currents that cross the text are lodged between the work of the mind and the exigencies of the body. (The body referred to here is not that of a weary represented speaker but the body in general, implicating all subjects in, or of, language.)

This raises, in Freud's terminology, the problematic relationship between "the psychical apparatus and its somatic substratum". Lacan insists that psychic life can never fully represent the body's animating

forces: the task of achieving "complete coincidence between the psychical and somatic" is strictly impossible.<sup>(70)</sup> The "real" of the body, its ineffable need, is unthinkable in a text, an unrepresentable unconscious. As Richard Boothby comments, the union of word and flesh remains unimaginable:

There can be no total psychical representation of the reality of the animate subject. The final implication of what is beyond the pleasure principle is that the real of the body remains beyond our powers to imagine it. (225)

Yet the boundary between mind and body, at the limits of sense and signification, is necessarily a site of crossing and disruption, a moving point of difference. Human desire is mental and bodily, and those very categories can scarcely be thought separately. Perhaps paradoxically, another unimaginable reality - death - relates to the question of the unthinkability of the body. As Boothby argues:

As we have interpreted it, the concept of the death drive bears directly on this issue, as the 'death' at stake is not the demise of the physical organism but rather the mutative effects on psychical structure exerted by energies that remain foreign to its organization. The action of the death drive effects a transmission across the boundary between the psychical and the somatic. (224)

Here a parallel is suggested between somatic energies exerting pressure on "psychical structure" and the way in which the rhythms of the body work over reading and writing. It is the enigmatic death drive, inimical yet compelling, contaminating yet ineradicable, that effects this transmission, precisely through a disruption of distinctions and a disturbance of limits.

The third strong connection between 'After Apple Picking' and Hamlet's speech lies in the notion of flesh as "heir", which suggests the genealogical strand in the poem. Yet who will inherit 'After Apple



Picking'? Assigned to an uncertain future, the text survives the flesh, but a name remains and becomes "heir" to language. In this way, as in Jacob's dream, flesh survives "in" the text. The woodchuck's hibernation offers a motif of physical survival: after winter sleep, a seasonal death, there is a reawakening in spring. Hibernation satisfies biological *instinkt* rather than *trieb*, however: the woodchuck will be reborn into the natural, organic world. The woodchuck's winter dormancy responds to biological need like human sleep, but human sleep also possesses psychic significance. It is the state where dreams take place, and oneiric discourse "speaks" the language of desire. The relative constancy of the drive separates human from animal desire, as does "the greater latitude and openness to variation between the drive impulse and its mode and means of satisfaction".<sup>71</sup> The drive is a psychological representative of need arising within the organism; thus *trieb* is a matter of representation as well as biology. The very presence of desire as it is imprinted in language - the woodchuck cannot say anything - distinguishes human beings from other living organisms. The woodchuck is not reborn into language.

The "long sleep" of death is a traditional image; the conjunctions of night and the onset of winter, "hoary" grass, the changing of the seasons and the evocative and unspecific "all" striking the earth represent conventional and unmistakable allusions to age and death, underscored by reading "Were he not gone" as an isolated line. This could well stand as an epitaph, and although contextually the line refers to the woodchuck, who or what might be already "gone" in the text? Does some ghost haunt the text, working in the earth? The woodchuck cannot speak about its long hibernatory sleep, but can the

dead speak from the "beyond" of their long sleep, from beyond the death of the mortal body? Some uncanny, half-recognised phantom returns as these closing lines attempt to reel in something that lies beyond the text, at the limits of consciousness and the borders of the knowable. The text takes a risk, gambles on an uncertain outcome. A projective vision is displaced onto the figure of the woodchuck, which "could" report back from the "beyond" of its "long sleep". A futuristic prospect (in a visionary and financial sense) is a necessary and unavoidable risk or gamble, with an uncertain outcome: the dream of "living on" (and not just in the sense of a religious afterlife) represents the human subject's imaginary supplement to the blankness and finality of death. The text entrusts a name to an unknown, late other. <sup>(72)</sup>

The text is pervaded with loss, incompleteness: everything is "gone". The harvest is gathered but incomplete, the year is drawing to a close, and the natural world is drifting off into winter sleep. Sleep is a provisional closure that does not arrest the circulation of desire. Only the longest human sleep - death - offers stability and quiescence. Here is one crux of the poem: how else to avoid desire and escape the strictures of human sleep, other than by moving beyond the mobility of erotic drives, by desiring the end of desire? This dual movement, back to Eden and forward to a "proper" death, mirrors the constant exchange on the ladder of dreams. Human sleep is a state of rest that is acutely marked by the inexhaustibility of desire, which never sleeps. Above all, sleep never truly comes to this text. In what sense *does* language sleep, with its echoes, traces and remainders? The poem can be read as under the sway of an *arrêt de mort*, a death sentence but also a delay that arrests death, suspends its arrival. <sup>(73)</sup> Writing bears the mark of death

within it but also survives that death. 'After Apple Picking' patrols the borderline that Freud steps along in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', not quite naming death and not quite beyond its power. The text drowns to a form of resolution, yet that closure is put in question: "sleep" suggests both a temporary resting point (and one still traversed by desire) and death, a permanent sleep and the end to all tension. Such uncertainty perhaps bears out Frost's own comment that a poem is a temporary stay against confusion. The next chapter will examine another haunted, entranced text that hovers between conscious and unconscious, sleeping and waking.

## Footnotes

1. René Char, Fureur and Mystère cited in Foucault, 'Dream, Imagination and Existence', p.30.
2. Robert Frost, The Complete Poems (London: Jonathan Cape, 1961), pp.88-90.
3. Robert Frost (Boston: Twayne, 1982), p.112.
4. Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.292.
5. See also John C. Kemp, Robert Frost and New England: The Poet as Regionalist (Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1979), p.126: the speaker's "repose involves both physical fatigue and the satisfaction of fulfilment".
6. Baudelaire and Freud (London: University of California Press, 1977), p.39.
7. A Future for Astyanax: Character and Desire in Literature (London: Marion Boyars, 1978), p.10.
8. Bersani, Baudelaire and Freud, p.40. (Further references given in main text.)
9. Poirier, p.293.
10. Easthope, PAP, p.25.
11. Anika Lemaire, Jacques Lacan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.173.
12. Gerber, p.114.
13. Poirier, for example, comments that the ladder points to a destination "beyond itself" (p.293). In a different sense, the concluding section of this chapter contends that the poem does indeed point to a "beyond" that it cannot foresee.
14. Skura, p.149.
15. 'Unity and Difference: Poetry and Criticism', in Literary Theory and Poetry: Extending the Canon, ed. D. Murray (London: Batsford, 1989), p.11.
16. Thom, p.3.
17. Metz, p.237.
18. Wright, p.112.
19. Metz, p.232.
20. *ibid.*, p.239.
21. Thom, p.18.
22. Metz, p.239.
23. Susan Friedman, 'Creativity and the Childbirth Metaphor', in Speaking of Gender, ed. Elaine Showalter (London: Routledge, 1989), p.77.
24. Poirier, p.297.
25. *ibid.*, p.291.
26. See Royle's Telepathy and Literature. In his study of Wuthering Heights, Royle discusses the capacity of the text to leave a reader both "asleep" and conscious: "The text can appear to keep you absolutely awake, while sending you to sleep. It can appear to turn you - the anonymous reader - into a vigilant observer of Lockwood's encryptment at Wuthering Heights, a meticulous and rational reader of his crazy nightmare, his blindly supernatural experience, while actually, at the same time, by the same movement, drawing you in, distracting your attention from your own inclusion" (pp.48-9). These comments have evident and persuasive implications for a reading of Frost's poem. It

- too represents "dreams", inducing, drawing in, distracting the reader by blurring the distinction between waking and sleeping.
27. Selected Essays (London: Faber, 1963), p.21. This quotation will be considered again in Chapter Five.
  28. Royle, p.61.
  29. Poirier, p.297.
  30. J. Hillis Miller, 'The Stone and The Shell: The Problem of Poetic Form in Wordsworth's Dream of the Arab', in Young ed., p.253.
  31. Royle, p.135.
  32. *ibid.*, p.135.
  33. Kemp, p.98.
  34. 'Speculations on Freud', trans. Ian McLeod, in *Oxford Literary Review*, 3, 2 (1978), p.79.
  35. *ibid.*, p.92.
  36. Derrida, 'Coming into One's Own', trans. James Hulbert, in Psychoanalysis and the Question of the Text, ed. Geoffrey Hartmann (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p.115. (Further references given in main text.)
  37. Derrida (London: Fontana, 1987), p.209.
  38. Poirier, p.290.
  39. *ibid.*, p.32.
  40. 'Frost's Thanatography', in Post-Structuralist Readings of English Poetry, ed. Richard Machin and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.400.
  41. Derrida, 'Signature Event Context', in Glyph 1 (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p.194. Derrida's remarks in this essay on the survivability of writing are particularly germane to this discussion: "For a writing to be a writing it must continue to 'act' and to be readable even when what is called the author of the writing no longer answers for what he has written, for what he seems to have signed, be it because of a temporary absence, because he is dead, or, more generally, because he has not employed his absolutely actual and present intention or attention, the plenitude of his desire to say what he means, in order to sustain what seems to be written 'in his name'" (p.181). Derrida discusses autobiography, thanatography and (con)signing to the future extensively in 'Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name' trans. Avital Ronnell and 'Roundtable on Autobiography' trans. Peggy Kamuf, both of which appear in The Ear of the Other ed. Christie McDonald (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988).
  42. 'Coming into One's Own', p.135.
  43. Boothby, Death and Desire, p.22.
  44. Donald J. Greiner, Robert Frost: The Poet and his Critics (Chicago: American Library Association, 1974), p.233.
  45. Poirier, p.298.
  46. E, p.301. In Lacanian terms, Adam and Eve seek to understand themselves by finding the Other: "desire is knotted to the desire of the Other...in that loop lies the desire to know". The move from an other to the Other is of course not straightforward. In The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, Lacan defines the Other as "the locus in which is situated the chain of the signifier that governs whatever may be made present of the subject" (p.203), a definition that keeps in place the notion of a transcendent, governing presence and that retains a sense of metaphysics and systematicity.

47. Catherine Belsey writes of the splintering of the Protestant church into various sects in the seventeenth century, which left no central institution to guarantee scriptural truth, a situation leading to the belief that "the Logos had left the earth": "The Fall, the moment of division between human and divine, therefore prised open in this period as never before the gap between signification and truth, earth and heaven": in John Milton: Language, Gender, Power (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p.23. For the purposes of the present discussion, it is sufficient to note that this early modern disjunction between heaven and earth and the dispersal of signification and/or hermeneutics as described by Belsey recalls the ladder of Jacob's dream. It also links an ordinary moment with questions of genealogy.
48. D.H. Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis of the Unconscious (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p.85.
49. See, in particular, Kate Millett on Lawrence's idealization of the phallus, in Sexual Politics (London: Virago, 1991), pp.237-293.
50. Lawrence, p.17.
51. *ibid.*, p.214.
52. Wright, p.51.
53. Jacqueline Rose, Sexuality in the Field of Vision (London: Verso, 1986), p.37.
54. Frost's comment on the dust jacket of his 1929 collection West-Running Brook articulates writing as nostalgic: "A poem begins with a lump in the throat; a homesickness or a love-sickness. It is a reaching-out toward expression; an effort to find fulfilment". Cited by Lawrence Thompson, 'Robert Frost Theory of Poetry', in Robert Frost: A Collection of Critical Essays ed. James M. Cox (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1962), p.16.
55. Boothby, p.31.
56. Reading Lacan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), p.85. Both versions of this tragedy describe two-part birth processes, the first birth into "nature" and the second into "history". The distinctions between nature and history are problematic, however, acting less as firm categories than moving points of difference.
57. Wright, p.108.
58. Gallop, p.85.
59. Interestingly, John F. Lynen links Frost's pastoral technique with questions of origins and time: "Pastoralism, whether in Frost or in the poets of the Arcadian tradition, will always at first appear to involve an escape from the world as we know it, but actually it is an exploration upstream, past the city with its riverside factories and shipping, on against the current of time and change to the clear waters of the source..." ('Frost: A Modern Poet', in Cox ed., p.196). This "upstream" pastoral nostalgia for a preindustrial age is perhaps revealing if the collection in which 'After Apple Picking' appeared, North of Boston, is set against an historical background of rural economic upheaval and declining prosperity in New England. On this historical context see W.G. O'Donnell, 'Robert Frost and New England: A Revaluation', also in Cox ed., p.50.
60. Lacan, The Language of the Self: the Function of Language in Psychoanalysis, trans. Anthony Wilden (New York: Dell, 1968), p.191.
61. A Future for Astyanax, p.160.
62. Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion (London: Methuen, 1981), p.80.
63. Gallop, p.98.

64. Catherine Belsey, 'Love and Death in "To His Coy Mistress"', in Machin and Norris eds., p.113.
65. Lacan, The Language of the Self, p.82.
66. Belsey, 'Love and Death', p.114.
67. Baudelaire and Freud, p.6.
68. Derrida, 'Speculations on Freud' p.97.
69. William Shakespeare, Hamlet III, i, 60-68. (New York and London: Signet Classics, 1963).
70. Boothby, p.224. (Further references given in main text.)
71. *ibid.*, p.30.
72. Derrida, The Ear of the Other, p.51. Derrida speaks of the unknown, late other to whom a text, even an autobiographical text, is entrusted: "A text is signed only much later by the other".
73. For an extensive engagement with the notion of *l'arrêt de mort* see Derrida, 'Living On: Border-lines', in Deconstruction and Criticism ed. Harold Bloom et al (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), p.75-176.

### III

#### PLAY TIME: CREATIVE DAYDREAMING IN 'ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE'

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
Fled is that music - Do I wake or sleep?<sup>(1)</sup>

Keats's closing lines in 'Ode to a Nightingale' display a radical uncertainty about the poem's status - its time, destination and the nature of its addressee or object. The Ode strains for stability, even transcendence, but remains ambiguously located between palpable and impalpable worlds, between life and death, organic and inorganic. John Baker notes the placelessness of the poem's theme and the namelessness of the speaker's desire<sup>(2)</sup>, and this lack of grounding has its implications for any act of interpretation. The text's aporias and divisions do not merely provide the opportunity for a triumphant critical resolution or restitution of gaps and contradictions. The act of reading poetry or reading the unconscious cannot assume a stable subject/object or form/content division. Dreams and poems are processes or events, and any act of interpretation is implicated in those processes: it is not safely outside that which it reads. This chapter considers how the 'Ode' puts in question the boundaries between conscious and unconscious thought, and its problematic representation of time, voice and the body.

"Do I wake or sleep?"

The 'Ode' can be seen as a text that shifts and disrupts the boundaries of the reading and writing process: it moves between



conscious and unconscious, hypnagogic and prophetic, active and passive. Already haunted, entranced, the poem opens as an act of interruption and instability, an act that tests its grounding, authority and coherence, and throws into question its reception or arrival: "My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains/ My sense". In the wake of this radical departure, closure and destination are always in question. It is a poem of yearning and "fancy", an instance of unfulfilled desire, and offers suggestive parallels with the work of dreams. Desire disrupts the coherent structure of the poem, disordering meaning and deferring closure, working over the text in a way similar to that in which dream-work transforms the latent dream-thoughts. Yet, as is becoming clear, it is a problematic task to assign definitively the "unconscious" of a text to an author, reader or character. The 'Ode' arrests itself on a threshold, in the undecidable space of "sense"; it offers a form of hypnopoetics where the "poet" or "reader" is suspended between waking and sleeping. Although the text refers to a "vision" or "waking dream" in the past tense, the closing line casts doubt upon whether the text is yet "awake": "Do I wake or sleep?". In the closing act of (self)interrogation, the "or" represents a troubled resting point whose status is uncertain, and this disruption or suspension raises questions about the subject of writing and the subject of desire. Paul H. Fry argues that the moment represents a state of narcotic reverie<sup>(3)</sup>, but this presupposes a provisionally unifying consciousness in the text, for whom this narcotic condition is *temporarily* other.

With the poem hovering "without sustained direction or propulsion" in a state of "ontological in-definition"<sup>(4)</sup>, the reader's position is also problematised. If the text is structured as a dream inside a dream,

it necessarily produces a certain confusion for a critical reading that aims to remain "outside" that textual "dreaming". The text's waking dream is disturbed and displaced by its elusive addressee, and it proves problematic to ascribe a stable relation between addresser and addressee in the text. Who is the object of the apostrophe: the reader, the poet, the nightingale or the poem itself? The poetic and the apostrophic are interlinked, since the text is addressed "to a figure who is both the text's destination and its muse".<sup>(5)</sup> Keats's Ode can be considered in terms of the complex poetic structure of address articulated by Derrida in 'Che cos'è la poesia'. In the ode, the apostrophe or vocative "you" is not only metapoetic, it is both singular and multiple: the "you" of a poem can be addressed both to the other and to itself as other. The intimacy of poetic address depends for its possibility on the established codes of language: a poetic event can occur here and now but this event is simultaneously readable and repeatable. Singular and iterable, the poetic

is obliged to address itself to someone, singularly to you  
but as if to the being lost in anonymity, between city and  
nature, an imparted secret, at once public and private,  
absolutely one and the other...<sup>(6)</sup>

It is possible to read dreams and texts as imparted secrets, their operations and their interpretation shifting across the boundaries of public and private.

To consider dreams and poems as a question of secrecy means taking account of Abraham and Torok's work of cryptanalysis, particularly the concepts of the crypt and the phantom. The crypt is defined as "an isolated region within the psyche in which an experience that is shameful, and therefore unspeakable, has been 'buried alive'."<sup>(7)</sup>

Patients tormented by unspoken secrets elaborately conceal in their speech any elements that would reveal the contents of such secrets. The crypt is an effect of mourning and "works in the heart of the Ego as a special kind of Unconscious".<sup>(9)</sup> Also of relevance is the notion of the phantom, which offers a psychoanalytic explanation for the belief that the dead return. The metapsychological phantom describes the situation whereby someone can be haunted by the effects of another's crypt in their unconscious. (Freud's haunting by the Wolf Man's case history is Torok's representative example.) The work of the phantom is observed to coincide "in every respect with Freud's description of the death instinct".<sup>(9)</sup>

The concepts of the crypt and the phantom offer suggestive parallels with the 'Ode'. In terms of the death instinct, the poem offers an explicit example of the desire for obliteration or extinction: "Now more than ever seems it rich to die, / To cease upon the midnight with no pain". This is accompanied by a contiguous nostalgia for origins, the desire to return to quietude and stability suggested by "sick for home". This entropic trajectory also performs an identification with a dissolving "other". A return to "my sole self" or the "self-same" would represent the assumption of full presence which "is" death. The poem opens as if in a dark, suffocating space, an "enbalmèd darkness" that could stand variously for the womb, the inorganic, the dark chamber of the mind or the "Chamber of Maiden Thought".<sup>(10)</sup> Yet the entombed darkness suggests a more ominous encrypting or living death. The text foresees burial in the form of a living death in the grave: "cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd earth", "leave the world unseen", "I cannot see what flowers are at my feet",

"To thy high requiem become a sod". The "requiem", the "plaintive anthem" and the "sod" are linked as constituent elements in an anticipated funeral service: the antitheses of high and low, life and death, triumph and defeat are brought into close relation. The text cannot see itself dead: it hovers between a day-world and "passing night". It is as if a body or ghost cannot be laid to rest. The nightingale remains other-worldly, a phantom: a "Dryad" or "Darkling", its "plaintive anthem" fades out of the text until it is "buried deep/ In the next valley glades". The nightingale is Immortal and almost a voiceless voice, and this again concerns the concept of the crypt, which is anasemic and preoriginary.<sup>(11)</sup> The enchanting song of this intangible bird is already buried, thus remaining deceptive and mysterious. There are hints of a buried secret, an entombed echo or trace in that already-ghostly bird's song. It is as if deciphering the nightingale's cryptic voice raises some spectre, the occulted trace of a name or a memory: "No hungry generations tread thee down".

Yet whose encrypted memory could be adduced to support this speculation? A critical reading cannot turn to the unconscious of the author, the historical subject John Keats, however suggestive the biographical evidence.<sup>(12)</sup> Equally, can the crypt be attributed to the unconscious of the speaker, when it is problematic to identify the 'I' of the text? The poem is neither the speech of a patient nor a case study. Since psychobiographical and characterological approaches are clearly unsatisfactory, the endeavour to ascribe an unconscious to the text would have to consider the role of the interpreter/analyst/critic, and the ghostliness or alterity of the reading process. The bird is other, but the reader too is other: the unconscious of a text can be

thought of as a different or other space. The 'Ode' opens itself out to otherness, to buried echoes and ghosts that return. A crypt or phantom can be traced as a memory that the text cannot erase and that can never fully be brought to light, a secret it conceals and preserves, just as the ancient Egyptians kept the dead in place by covering tombs with text. The crypt of the poem "remains incalculable, it does not conceal a single determinate secret", but its "ciphered singularity gathers a multiplicity".<sup>(13)</sup>

### Imaginative Licence

In a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, Keats outlines his version of the dreaming space of poetry:

I have an idea that a man might pass a very pleasant life in this manner - let him on any certain day read a certain Page of full Poesy or distilled Prose and let him wander with it, and muse upon it, and reflect from it, and bring home to it, and prophesy upon it, and dream upon it - untill it becomes stale - but when will it do so; Never - when Man has arrived at a certain ripeness in intellect any one grand and spiritual passage serves him as a starting-post towards all "the two-and thirty Pallaces". How happy is such a 'voyage of conception', without delicious Indolence! A doze upon a sofa does not hinder it, and a nap upon clover engenders ethereal finger-pointings..<sup>(14)</sup>

In its mix of the pleasurable, inexhaustible, prophetic and ethereal, the indolent daydreaming of Keats's letter shifts between activity and passivity, freedom and confinement, waking and sleeping. It perhaps serves as an ambiguous definition of "imaginative licence", which can be understood as "lexical or syntactical irregularity, *difference*" (OED) [*italics mine*]. While this definition is significant, a stricter consideration of licence provides an equally useful model for reading

poetry in terms of dream or phantasy. Licence is defined as (a) permit, leave, permission; (b) abuse of freedom, disregard of law or propriety. Licence suggests a potentially subversive, destabilizing sense of liberation, yet it can also imply containment and jurisdiction. Poetry is a space that can offer on the one hand a radical alternative to normative reality; but it can also be read as a bounded zone, a site of jurisdiction, a place of sanction, force and Law, where the "world" intrudes and restraints can be imposed upon the imagination.<sup>(15)</sup> Thus a subject (that is, one already under the Law) can control (and have controlled) the work of desire. Equally, this legislative structure permits no escape from time or space.

This etymological digression can be mapped across the work of phantasy and desire in texts: "imaginative licence" characterizes writing as caught between the proper and improper, the legitimate and illegitimate. Under the sway of force and order, writing is also the site of disruption and difference. This double movement produces the violent, crumpling effect of desire. To return to "licence" for a moment: definitions of "licentiousness" follow a similar pattern. The word can mean that which is unruly, insatiable, sexually liberated; equally, it carries a weight of moral sanction, connoting a disregard for accepted rules or conventions. Licentiousness: not being able to help oneself, desire that is not one's "own". So, agency and passivity, subjects working desire and desire working on subjects. To begin to think through the relationship between dream-work and poetic texts means thinking through a series of related issues: the process of signification, the act of interpretation, the way in which desire "passes through" a text and what is meant by "the desire of the text".

Reading the work of texts means reading the work of desire, the disruption and transformation that desire performs on texts, the "primordial" violence done "to the order of utterance".<sup>(16)</sup> Desire disfigures a text that is already subject to the disfigurative character of the figural dimension of language.<sup>(17)</sup> As Lyotard points out, Freud's word for distortion in the dream-work, *Enstellung*, indicates the use of force: *sich einstellen*, to disfigure oneself, *die Sprache einstellen*, to do violence to language. The work of desire can be construed as "the result of manhandling (sic) a text".<sup>(18)</sup> Interpretation too is a work of desire and thus a form of violence. There is no reading without some form of investment; no interpretation that is not indebted. The desire to bring about the completion of meaning, to restore origins, is a final violence that owes its allegiance to the force of figuration; in effect, that which interpretation reads both admits and resists that reading.

Thus, texts function as a site of licence, of resistance and submission. Any "psychoanalytic" reading of a text must trace not only violence "in" a text, but acknowledge the violence implicit in interpretive practice, the force employed by reading in the name of the text, the mark left on the "body" of a text. This reading of Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' aims to trace the interweaving of time, the body and absence in the text, its various acts of violence, silences and occlusions. Far from effacing or recycling the body on a linguistic or rhetorical production line, interpretation is a matter of registering violence done to bodies by the text and violence done to the text when the body "speaks", when the figure actually figures.

## Passing time

For Keats, poetry is a "vast region to wander in", a legitimate medium or locus of imaginative play or day-dream. Dreams and poems operate as an autonomous space of detachment and pleasurable escape, offering an alternative reality. Freud challenges this notion of dreams as separated off from the real world, and questions the "authority" ascribed to creative dreaming when he reviews the scientific literature on dreams in The Interpretation of Dreams. Citing the difficulties of reality-testing "in" dreams, Freud argues that the dream's "detachment from the external world" does not "account completely for its strange character" (TID 118). In response to earlier writers who praise the ability of dream-life to rise "superior to distance in time and space"<sup>(19)</sup>, Freud argues that this advantage is illusory, factually incorrect: "...dreaming rises superior to time and space in precisely the same way as does waking thought, and for the very reason that it is merely a form of thought" (TID 131). Freud asserts that "*psychical* reality is a particular form of existence not to be confused with *material* reality" (TID 782). It is important to consider the questions of marking time in dreams and their distinctive temporality and spatiality, and how this might involve the historical and corporeal.

In 'Creative Writers and Day-dreaming', Freud writes of the way in which a subject's imaginative activity receives a "date-mark":

The relation of a phantasy to time is in general very important. We may say that it hovers, as it were, between three times - the three moments of time which our ideation involves. Mental work is linked to some current impression, some provoking occasion in the present which has been able to arouse one of the subject's major wishes. From there it harks back to a memory of an earlier experience (usually an infantile one) in which this wish was fulfilled; and it



now creates a situation relating to the future which represents a fulfilment of this wish, What it thus creates is a day-dream or phantasy, which carries about it traces of its origin from the occasion which provoked it and from the memory. Thus past, present and future are strung together, as it were, on the thread of the wish that runs through them. (AL 135)

Freud's "dating" of phantasy remains heavily dependent on a theory of wishfulfilment. His subsequent revision of the claim that every dream fulfils a wish - "a dream is a (disguised) fulfilment of a (suppressed or repressed) wish" - indicates a major reformulation of the economy of desire. (A teleological strand remains in this theoretical modification: for a dream to be a repressed or suppressed wish, the dream-wish would have to be attempting to get somewhere or achieve some particular end.) Freud acknowledges that dreams do not maintain the "chronological order" which he attributes to them:

...what happens in reality is no doubt a simultaneous exploring of one path and another, a swinging of the excitation now this way and now that, until at last it accumulates in the direction that is most opportune and one particular grouping becomes the permanent one. (TID 731-2)

As desire works over the dream, time is not effaced, but is transformed, folded, fractured. Freud terms the unconscious timeless, in the sense of an endless circulation and transformation: "...it is a prominent feature of unconscious processes that they are indestructible. In the unconscious nothing can be brought to an end, nothing is past or forgotten" (TID 733).

The unconscious has a temporal dimension, in the history of human relations, marked by time and space, but it is not chronological or linear. Freud identifies a futuristic prospect in dreams, a forward but hardly linear or chronological movement. Dreams have a past, present and future, yet desire, in the dream-work, disrupts and spills over

these distinctions: it transforms the linear or chronological marking of time in the dream-text. All these time-scales in dreams are interwoven, constitutive of and dependent upon each other. These times track across the text that dream-work produces, mutually implicated and implicating, interlinked but maintaining their particular time, their mode of operation, their specificity. There is similarity but there is also difference, which might be configured in other terms as the difference within history.

The past time of dreams is situated in a matrix of memories, desires, day-residues, somatic stimuli, all the constituent elements of dreams and phantasies. This history is not a fixed private or social history; each phantasy is altered, a re- (that is, a transformed or reinscribed) presentation or constitution of elements. Notions of chronology, linearity, old and new influences, development and regression are suspended or put in doubt. Dreams have a history, localised and general, private and public, singular and collective, individual and cultural. Equally, the past of a text may not be the author's past, but the relations of a textual past, present and projected future.<sup>(20)</sup> The reading of dream-texts has a history and a condition mediated through historicized interpretive practices and structures. (Freud gives a short account of this interpretive history at the start of The Interpretation of Dreams.)

The dream-text has an ever-shifting, transformed and transforming present, a now that is never wholly now, a present that is never fully present. The scene of a dream-text, like the scene of writing, is a temporary resting point of uncertain grounding, a site of negotiation between past and future penetrated by difference and absence. Reading,

and the text, takes place in the "present" tense, although that presence is always under erasure. Reading in the present - working on a text and being worked on - is a concept that will be pursued and, in tracing the inscription of the body, this chapter offers the possibility of some grounding for the activity of reading. A dream also has a future. This is not necessarily to return to the old conception of oneiric prophecy, or to subscribe to a teleology of the human subject, but a certain futuristic tendency can be traced in the operation of a dream-text. Freud posits this forward-looking trajectory as the fundamental motivation, purpose and meaning of dreams: dreams aim to fulfil wishes that have not yet been fulfilled, to hallucinate scenes or situations, to anticipate outcomes. Even in Freud's narrow schema of wish-fulfilment, it is clear that this trajectory is speculative and uncertain, gesturing towards a conditional futurity.<sup>(21)</sup>

Interpreting dreams and interpreting texts takes place in the "impossible" time of reading and writing. Viewless not in the sense of flatness or blankness, but in the sense of a speculative, uncertain venture, dreams are a poetry of the future. This rethinks Freud's notion of the date-mark, if a text (or dream-text) is conceived of as a date-marked communication directed towards a future, with an implied but undesignated addressee or destination, a communication threatened by destinerance. Poetic texts no less than dream-texts disturb distinctions between past, present and future. As such they do suspend "real" time, not as a gesture of strategic "creative" control but as a marking of the structure of reading and writing. Texts bear the mark of time, with all of its differences. In his essay 'Shibboleth: For Paul

Celan', Derrida reconfigures the date-mark of a poem, bringing together history, the corporeal and the "present" of reading:

We are...concerned then with the date as a cut or incision which the poem bears in its body like a memory, like, at times, several memories in one, the mark of a provenance, of a place and of a time. To speak of an incision or cut is to say that the poem is entered into, that it begins in the wounding of its date.<sup>(22)</sup>

Where does this leave the time of dreams? Freud illustrates how dream-interpretation must confront "chronological reversal" in the dream-work. Interpretation has to reverse the time of the dream-text: "In some instances...it is only possible to arrive at the meaning of a dream after one has carried out quite a number of reversals of its content in various respects" (TID 441). Yet analysis does not reinstall correct time in its reading of a dream; dreams recognise no "real" time. Equally, interpretation reads outside "real" time. The recovered dream and its interpretation are reinscribed within another time-scale, perhaps the only time-scale in which we can read dreams: in textual time, the space and time of reading and writing. (This of course acknowledges that such a space is itself inscribed or framed within historical time.) We must rethink the time of dreams partly in terms of the time of a text. Dreams, their interpretations, and psychoanalytic situations foreground the confusion between psychical and material realities. Such confusion produces the ambiguous "or" that both separates and links waking and sleeping, disturbing clear definitions of fact and fantasy, truth and fiction. A similar suspension or displacement of stability and coherence takes place in literature.

George Eliot writes that like "an Egyptian sorcerer", the novelist uses the magic of plain paper and dark ink to reveal "far-reaching

visions of the past". Such literary visions look far in different directions, into the distant past and into an uncertain future, a temporal displacement accentuated by the less-discursive form of poetry. These visions are situated in a text constructed from the differences and spaces between plain paper and dark ink. Writing is contaminated by the traces of other texts and the shadows of other pasts: it is haunted by the ghosts of history, the abysmal possibility of absence and the iterability of writing, carrying the mark both of the future and of death. Death intervenes in writing as spacing, allowing signs to live whilst placing that "life" under erasure. Death permits us to read its absence: "...death furrows the space of writing, appearing only as the occulted mark of a trace which has never been present, as a palimpsest which permits what is obliterated to be dimly deciphered".<sup>(23)</sup> Reading a textual or oneiric history is a matter of deciphering a receding but insistent mark. Tracing a historical unconscious (or unconscious history) is a case of reading through a textual past to a space beyond the text, of re-membering or giving a voice to that which is past but insists in the margins of representation.

'Ode to a Nightingale' has to do with time, but it is inhabited and marked by a temporality that disturbs any sense of linearity: the text moves from present to past and future. The 'Ode' attempts or experiments with controlled time travel in a way that destabilizes the lyric "I" that desires completion. The poem cannot see where it is going, but must envision a destination or future, one that is silent, invisible but insidious. As Timothy Clark comments, Derrida offers a futural poetics that arises out of his reconfiguration of the ode "as a mode of writing whose temporality is often pro-jective, futural".<sup>(24)</sup> Similarly, Timothy

Clark conceives of the muses as beings of the future, a notion that runs counter to critical thinking "saturated with a vocabulary of representation, restitution and retrieval" (64). Such a poetics posits memory "as a constitutive act of the mind bound to its own present and oriented toward the future of its own elaboration" (65). Memory must destroy the very anteriority of the past in order to elaborate its figure in the present. <25>

Paul de Man's remarks on the large unfinished works of Keats's career suggest a future orientation that persuasively describes the Ode: "The circle never seems to close, as if he were haunted by a dream that always remains in the future". <26> Yet this dream of the future risks effacing or obliterating the body and history. De Man's art of memory is an act of selective forgetting, of remembering to forget, and that is never an innocent endeavour. When considering the effects of psychical censorship, Freud comments that there is "no lack of a hostile (i.e. resistant) purpose at work in the forgetting of a dream" (TID 662-3). By this Freud means the process of forgetting in the work of the dream, not the complete obliteration or effacement of the dream itself. This hostile purpose in forgetting echoes (the voice has already drifted away, after all) the poem's opening. To read the poem as a necessary forgetting is to ignore the operation of selective forgetting, a point that Freud himself acknowledges. The futural time of texts and dreams engages directly with questions of history, forgetting, the textual machine and the body.

### Textual machinations

The poet's dream is a transcendent vision of "faery lands" beyond the constraints of time and body, yet this reverie is disrupted by a profound anxiety about the allegorical force of language, the intoxicating ability of poetry to enact a radical displacement or dissolution of self. Identification with the "immortal Bird" numbs the senses and takes the "I" of the Ode away from its own centre (27). The "enraptured identification" (28) with the nightingale represents less an escape into a realm of free play than the decentring or erasure of the subject. The conjunction with the nightingale "would be at once the summation of a human poetic yet, at the same time, also its annihilation". (29) Can there be a "self" in the text when that self is drawn towards oblivion at the end of the poem, to a place or moment where there is no differentiated self, no-thing at all? Being too happy in another's happiness suggests the impossible desire of desire itself, circling around an absent centre. Baker suggests that this impossible identification is a version of De Man's "upward fall". Alongside the ecstatic sense of exultation, or "pouring forth", there is also a sense of confusion, "as when one gets lost in a speculation or dream". (30)

This confusion may bear some relation to what Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen describes as the blind spot of a dream-scene. To "be" the nightingale, the poet would have to see as other, to see from a point of otherness that Borch-Jacobsen describes as invisible to the subject in dreams. It is a truly impossible point of identification for the dreamer:

...in order to see the invisible, or say the unsayable..  
he would have to reflect himself, absent himself from the  
plane on which he is speaking, take himself as reference

point for his own discourse,<sup>(31)</sup>

To ask who is the subject of the unconscious, to say who thinks and wishes, is a question that goes beyond the self, beyond its representations, to a point of otherness. Immortal, immaterial, the nightingale is that site of alterity. The nightingale cannot be fully seen or spoken in poetry, because to do so, the poet would have to assume a point outside language. The poet can fly away only as other, not as a "sole self", although that self is also riven by otherness, drifting between sleeping and waking.

The poem both invites and is invaded by the nightingale's song. The means of escape - "the viewless wings of Poesy" - is also that which undoes the poet's rapture. The "forlorn" yearning sounds a warning bell "To toll me back from thee to my sole self". The very word "forlorn", "utterly lost"<sup>(32)</sup> in its archaic sense, implies that language has revoked its claims to be transcendent, self-identical or present-to-itself. Poetry is irreducible to a "self-same song", a secret, primal, magic word, the very word of poetry: "Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well/ As she is famed to do, deceiving elf". To be carried away on "the viewless wings of Poesy" offers the possibility of being endlessly folded or spun outwards by the imagination. Yet "carried away" also suggests being rendered supplementary, without agency, caught up in the circuitry, networks and channels of language. Language is "hemlock", narcotic sedative and potential poison.

Poetry's viewless wings offer a mixture of flight, death and the future. The nightingale's invisibility as it transcends the limits of time and space is suggested by "viewless" and "unseen"; as Barnard stresses, however, the words can also be taken to mean sightless.<sup>(33)</sup> As



an index of poetry, the nightingale is unseeing, and the flight of Poesy too high, ethereal and disembodied to see a corporeal, mutable world. Blind, endlessly deferring completion, apparently immutable and iterable, poetry beguiles with the offer of transcendence but remains indifferent and extrinsic to the subject. Thus a spectre of the machine age encroaches on the pastoral and synaesthetic phantasies accessed in the poem. The thwarted gesture of escape - "Away! Away! for I will fly to thee" - (impossibly) rejects history and the body; the dream of this text cannot rise above temporal and corporeal limits.

'Ode to a Nightingale' still aspires to transcendence or originary voice; although the nightingale may act as a power of death<sup>(34)</sup>, the workings of the textual machine remain a ghostly echo. A century later the fear of mechanization, of a wholly technologised mind, haunts Freud as he explores the "mechanisms" of the unconscious. It is tacitly acknowledged that this exploration will inevitably shatter notions of essence and the Self: "The subject of writing is a *system* of relations between strata: The Mystic Pad, the psyche, society, the world. Within that scene, on that stage, the punctual simplicity of the classical subject is not to be found".<sup>(35)</sup> More than revealing the split subject, Freud's recourse to the trope of the Mystic Writing-Pad brings him face to face with the mind as pure machine, the automatic, "inhuman" psyche. Derrida articulates this anxious moment when Freud must abandon the analogy between mind and machine, psychical and writing apparatus:

Far from the machine being a pure absence of spontaneity, its *resemblance* to the psychical apparatus, its existence and its necessity bear witness to the finitude of the mnemonic spontaneity which is thus supplemented. The machine - and consequently, representation - is death and finitude *within* the psyche.<sup>(36)</sup>

This machine does not run by itself: it is death, a mechanism without its own energy. The psyche is no longer regarded as a self-generating force: the logical consequence of Freud's trope is to conflate psyche and writing as machine. The ghostly literature machine produces a radical finitude, rendering "empirical, historical man"<sup>(37)</sup> an effect of its impassive, indifferent workings:

The touch of death, which Freud glimpsed and drew back from in his representation of the machine, is at work within the trope itself. The logic of this terrible obliteration works for both representation - literature - and the machine. That which had seemed to promise a future for the self is also the script which, with a wholly mechanical indifference, spells its death.<sup>(38)</sup>

De Man traces the moment in Rousseau's Reverie when "the text as body" is displaced by "the text as machine". If the text is no longer a figural body but a literal machine, the metaphorical integrity of the text is put in question:

Far from seeing language as an instrument in the service of a psychic energy, the possibility now arises that the entire construction of drives, substitutions, repressions, and representations is the aberrant, metaphorical correlative of the absolute randomness of language, prior to any figuration or meaning.<sup>(39)</sup>

Just as the psyche is conceived to be the product of an antecedent language machine, so the body is effaced by language. Within this mechanization, is the body located only as a waste product, a weave of textual traces, a remainder? Difference never allows a text to become embodied as transcendental, but difference also opens a space for the body. Derrida characterizes the poem as a learning-by-heart, an act of love and desire:

*Heart*, . . . no longer names only pure interiority, independent spontaneity, the freedom to affect oneself actively by reproducing the beloved trace. The memory of the 'by heart' is confided like a prayer - that's safer - to a certain exteriority of the automaton, to the laws of mnen-

technics, to that liturgy that mines mechanics on the surface...<sup>(40)</sup>

Located between the body and the textual machine, Derrida's trope acknowledges affect and agency, and later in his essay there is a more explicit move to demechanize or in-corporate the poetic:

The poem can roll itself up in a ball, but it is still in order to turn its pointed signs toward the outside. To be sure, it can reflect language or speak poetry, but it never relates back to itself, it never moves by itself like those machines, bringers of death. Its event always interrupts or derails absolute knowledge, autotelic being in proximity to itself.<sup>(41)</sup>

The event of poetry is bound up with possibility, with the non-mechanistic, with that which supplements or exceeds the system of language. Derrida restores a complicated sense of agency and an extratextual component to the event of poetry, under the guise of the sublime, but the body remains an ambiguous, shadowy presence.

Helga Geyer-Ryan offers a more explicit engagement with the death-bringing trope of the language machine. Geyer-Ryan argues that De Man fails to examine the metaphor of the linguistic figure, the figurality of the figure. By privileging the text as the scene of the aesthetic event, thus repressing the sensual dimension of aesthetics and banishing the subject from texts, De Man also has to make the body disappear:

...de Man is only able to insist on the exclusively linguistic semiology of the literary text because he represses the corporeality of author and recipient whose presence in the literary communication is in fact represented by the metaphor of the linguistic figure in the text. Only such a repression of sensuality rips the text so radically from its anchorage in objects and bodies that all that remains of it is the allegory of its own 'undecidability', its unreadability.<sup>(42)</sup>

This forceful repression of the body "involves destroying history, the traces of which are inscribed in...bodies".<sup>(43)</sup> The figurality of

language, the metaphor of the language machine, the trope of the trope obliterate history, efface the conditions of the present and offer only mechanical, deathly futurity.

### Body Matters

The Ode's apostrophe is addressed to an elusive phantom, one of "the airy creations of phantasy" of which Freud writes (AL 136). Baker notes how the nightingale, as object of desire, always withdraws in the poem:

But this withdrawal does not first occur in the fading of the nightingale's song. It has occurred all along the ode's rhythm of statement in which what seems ready to speak disappears each time with its utterance.<sup>(44)</sup>

Invisible, pure breath, an airy spirit, the nightingale is already elsewhere, leaving a song in its wake. Its voice passes through the text, moving through the poem like a whispering other, visible in the traces of its passing. It can be seen as analogous to the way in which desire is conceived to "breathe" through a dream, working over the text of the dream-thoughts, compressing, crumpling, folding it, the way in which wind would blow a flag.<sup>(45)</sup> The nightingale's voice inspires and expires, filling the listener with rapture then fading away. The aspiration to ecstatic voice, the hope for insufflation (the breathing of spiritual life into a person) is imbricated with a desire to dissolve, to become insubstantial:

Darkling I listen; and, for many a tine  
I have been half in love with easeful Death  
Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,  
To take into the air my quiet breath...

Throughout the poem, the entropic desire for extinction characteristically oscillates between activity and passivity, between willingly surrendering the self and having it taken away. The poet is only "half in love" with Death, calling him "soft names..To take into the air my quiet breath". This exchange of whispers hinges on the force of "take": is the "quiet breath" offered up in order to achieve the full voice of "rich" death, or will Death be only "drowsy numbness"? As it is, pure voice is unattainable: "Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain -/ To thy high requiem become a sod". For all the heady delight of the bird's song, the poem's fancy is contingent on the body.

The poem (dis)locates itself on the threshold of spirit and matter, the impulse to become impalpable leading to a sense of loss and disorientation. (This slippage between material and immaterial will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Four.) The contrast of light and shade might be read in terms of how the work of poetry tends toward "a constantly shifting relationship between veiling and unveiling".<sup>(46)</sup> Yet the "shadows numberless", "the forest dim", "verdurous glooms" where "there is no light" are places where the subject disappears, fading away and leaving the world "unseen". The body dissolves, becoming viewless, insubstantial. Although it grows "spectre-thin", however, the body cannot be rendered invisible in the text:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget  
What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs;  
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow. (11,21-30)

This stanza is caught between two worlds, between mortality and physical vulnerability and a transcendent time or space "beyond tomorrow". The nightingale rises above the material and corporeal; it cannot be trodden down by the "hungry generations". The mortal, historical world is a world of suffering and want, and "hungry" also implies the insatiability of desire, borne out not least by the restless gaze of eyes that "cannot keep", that provoke only transient love. Death invades beauty as entropy and decay.<sup>47</sup> The body too "cannot keep", yet it inevitably grounds the text's imaginative flight. The immaterial can be thought only in the material, a paradox resolved only by the nightingale's ethereal status: "Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!"

Lyotard argues that "language, at least in its poetic usage, is possessed, haunted by the figure", and that poetry is an example of "immanent rhythmic force".<sup>48</sup> What figure haunts poetry: only the figurative figure or the bodily figure too? Are the rhythms of language and the rhythms of the body at work? The body cannot be reinstated as the locus of transcendent metaphysical unity or presence, it cannot be considered as extrinsic to the "essential" thinking subject, but equally the body is not merely another writing site. The body might write or figure as well as being written or figured. Bodily desires work through or counter to the disfigurative force of language. The word can never be made flesh, yet desire in language becomes a ghostly supplement of bodily drives, their rhythms, eruptions and interruptions. The figuration of desire in language is the ghost in the textual machine, and death is the ghost that whispers through the body and language. To conceive of the body working as the shadowy other of language, at the borders of representation, is not merely to inscribe the corporeal as

another trope or site of textual otherness or difference. There are very "material" and historical absences in the time and body of a text: bodies rendered insubstantial, silenced voices, ghosts.<sup>(49)</sup> A body that longs for vocality, a voice that longs for corporeality, a bodied poetry: "Eat, drink, swallow my letter, carry it, transport it in you, like the law of a writing become your body".<sup>(50)</sup> It is possible to trace a nightingale that, like Derrida's *hérisson*, is figured as "neither sublime, nor incorporeal".<sup>(51)</sup>

### Interleavings

The nightingale's "plaintive anthem" sends out many echoes. Paul Fry argues that, as a form, the Ode can be seen as the quest or yearning for a transcendent, originary voice that represents an absent presence in the text: "Voice, the knell of natural sound that echoes death, is the lost origin of an ode" <sup>(52)</sup>. The leavings or ghostliness of voice, echoes and traces of presence, the authentic and proper flit through the text. The poem opens with a radical absenting of grounding or origin, registering the fall into the beyond of language, a wrenching from the purely interior or primordial inseparation of self. Fry comments that the writing of the the ode "leafs" over the voice, displacing the logocentric privileging of the spoken word, implying that an active silencing takes place in the text. Writing ascribes "imaginary power" over voice, "the knell of natural sound that echoes death".<sup>(53)</sup> The interleavings of voices in the Ode can be considered intertextually, as if by flicking through the pages of a writing past. Eleanor Cook traces a range of metaleptic echoes for the bird topos: the figure of a bird in

an earthly paradise functions as an image of voice for the poet, a topos that includes matters of "waking or sleeping, dreaming, death".<sup>(54)</sup>

This intertextual history contains a graphic silence, an absent "figure", however. Another echo can be discerned. The figurative status of the nightingale, self-consciously inscribed as a muse or motif of the poetic, recalls the myth of Philomel. Her silence "so rudely forc'd", Philomel is an analogue of tongueless desire, her fate inhabiting the text as a primal scene of silence and violence. The insistence of these shadowy echoes may be attributed to what Lyotard describes as "the effect on language of the force exerted by the figural", a force which "hinders hearing but makes us see". Philomel is silenced and invisible, but rendered visible and voiced in the text too, "a tongue lost in a hallucinatory scenography, the first violence".<sup>(55)</sup> The other's voice does violence to the order of utterance, yet violence also arises from the desire to voice the other. The identification with the bird is a form of murder, but this "intertextual" echo is perhaps a voice from the crypt, returned to haunt the poem, to whisper in the shadows. The insistence of this haunting voice perhaps offers a parallel with Abraham and Torok's comments on what the analysand's tomb contains:

..the content is unique in that it cannot appear in the light of day as speech. And yet, it is precisely a matter of words. Without question, in the depth of the crypt are held fast, like owls in ceaseless vigil, unspeakable words buried alive.<sup>(56)</sup>

The nightingale never "presents" itself in the light of day, yet equally never disappears, insisting in representation even as it hovers at the limits of the representable, both silent and audible.

The myth of Philomel is a representation not only of the mechanical deathliness of figuration, the repetition of language or poetry; that



brutal silencing also represents actual force, how a history (or a representative female dead body) is written over in the name of aesthetic "escape".<sup>57</sup> The oscillation between invitation and invasion attests to the process of inscription and elision, of re-covering the dead that takes place equally in dreams and poems. The nightingale acts as a phantasmal reminder of other leavings of voice: the echoes and remains of histories that are intra-, inter-, and extratextual, that cannot be elided by a dream of forgetting. The next chapter, which discusses Freud's essay on Jensen's Gradiya, will trace another effaced body that "lives" between waking and sleeping, dream and reality, buried on the surface of the text.

### Footnotes

1. Keats, 'Ode to a Nightingale', in The Complete Poems, pp.346-8.
2. 'Dialectics and Reduction: Keats Criticism and the "Ode to a Nightingale"', in *Studies in Romanticism* 27, 1 (1988), p.127.
3. The Poet's Calling in the English Ode (New Haven and London: Yale Univ Press, 1980), p.237.
4. Baker, p.124.
5. Clark, p.56.
6. 'Che cos'è la poesia?', p.223.
7. Nicholas Rand, 'Psychoanalysis with Literature: An Abstract of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's The Shell and the Kernel', in *Oxford Literary Review*, 12, 1-2 (1990), p.59.
8. Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p.80.
9. Nicolas Abraham, 'Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology', trans. Nicholas Rand, in *Critical Inquiry*, 13, 2 (Winter 1987), p.291.
10. See for example Margot Waddell and Meg Harris Williams, The Chamber of Maiden Thought: Literary Origins of the Psychoanalytic Model of the Mind (London and New York: Tavistock/Routledge, 1991).
11. Royle, p.31.
12. The "fret" of the material world and physical contingency was known only too well by Keats himself: the pale youth that grows "spectre-thin and dies" refers in part to his brother Tom, who Keats nursed until he died of tuberculosis in 1818. A presage of Keats's own demise, Tom perhaps represents the phantom of a death which is not "easeful", of a body faced with undesired dissolution, that is carried or encrypted by the poem. This death might "toll" in the closing lines with a similar "soft knell" to that which registers the death of Freud's daughter Sophie in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. See Derrida, 'Coming into One's Own', p.122.
13. Derrida, 'Shibboleth: For Paul Celan' in Acts of Literature, ed. Derek Attridge (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p.413.
14. The Selected Letters, ed. Robert Gittings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p.64.
15. For a consideration of aesthetic pleasure and licence in direct relation to Keats, see Lionel Trilling's Beyond Culture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980). Trilling refers to Keats's "forlorn" faery land in the Nightingale Ode as "the scene of erotic pleasure which leads to devastation", then sets Keats in the wider context of Freud's work on the pleasure principle: "Keats, then, may be thought of as the poet who made the boldest affirmation of the principle of pleasure and also as the poet who brought the principle of pleasure into the greatest and sincerest *doubt*. He therefore has for us a peculiar cultural interest, for it would seem to be true that at some point in modern history the principle of pleasure came to be regarded with just such ambivalence" (p.58).
16. Lyotard, 'Dream-Work', p.3.
17. Chase, p.213.
18. Lyotard, 'Dream-Work', p.3
19. See for example Haffner, who argues that "the first mark of a dream is its independence of space and time, i.e. the fact of a presentation

being emancipated from the position occupied by the subject in the spatial and temporal order of events" (TID p.116n).

20. Peter Brooks, p.6.

21. This conditional futurity is bound up with the trope of prophesy and fortune-telling, an affirmation of "the magic power of words", that runs through Freud's work. See Avital Ronnell's 'Goethezeit', in Taking Chances: Derrida, Psychoanalysis and Literature, ed. Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan (London and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984). Ronnell argues that Freud "makes provisions for the futural dimension of dreams to flash before us, but only within the horizon circumscribed by the past. Nonetheless, this prospect does admit, however cautiously, a certain filtration of the future or fortune telling elements of dream. Such ambivalence..hovers on the frontier between science and its others, be these poetry, superstition, or telepathy" (p.167). This final sentence raises issues that will be addressed, along with the prophetic strand of Freud's work, in some detail in the following chapter.

22. 'Shibboleth', p.393.

23. Gerald Doherty, 'Life Styles and Death Sentences: The Dying Art of Mrs Dalloway in Afterwords, ed. Nicholas Royle (Tampere: Tampere English Studies No.1 1992), pp.136-7.

24. Clark, p.65. (Further references given in main text)

25. This might accord in an oblique way with Freud's note in The Interpretation of Dreams: "Un rêve c'est un reveil qui commence" ["A dream is an awakening that is beginning"] (TID 731).

26. Critical Writings 1953-78, ed. Lindsay Waters (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989), p.181.

27. *ibid.*, p.189.

28. Easthope, PAP, p.138.

29. Clark, p.56. His comments refer specifically to 'Ode to Psyche'.

30. Baker, p.121.

31. Borch-Jacobsen, p.39.

32. Barnard, in The Complete Poems of John Keats, p.657n.

33. *ibid.*, pp.655-6n.

34. de Man, p.194

35. Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', in Writing and Difference, p.227.

36. *ibid.*, p.228.

37. Mark Reford, 'Freud and the Literature Machine', in *Oxford Literary Review*, 12, 1-2 (1990), p.184.

38. *ibid.*, p.188.

39. 'The Purloined Ribbon' in Glyph 1 (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p.44.

40. 'Che cos'è la poesia?', p.231.

41. *ibid.*, p.235.

42. Fables of Desire: Studies in the Ethics of Art and Gender (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), pp.196-7.

43. *ibid.*, p.197.

44. Baker, p.120.

45. See Lyotard, 'Dream-Work', pp.8-11.

46. André Green, 'The Double and The Absent', in Psychoanalysis, Creativity and Literature: A French-American Inquiry, ed. Alan Roland (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), p.289.

47. See Elisabeth Bronfen, Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp.62-3. Bronfen discusses the aesthetic and cultural trope which substitutes female Beauty for death, a substitution that Freud terms a highly ambivalent wishfulfillment. The apparent opposition between beauty and death conceals a hidden identity between the two: "Pleasure at the beauty of Woman resides in the uncanny *simultaneity* of recognising and misrecognising it as a veil for death" (p.63). This offers a different sense of "unveiling" to that advanced by Green. See also the remarks on a silenced female voice below.
48. Lyotard, 'Dream-Work', p.13.
49. Andre Green identifies two forces sustained in texts: a *vertical* force derives from the "depths" of the body, urging and driving the text, while language exerts its pressure along the *horizontal* axis ('The Double and the Absent', p.289). It is problematic that the coordinates of body and language are thought in terms of depth; it becomes clear that silenced voices and bodies work *through* and *across* the text in a disruptive and visible manner.
50. Derrida, 'Che cos'è la poesia?', p.229.
51. *ibid.*, p.235.
52. Fry, p.246.
53. *ibid.*, p.246.
54. Eleanor Cook, 'Birds in Paradise: Uses of Allusion in Milton, Keats, Whitman, Stevens and Ammons', in *Studies in Romanticism*, 26, 3 (1987), p.433. Cook examines various deployments of the motif of the heavenly bird, for example tracing "viewless wings" back through Ovid and Milton.
55. Lyotard, 'Dream-Work', p.32.
56. Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, 'The Topography of Reality: Sketching a Metapsychology of Secrets', in *Oxford Literary Review*, vol.12, 1-2 (1990), p.66
57. This bears a relation to what Elizabeth Abel describes as "a Keatsian model of treacherous seduction as the failure of a (feminine) imagination to sustain its offer of transcendence" ('"Cam the Wicked": Woolf's Portrait of the Artist as her Father's Daughter', in Mrs Dalloway and To the Lighthouse: Contemporary Critical Essays, ed. Su Reid [London: Macmillan, 1993], p.123). Consider also "Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes, / Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow". This suggestion of female deceit is counterposed to images of male death and disease. See also the "foul dream" of Lamia. If T.S. Eliot's treatment of the nightingale motif is taken into account, with its recurrent images of rape, degraded sexuality and male "hysteria" (see Chapter Five), a very different version of Eleanor Cook's metaleptic or transumptive echo is heard. The silencing of the female voice will be traced throughout this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DELUSIONS AND DREAMS IN FREUD'S GRADIVA

## The remains of a text

This chapter attempts to follow the detours, repetitions, strategic shifts and oversights of Freud's essay, Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*, as he sets out to read psychoanalysis through Jensen's text. Initially the reading will trace Freud's somewhat cursory attempt to outline a theoretical position on how to "treat" literary dreams. In a series of manoeuvres, Freud comes to claim critical priority for psychoanalysis in textual interpretation and then to position himself as a creative artist. Yet it becomes clear in the essay that psychoanalysis and literature inscribe or traverse each other. The manner in which Freud retells Jensen's story puts the specificity of literature in doubt; the pristine creative text cannot be placed outside the bounds of psychoanalytic investigation. By the same token, literature comes to contaminate the boundaries of this youthful science. Psychoanalysis professes scientific objectivity, yet its analytic practices are "creative", and much of its conceptualization borrows from literary metaphors. A master/slave dialectic is never inverted or displaced; rather the two discourses inhabit each other as a foreign body, in turn barely tolerated, misrecognised, confronted and accommodated. Freud's essay plays out a phantasy, fulfils a wish, a wish to occupy the masterful place of the other. Freud's first act of identification in

reading Gradiya is an attempt (conscious or unconscious, the two are so difficult to distinguish) to take the place and name of the other.

The chapter will also examine the way in which Freud's phantasy construction of psychoanalysis hovers between archaeology and narrative fiction. (In doing so, the discussion focuses on *poetics* rather than specifically on poetry.) Archaeology becomes more than a convenient metaphor for psychoanalytic practice; Freud's thinking begins to assume the character of an archaeological investigation.<sup>11</sup> Equally, what archaeology signifies for Freud (fame and glory, time-travel, commerce with the dead, the representation of the unrepresentable) is bound up with the stakes of the essay. To know, be present, in the past is the ultimate archaeological phantasy. This delusion runs alongside another phantasy - that of psychoanalysis as narrative. Freud tells the story of an analysis, while ostensibly interpreting a fictional text. Fiction becomes Freud's interpretive method, which gives psychoanalysis an ambiguous identity; it is located between art and science, observation and speculation, fact and phantasy. Psychoanalysis is not the tool by means of which Freud discovers the unconscious, psychoanalysis is the field or site where it discovers itself. This is not to say that psychoanalysis has no experiential or material purchase, but even in the analytic situation the unconscious is performed, constructed and voiced rather than "revealed".

For psychoanalysis, dreams are nodal points in which to trace the barely visible markings, lines and workings of texts. It is difficult to avoid the depth model - under the surface, buried lives, inner secrets - when thinking through a relationship between psychoanalysis, archaeology and traditional literary criticism. This chapter attempts to read the

other texts, the other fables, that weave through and between Freud's essay. Freud explores the remains of Jensen's text, tracing a wealth of repressed material in the narrative. Freud articulates that repression through psychoanalysis and goes on to apply his investigation "outside" the site of the text, excavating Jensen too. In tracing this field of excavation, this chapter scrutinizes, turns over Freud's readings, to see what has been made less visible in his work.

The role of Zoe as an ideal analyst is also considered. She occupies an ambiguous space in Freud's essay, positioned as interpreter/interpreted, analyst/patient, active subject/ passive object, thus disrupting the categories of subject and object, the outside and inside of the narrative. Freud's identification with Zoe remains ambivalent: it will be seen to take the shape of an erotic and also a rivalrous (even murderous) identification. Given the masterful position Zoe occupies in the text, this phantasy of identification and rivalry is played out over power, knowledge and priority; the cathexis (if such it is) remains both erotic and appropriative in character. Freud's closing remarks touch on death, time-travel, mastery, situating Hanold's first dream as an occasion for Freud's own archaeology and as a nodal point which draws the various threads of the essay's narrative together.

### **Familiar Faces**

It is far from being generally believed that dreams have a meaning and can be interpreted. Science and the majority of educated people smile if they are set the task of interpreting a dream. Only the common people, who cling to superstitions and who on this point are carrying on the convictions of antiquity, continue to insist that dreams can be interpreted. The author of The Interpretation of Dreams has ventured, in the face of the reproaches of strict science, to become a

partisan of antiquity and superstition. He is, it is true, far from believing that dreams foretell the future, for the unveiling of which men have vainly striven from time immemorial by every forbidden means. But even he has not been able entirely to reject the relation of dreams to the future. For the dream, when the laborious work of translating it had been accomplished, revealed itself to him as a wish of the dreamer's represented as fulfilled; and who could deny that wishes are predominantly turned towards the future? (AL 33)

This opening passage from Freud's essay on Gradiiva falls somewhere between a manifesto and justification for the institution of psychoanalysis. Freud alludes to points of contact or currency - prophecy, superstition, unveiling of the truth, exploring history, restoring the dead - that are recurrent and imbricated features of his work on dreams and literature. This study of Freud's text aims to draw out the weave of effects and concerns that cross dream-texts and "literary" texts, in differing but associated ways. Freud's Gradiiva is a text much concerned with strict science, classical antiquity and forbidden knowledge. It is marked by a complex network of movements, a series of points of contact, that run through this thesis: the future, translation, desire, death and time. It also represents an attempt to investigate the grounds for knowing, what there is to know or possess "in" texts and dreams. The "dreams" in Gradiiva must be read in the light of these interrelated issues and aspects.

This study does not intend to read dreams in Jensen's text as if they were the dreams of a real patient, but will attempt to develop a methodology, explore a form of encounter, test a strategy of reading that will take account of the process of dream texts and will implicate the hermeneutic techniques traditionally applied to texts in general. The Gradiiva that will be referred to is Freud's essay on Gradiiva, for



reasons of argument and not priority, or to repeat Freud's appropriative gesture.<sup>2</sup> Freud writes on, before and after, Jensen; a network of connections, traces, conjunctions, coincidences, all dependent on reading time, on the time for and of reading. The terms and conditions under which Freud reads the "literary" dreams in Gradiya are at least as important as the accuracy or inaccuracy of his reading of those dreams. If dreams can be understood as texts, a matter of figuration and fantasy at whatever stage of elaboration, then the practice of reading those texts (including the following interpretation) is itself subject to these same formative conditions. Thus the term "textual dream" must take account of how dreams are figured and interpreted in texts, tracing a writing effect of dreams - the identification, transformation, figuration and staging that take place in the construction and interpretation of dreams. The dreams in Gradiya may be understood as nodal points in the text, moments that draw together various strands which cross the narrative; this approach recognises that there exists some correspondence between text and dream, the laws of fiction and the laws of the unconscious.

Freud indicates that Jung drew his attention to the potential of Gradiya, a potential whose value can be realised by confirming the insight of Freud's theory of dreams. Both are attracted, beguiled by Jensen's story, just as Hanold is entranced by the mysterious, fleeting figure of "Gradiya". Several dreams in Jensen's text had looked at Jung "with familiar faces and invited him to attempt to apply to them the method of The Interpretation of Dreams" (AL 36). This is an odd way of describing interest in a text, but it is a description that raises the question of what "faces" interpreters (who are themselves dreamers) see

or wish to see in dreams or texts. Who sees or faces who, and who sees who first? Jung sees a familiar, expected aspect in Jensen's textual dreams, as if anticipating or forereading the story in the light of psychoanalytic theory.

The dreams in the text can be read as processes of identification and appropriation, precisely the processes that takes place in Freud's essay on Jensen's story. It is a strategy perhaps similar to the rivalrous correspondence between Freud and Jung remarked upon by Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen.<sup>(5)</sup> Freud proposes a contract of "intellectual communism", the terms of which are part collaborative, part appropriative, "a matter of thinking and speculating together (in this instance, on delusion), with each partner having the right to appropriate the other's thoughts, so that the other becomes by that very token a double, another self, and/or a different - an other - self" (50). This competitive relationship is conceived of less in biographical terms - with two strong individuals vying for fame and mastery - than as an act of countersigning. The writings of "Freud" and "Jung" are "signed *with another, against the other, in intimate opposition to the other*" (62). Suggestively for a reading of Freud's Gradiya, the term "intellectual communism" crops up in a study of delusion. If this study weaves between delusion and dream, it is not a deliberate or unwitting blurring of the distinctions between these separate yet linked psychic processes; rather, it is an acknowledgement that Freud's own approach to reading Hanold's delusion is closely associated with his reading of dreams in the text.

## Dreams never dreamt at all

In his essay, Freud addresses himself to "the question of the class of dreams that have never been dreamt at all - dreams created by imaginative writers and ascribed to invented characters in the course of a story" (AL 33). He traces the formation of these "dreams" as if their constituent materials were taken from real life, although in his concluding paragraph Freud reluctantly acknowledges that these dreams are not to be taken literally: "But we must stop here, or we may really forget that Hanold and Gradiwa are only creatures of their author's mind" (AL 116). (Precisely who authors Hanold and Zoe/Gradiwa in Freud's text is a question that will be taken up.) Freud continually blurs the distinctions between real people and fictional characters, a slippage that attests less to a naively reflectionist theory of literature than to a continuing methodological problem for psychoanalytic criticism. Readings of both dreams in Jensen's text may treat these "dreams" only as analogies or metaphorical stagings of Hanold's phantasies, but readings or knowledge of dreams are never other than metaphorical. The concerns of any analysis of dreams in texts remain those of Freud's, even if these difficulties are elided or suppressed in his text: how do we read "literary" dreams, or account for their "place" and role in texts? How or where do we identify the "subject of phantasy", and to whom do we attribute the wishes or phantasies figured in dreams?

Freud neither resolves the position of psychoanalysis in relation to a literary text, nor does he establish how and when a reader of fiction can regard an incident as "real" or literal in a narrative. Equally problematic is the question of what constitutes part of a

writer's conscious strategy and, in the particular case of Gradiva, when a character is "in" and "out" of his/her delusion. In reading literary dreams, the psychoanalyst lacks a dreamer who could provide associations and "copious explanations" (AL 84) relevant to the dream being interpreted. The reading of Hanold's first dream falters through lack of further detail about the dreamer's life:

If only we had some reason for supposing that the town was noisier than usual that morning! If only, for instance, the author had not omitted to tell us that Hanold, against his usual practice, had slept that night with his windows open! What a pity the author did not take the trouble to do that!

(AL 81)

This frustration at the lack of access to an author's mind, to a life beneath the surface of the text, does not prevent Freud from drawing on his own work on dreams, the "life" of his consulting room, to fill this gap. The analyst becomes the author as much as the interpreter of the text. It is left to Freud (and, by implication, any reader) to supply or invent the associations that the author omits, chooses not to provide or unconsciously represses.

In order to test the validity of his theory of dreams, to read Hanold as if he were a real person, Freud must treat the dreams in Jensen's story as if they were actual phenomena. Freud seeks to distinguish between an objective, real world and Hanold's phantasy world, the same endeavour he must undertake in the consulting room. After recounting Hanold's first sighting of Gradiva in Pompeii, Freud fleshes out this phantom with some empirical detail:

A large lizard was lying motionless, stretched out in the sunshine, but fled at the approach of Gradiva's foot and darted away across the lava paving-stones. So it was no hallucination, but something outside our dreamer's mind. But could the reality of a *rediviva* startle a lizard? (AL 43)

The resolution of Gradiva's mysterious appearance is not as straightforward as Freud allows. The lizard may be another element in Hanold's daydream, part of his mid-day madness. Jensen's story does not present any obvious conclusion about the status of the lizard; Peter Benson points out that "if a man is capable of hallucinating the figure of a woman, he would presumably be equally capable of hallucinating a lizard to add definition to the image".<sup>(4)</sup> How can a reader know that the lizard is outside the dreamer's mind, or indeed that anything is real in a text, "outside" the narrative? Hanold could be read as being trapped in an impermeable subjectivism, and Jensen's story has Hanold wondering if all of the events and experiences in Germany and Pompeii are a product of his own imagination, if he is in touch with reality.<sup>(5)</sup> Yet no reading can readily stand "outside" delusion; there is no objective reality against which to test a character's actions or behaviour. Indeed, what is a character in a text? Hanold's uncertain relation to the "outside" world arises from his uncertain relation to an otherness "embodied" (although she is a phantom) in Gradiva, but whether this otherness takes on representation "outside" of Hanold's imagination is problematic. Is anything real in a dream, and is there a dream-subject prior to the dream-scene, one who actively stages a wish? Is the notion of a dream-subject as chimerical as "character" in a text, as elusive as Gradiva amid the ruins of Pompeii?

This ambiguity or confusion in reading the scene, arising in part from Freud's own descriptions of the construction of dreams, is not just methodological: it acquires a structural force. The "matter" of dreams, their origin in real experience, is highly problematic: the formative dream-materials or elements are already fictive, already caught up in

representation. Rather than looking on from outside, the dream-subject (if such it can be called) takes part in the scene of phantasy. Even if the idea of an articulated latent wish behind the dream-facade can be accepted, the dream-work is never fully present to itself. In striving to fulfil desire, a dream looks forward to a destination, if not a destiny, but the problematics of subjectivity (I am not "I", even in the secret, "private" depths of the unconscious) renders that aim unattainable though inescapable. Freud's ability to ground a reading of dreams in Jensen's text is ineluctably complicated and traversed by his theoretical endeavour to trace the enigmatic status and operation of dreams.

Freud's difficulties in distinguishing what is "outside" and "inside" delusion also inevitably derive from his status as reader. Although as an analyst Freud must affect masterly detachment, as a reader he is drawn into the narrative, forgetting himself. He sets out to isolate, record and explain the determining elements of Hanold's dreams, but succumbs to the overall lure of the story:

...what we really intended to do originally was only to investigate two or three dreams that are to be found here and there in Gradiva with the help of certain analytic methods. How has it come about, then, that we have been led into dissecting the whole story and examining the mental processes in the two chief characters? (AL 66)

The clinical force of "dissecting", "analytic" and "examining" suggests that the text and/or author has become the patient, an object of surgical study. Despite the authority of this medico-scientific language, Freud admits to puzzlement, even a "painful sense of bewilderment" (AL 42), as a representative reader. In part this is disingenuous, and can be regarded as a rather obvious rhetorical ploy to

highlight the subsequent enlightenment brought about by psychoanalysis; in one sense Freud already knows what course the narrative and his reading of that narrative will take. Freud does not explicitly consider the conditions of his reading yet, in the sense of proposing an interpretation, of undergoing a reading experience, Freud's essay necessarily suggests that reading texts is a complex, uncertain process, an economy of libidinal investment, a site of strategies, identifications and multiple meanings. Reading is also an affective experience, a cause of pain and bewilderment. When Freud forgets himself, taking the text and its characters as real people, that forgetting may resemble what he describes as repressive "forgetting" (AL 59), a forgetting that expresses a reluctance to acknowledge the provisional, fictional status of the text and thus of any psychoanalytic speculation. Freud does not simply read the phantasy that is revealed in Gradiva: phantasy insists in his own reading of the text. He is both "inside" and "outside" the play of phantasy, a doubled position "impossibly" occupied by Zoe in the story.

#### Authorizing Science

In his essay Freud undertakes (it is a text concerned with the dead) to read the "dreams created by imaginative writers". Some issues surrounding the status of those dreams have been raised, but in order to examine this endeavour, and the stakes that are being played for, it is necessary to consider the status granted by Freud to imaginative writers, since it has bearing on the appropriative tendencies of all acts of interpretation. Freud often appears to admit the supplementary

status of psychoanalysis, portraying it as a discourse trailing on the coat-tails of great artists, continually deferring to the insight (and masculine authority) of creative writers, particularly poets. How the creative writer produces phantasies that give great pleasure to his readers or audience "is his innermost secret" ('Creative Writers and Daydreaming', AL 140). On the question of imaginative licence, Freud accepts the "ruling in every case" of the writer ('The Uncanny', AL 373). Most tellingly, the "secret" of artists defeats the interpretive strategies of psychoanalysis: "Before the problem of the creative artist analysis must, alas, lay down its arms" ('Dostoevsky and Parricide', AL 441). The creative writer has been describing "pathological mental states" long before psychoanalysis: "he has from time immemorial been the precursor of science, and so too of scientific psychology" (AL 68). Authors (including Jensen) have anticipated Freud and have thereby articulated psychoanalysis already.

Despite this professed humility in acknowledging the priority of literature over psychoanalysis, Freud's essay challenges and attempts to invert this hierarchy. Peter Benson argues that Freud's reading of Gradiya is structured by the oedipal relationship to literature of his infant science: "Psychoanalysis wishes to be in the place of literature's knowledge, while maintaining an analytic distance from its respected precursor".<sup>(6)</sup> Benson overestimates the respectful distance that Freud keeps from literature. Freud's study of Gradiya cannot suppress the contest of (masculine) priority, authority and ownership over the discoveries to be made in Jensen's work. In the intellectual arena, psychoanalysis cannot easily concede the genius and autonomy of writers. The text gradually unseats the primacy of the writer,



hesitantly, progressively establishing monopoly rights on reading the mind. The doctor first achieves equal status with the author, is then granted prior status and, by the end of the essay, the "author" has been subsumed into the "doctor", positing a composite creative figure with predominantly scientific and clinical characteristics.<sup>67</sup>

Freud defers to writers as "far in advance" of other thinkers, while proposing a degree of mutuality, in content if not form, between author and doctor. In ascribing significance to dreams, "creative writers are valuable allies and their evidence is to be prized highly, for they are apt to know a whole host of things between heaven and earth of which our philosophy has not yet let us dream" (AL 34). Authors not only write about dreams, they "dream" in writing beyond the imaginative level of the philosopher/scientist. Nevertheless, Freud traces a distinct but simultaneous working towards the truth of the mind between the writer and the psychoanalyst, finding confirmation of his theories in creative writings. As valuable allies, author and doctor are engaged in mapping the mysteries of the mind, describing "pathological mental states" (AL 68). Psychoanalysts and authors "probably draw from the same source and work upon the same object, each of us by another method" (AL 114); the writer and the doctor have either misunderstood the unconscious in the same way, or "they have both understood it correctly" (AL 115). Jensen produces a correct "imaginative picture of the history of a case and its treatment" (AL 69). Psychoanalysis brings something valuable to the study of literary texts, and the writer meddles productively in psychiatry. Hence the domains of doctor and author necessarily and unavoidably interpenetrate:

...the creative writer cannot evade the psychiatrist nor the psychiatrist the creative writer, and the poetic treatment of

a psychiatric theme can turn out to be correct without any sacrifice of its beauty, (AL 69)

This statement contains several deft evasions. It glosses over any differences between poetry and psychiatry as practices, proposing that each poetic treatment is as clinical and discursive as a psychiatric case study. Correlatively, the shift from psychoanalysis to "psychiatry" and medicine situates Freud in the domain of science, eliding the "poetic treatment" of which a psychoanalytic case study partakes. Sarah Kofman argues that Freud, in his "summarizing" of Gradiva, replaces descriptions and metaphors in Jensen's story with concepts. Science is substituted for "art" and the reader is prevented "from falling into a delusion, from falling asleep, from dreaming, from falling under the spell of the text's poetry". Freud's transformations of the text effect "a movement from poetry, which contains the truth without being aware of it, to science, which delivers the truth up in proper and adequate terms".<sup>18</sup> Separating poetry and science is the essay's precise difficulty: "poetic treatment" is inscribed in the institution and discourse of psychoanalysis.<sup>19</sup>

In his essay on the case of "Little Hans", Freud considers the objection that much of the evidence for the boy's phobia was actually inferred or prompted by his father. Although this detracts from the evidential value of the analysis, it follows a common procedure: "...a psychoanalysis is not an impartial scientific investigation, but a therapeutic measure. Its essence is not to prove anything, but merely to alter something" ('Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-year-old Boy', (SE X 104). Sixteen pages later he claims:

Therapeutic success, however, is not our primary aim; we endeavour rather to enable the patient to obtain a conscious grasp of his unconscious wishes. And this we

can achieve by working upon the basis of the hints he throws out, and so, with the help of our interpretive technique, presenting the unconscious complex to his consciousness *in our own words*, (SE X 120)

The analyst aims to reveal, demonstrate and make clear what is hidden, bringing to light the objective reality of unconscious pathogenic material. This desire for scientific objectivity is only enacted, however, by the analyst's creative and transformative intervention. Whatever the authority invested in the phrase, "our own words" suggests the provisionality of art as much as the clinical detachment of science.

The "nature" of writers and the workings of texts fascinate, puzzle and resist the drive to mastery that psychoanalysis directs toward other functions and activities of the human mind. Freud reluctantly cedes Jensen a troubling, intriguing independence: "...since access to the sources in the author's mind is not open to us, we will leave him with an undiminished right to construct a development that is wholly true to life upon an improbable premiss" (AL 68). It is as if the writer, or writing itself, withholds a divine secret, something out of reach, beyond the interpretative capabilities of a fledgling field of enquiry:

In their knowledge of the mind they are far in advance of us everyday people, for they draw upon sources which we have not yet opened up for science. If only this support given by writers in favour of dreams having a meaning were less ambiguous! (AL 34-5)

Freud frequently stresses that ambiguity - condensation and displacement, undecidable meaning - is a mode of articulation common to dreams and creative writing, in particular poetry. Ambiguity as a rhetorical device is also deployed in the discourse, the "poetic treatment" of the analyst. Yet the youthful science (which may not be a science at all) of psychoanalysis, which tracks down hidden or obscured

meaning and uses ambiguity in its therapeutic practice, needs to speak clearly, in a determinable way, to confront overdetermination and displacement in dreams, phantasy and creative writing with a systematic reading. Despite the professed humility of "us everyday people", Freud's endeavour is to render dreams meaningful in unambiguous and masterly fashion: analysis must read ambiguity correctly and authoritatively.

Freud attempts to separate the reading of the story from the proper investigation, instituting "a functional split between the language of the text and his presentation of the text".<sup>(10)</sup> Freud distinguishes between Hanold's ambiguous speeches and Zoe's interpretive powers to make sense of this ambiguity, an "idealizing gesture" that identifies Zoe with the psychoanalyst and therefore himself.<sup>(11)</sup> Yet Zoe's role in the text is not exclusively interpretive: she is also the author of controlled ambiguity. Her speech is "full of ambiguities" (AL 106). Zoe may be responsible for solving the ambiguities of Hanold's speech and behaviour, but her own enigmatic statements and allusions in the conduct of her analysis have an ambiguous meaning; it is left to Hanold (and the reader) to decipher her ironic comments.<sup>(12)</sup> Thus Zoe's position can be read more as a double movement than a functional split: she deploys and interprets ambiguity, a function already attributed (though not without question) to the creative writer by Freud. (This anticipates the "appropriate" ambiguity and sublimation of ego-psychology.) The analyst's controlled ambiguity comes to resemble that deployed by the writer.

If repetition is one of the manifestations of the drive for mastery or will to power, then Freud not only wants to understand writing, he longs to reproduce and assume its strategic and affective power. At

moments in the essay psychoanalysis is granted priority over art more explicitly. Zoe's therapeutic conduct merely reproduces in fictional form well-established psychoanalytical practice:

The procedure which the author makes his Zoe adopt for curing her childhood friend's delusion shows a far-reaching similarity - no, a complete agreement in its essence - with a therapeutic method which was introduced into medical practice in 1895 by Dr Josef Breuer and myself, and to the perfecting of which I have since then devoted myself,

(AL 111-112)

Here the discourse of psychoanalysis precedes, foreshadows and foreknows literature. As part of Freud's appropriation or colonization of creative writing, the essay rehearses the main approaches to art of classical psychoanalysis. Freud tests the possibilities for psychoanalytic criticism of a characterological approach to fiction, and gestures in the postscript towards a psychopathology of the author. In a transitional moment where both of these approaches are offered from a hypothetically literalist or common-sense position, Freud proposes that there is no convincing explanation for Hanold's delusion: "...ought we not to argue in this kind of way either with Norbert Hanold or with the author himself?" (AL 81) Since character and author are unavailable for questioning, neither party provides a "path to an understanding".

For the most part, Freud concentrates on a characterological method of enquiry, but he alludes to his abortive dialogue with Jensen, who refuses to co-operate with Freud in psychoanalytic research. Since access to the author's mind "is not open to us", his motives must remain a matter for speculation. With increasing boldness, Freud sketches an outline of a psychobiography. The authority of the author is called into question: readers can legitimately and revealingly track down meanings in a text that need not be consciously offered or sanctioned by the

writer. Freud wonders whether Jensen's imagination "was determined by forces other than his own arbitrary choice" (AL 40). After this first "timid" question, Freud considers the problem of interpretive partiality. Jensen has written a story which "might have been designed to emphasise certain fundamental theories of medical psychology" (AL 68). This may be happy coincidence or a matter of convenience for the interested reader, only too willing to read something "into" the text; Freud acknowledges "how easy it is to find what one is looking for and what is occupying one's mind" (AL 114). The author may legitimately deny that any such meaning was intended. After all, as Freud admits (and uneasily recognises from his analytic experience), the interpretive process is faltering and often obscure: "It is so easy to draw analogies and to read meanings into things. Is it not rather we who have slipped into this charming poetic story a secret meaning very far from its author's intentions? Possibly" (AL 68).

This tacitly acknowledges that the reading of phantasy in a text is at least as much a matter of the reader's phantasy as the pathology of the writer. With an unavoidable circularity, Freud's objection becomes ripe for Freudian decipherment. Might "slipped into" suggest some erotic charge attached to reading narrative and discovering its hidden secrets? After the uncertain "possibly" Freud returns to the question with much less equivocation. Either his psychoanalytic interpretation is a caricature, a symptomatic reading merely revealing his own preoccupations, or psychoanalysis has something to say about texts and the workings of the mind that neither writers nor conventional readers are conscious of: "Our opinion is that the author need have known nothing of these rules and purposes, so that he could disavow them in

good faith, but that nevertheless we have not discovered anything in his work that is not already in it" (AL 114).

Freud's version of events suggests that Jensen replied "in the negative" and "somewhat brusquely" when asked by Jung if he knew anything of Freud's theories. In the postscript, Freud reveals that Jensen refused to engage in dialogue about the "scientific theories" in his story or co-operate in "the new tasks of psychoanalytic research". This apparent rebuff lends an air of danger to the enterprise, hinting at some strong resistance by artists to psychoanalytic speculations about latent levels of meaning. According to Jensen, and backed by the evidence of three published letters, his response to Freud's enquiries was not brusque but courteous. Freud's version of the correspondence, accurate or not, stresses Jensen's discomfort and represents another manoeuvre to circumscribe and then assume the role of the creative writer. Jensen offers a rather dismissive and bland explanation for his story:

His imagination, he said, had inspired Gradiva, and he had enjoyed it; if there was anyone who it did not please, let him simply leave it alone. He had no suspicion of how greatly it had in fact pleased his readers. (AL 114)

The author is presented as unaware of the effect of his text, showing how much goes on under his nose, how tenuous his conscious control, how percipient the psychoanalytic critic ("Freud") who reveals to the author ("Jensen") the hidden treasures of his (the attribution of the pronoun is necessarily ambiguous) text. Is Freud writing "Jensen" and thus writing Gradiva?

In the most ambitious and yet risky move, Freud conflates the roles, contaminates the distinctions, of doctor and writer. It becomes

apparent that Jensen has conducted his own "investigations" into the origin of mental disturbances:

I was thus more than a little surprised to find that the author of *Gradiva*, which was published in 1903, had taken as the basis of its creation the very thing that I believed myself to have freshly discovered from the sources of my medical knowledge. How was it that the author arrived at the same knowledge as the doctor - or at least behaved as though he possessed the same knowledge? (AL 79)

Freud does not resolve this question; with the supernatural connotations of "possessed", the intertextual or intellectual connections he traces between his own and Jensen's work take on the character of an uncanny coincidence or telepathic communication. Insights into the mind's secrets are a strange possession. Does the doctor's knowledge "possess" the writer's knowledge or vice versa? Another form of possession, a strange merging of "doctor" and "author", may be suggested. Each "thinker" assumes the other's character, invades the other's domain (intellectual communism or imperialism?), a movement or oscillation suggestively similar to that which Freud describes in Hanold's second dream.

In interpreting this dream of lizard-catching, Freud cannot consult Hanold's "impressions, memories, and free associations" (AL 97). He confronts this difficulty by suggesting that "we may very tentatively put our own associations in place of his." However apologetic the tone, Freud advocates an act of appropriation, a becoming or taking the place of another, a speaking from, for and as that other. This colonizing gesture testifies to the fact that there is good deal more than a lizard up for grabs in the interpretation of texts and dreams. Initially, Freud terms the dream "a remarkably senseless affair...obviously hashed up from his day's experiences":



"Somewhere in the sun Gradiva was sitting, making a snare out of a blade of grass to catch a lizard in, and said: 'Please keep quite still, Our lady colleague is right; the method is a really good one and she has made use of it with excellent results.' He fended off this dream while he was still asleep, with the critical thought that it was utter madness, and he succeeded in freeing himself from it with the help of an invisible bird which uttered a short laughing call and carried off the lizard in its beak." (AL 50)

There are two phases, and perhaps two voices, in this short narrative. In the first phase, the recounted dream-text positions the dreamer and reader as a spectator or passive onlooker. The second phase ascribes Hanold an "active" role in sleep, where he deploys his "critical" faculties in fending off this dream, though strangely this defensive move culminates in an image of attack. Instead of concentrating on the "defence mechanisms" of a single dream-subject (Hanold), it is crucial to consider where identificatory desire might reside in Freud's reading of the dream.

The lizard can be read as the nodal point of the dream, knotting together several chains of meaning in the "original" narrative and Freud's analysis. Gradiva's speech is a modified form of the old zoologist's speech; under Freud's rules, this conflation of two people shows similarity between them: "'Gradiva catches lizards just like the old man; she is skilled in lizard-catching just as he is" (AL 98). By tracing other associations, this translation is extended: "the lizard-catching has come to signify man-catching" (AL 99). So Freud interprets "the penetration of Zoe's intentions" in the dream. (Are we meant to read this phrase as active or passive?) Subsequent events reveal that the zoologist is Professor Bertgang, Zoe's father: thus Zoe speaks "through" her father, in terms of similarity and difference. Hanold transgresses paternal authority by carrying off Professor Bertgang's

prize exhibit, his daughter. Yet perhaps the Professor's professional or intellectual authority is also at stake. In the dream, the invisible bird frustrates the zoologist's investigations by snatching the lizard, removing the object of study. The bird's derisive laughter suggests pleasure in undermining the zoologist's mastery. This contest of authority can be mapped on to Hanold's relation to the zoologist as Zoe's father. It may even implicate Freud's own interpretation: events in the dream uncannily seem to play out the struggle for scientific legitimacy that permeates his essay. It will be recalled that psychoanalysis recognises the "familiar" faces of the dreams in Jensen's text; the interpretation of this textual dream may play out a similar strange movement between seeing ahead and reading back.

Freud returns to the dream in his closing remarks, this time considering the more radical motivations behind the dream. Hanold's identification with the lizard, the wish to be taken captive and subjected to Zoe, is "of a passive, masochistic character" (AL 116). Yet Freud stresses Hanold's act of violence to Zoe the day after the dream, evidence "of a contrary erotic current". This oscillation can already be detected in the "lizard" dream. There appears to be some equivalence between Hanold and the lizard. The lizard escapes the snare, but it is seized by the invisible bird; Hanold eludes Zoe's man-catching snare, but like the lizard is subsequently caught. Significantly, however, it is Zoe/ Gradiwa who is compared to a lizard throughout the story. She resembles an "agile little lizard" (AL 100) whose apparent ability to slip through narrow cracks and gaps in Pompeii's ruins so bewilders Hanold. Freud emphasises that Hanold's curiosity about her "bodily nature...cannot disavow its origin in a young man's erotic curiosity

about a woman's body, even if it is involved in a scientific question by the conscious insistence on Gradiva's peculiar oscillation between death and life" (AL 103). This statement makes a revealing connection between sexual and scientific, physical and intellectual desire. Hanold's masochistic desire to be caught by Zoe cannot be divorced from the sadistic desire to possess her, to keep her as still as a marble relief and not let her wander or slip away. His passive desire to be "cured" by Zoe runs parallel with the desire to possess her knowledge, assume her position of authority. Freud's investment in Zoe's therapeutic abilities acknowledges his impulse to take on Zoe's authority and knowledge, to speak and act with her clinical confidence and insight in "real" life. As a site, Zoe's body permits the interpenetration of "erotic" and "scientific" desires, as well as the intermingling of professional roles.

In the work of dreams and phantasies, desire "trespasses" into the place of an other, challenging rights, occupancy and authority, destabilizing subjectivity. In Freud's explanation of the lizard-catching dream, a complex network of motives, the contaminating of professional or academic boundaries, partly mutual, partly competitive, is caught up with a relatively more private desire for supremacy. Zoe tells her newly-married friend that she will "dig out something interesting in Pompeii":

Here she was trespassing into the field of archaeology, just as he had trespassed, with his simile of lizard-catching, into the field of zoology; it was as though they were struggling towards each other and each were trying to assume the other's character. (AL 106)

Freud sanctions the act of trespass by citing "the emergence of Zoe as a physician" (AL 110); she is read as becoming or assuming the guise of

the omniscient doctor. What are the benefits of combining the character of the creative writer and the psychoanalyst? The analyst may become an object of love for the patient during the period of treatment, but must not return that love: "the doctor has been a stranger, and must endeavour to become a stranger once more after the cure" (AL 113). Zoe, however, has never been a stranger to Hanold and after the cure wins the prize of marriage. This is a reward that Freud, in his exemplary role of noble self-sacrifice, cannot claim. In such innocuous moments, it is possible to observe Freud assuming the ideal roles, playing out the same infantile phantasies of titanic proportions that he attributes to creative writers, asserting that the artist "desires to win honour, power, love, wealth, fame and the love of women" (ILP 423). For all the stoic self-denial, these are the rewards of one who can assume the roles of both author and doctor.

### Psychoanalysis as Archaeology

As a way of discovering psychoanalysis, of vindicating The Interpretation of Dreams, the layout of this essay's terrain is familiar - its buried life, its lines, traces and excavated features. Freud finds archaeology a most striking and insistent metaphor for psychoanalytic practice and, even more opportunely, Pompeii's fate supplies the ideal metaphor for repression: "There is..no better analogy for repression, by which something in the mind is at once made inaccessible and preserved, than burial of the sort to which Pompeii fell a victim and from which it could emerge once more through the work of spades" (AL 65). Pompeii emblematises the "unaccountable preservation of psychic traces"<sup>(13)</sup>, and

Freud sets out, in the time-worn footsteps of archaeology, to demonstrate how psychoanalysis too can preserve the effects of the past. The arche-therapist maps, follows the contours and detours of a life-history or clinical site, reading both with and against the evidence extracted by analysis, until the origin of a disorder is laid bare. Malcolm Bowie comments that archaeology offers psychoanalysis the "enticing picture of time made perfectly legible in layered deposits of matter".<sup>14</sup> In the "spadework" of psychoanalytic practice, the patient is helped to carry herself or himself "back into the life that had been buried" (AL 42), in order better to understand the present. Archaeology as a visionary excavation, the science of first things, "arrives" (it can never be present) at the dawn of civilization, just as psychoanalysis "uncovers" the primal beginnings of the human subject. In his essay, Freud embarks on his journey of discovery with echoes of his hero Heinrich Schliemann at Mycenae: "Let us, then, see what we find!" (AL 35) On the one hand, as the master strategist, Freud already knows what will be found, already recognises the signatures of all things he is here to read. Yet, by committing his researches to writing, by adducing a speculative project like archaeology, he raises questions about the certainty, the destination of his essay. Psychoanalysis observes and clarifies, but it also unveils and makes revelations. Once more Freud is caught in the conflicting identities constructed for psychoanalysis: scientific fact and superstitious imagination.

Freud turns to ancient history and other cultures to find support for his theory of dreams. He never explicitly rejects superstition or archaic belief as a basis for understanding dreams. In The Interpretation of Dreams, Freud cites James Sully's essay 'The Dream as

a Revelation': "...we may say that, like some palimpsest, the dream discloses beneath its worthless surface-characters traces of an old and precious communication." An editorial note points out that Freud emphasises this sentence by printing it in spaced type (TID 216n). This is bound up with hunting for buried treasure, deciphering and decoding the secrets of the past. Freud acknowledges the "painstaking study of dream-interpretation" made by Artemidorus of Daldis, probably in the second century AD, and also uses the Old Testament example of Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dreams. There is a common thread to these examples: ancient Egypt, the world of hieroglyphics. In calling his art oneirocriticism (the interpretation of dreams) Artemidorus may have been acknowledging the high science of priests in ancient Egypt, that of divine prophecy and dream-interpretation. Derrida focuses on this in 'Freud and the Scene of Writing'. This "science" drew its resources from hieroglyphic writing, a pictographic form of writing that Freud initially proposes as the language of dreams. Whereas the Egyptian priests could turn to an established code of symbols to interpret hieroglyphics, however, Freud has no Linear B script with which to read dreams conclusively. He proposes no *Traumbuch*, no dream-dictionary or encyclopedia of dream-signs, though he toyed with the idea before dropping it. In interpreting dreams, Freud travels back to the dawn of the human subject, tracing the original infantile phantasies that underlie the present psychological disposition. In this respect, analysis is a work of translation, a carrying-across-time, and the knowledge, theories and interpretive methodologies of dreams are passed on *in* writing and *as* writing, with all the attendant problematics of writing. Freud stresses that dream-symbols do not have fixed meaning,

like grammalogues in shorthand. He compares dream-symbols to Chinese script, since they admit several meanings, and might even lead to over-interpretation: "the correct interpretation can only be arrived at on each occasion from the context" (TID 470).

For psychoanalysis, interpreting dreams foregrounds the problems of transcription, of carrying meaning across time and context, and from unconscious to conscious. Freud's brief historical survey of dream-interpretation highlights the integral role of transcription: dream-decoding, the reading of hieroglyphs, is traced from Egypt, through the texts of Aristotle and Artimedorus in Greece to the "modern" Arabs of Mesopotamia. This survey itself is a history or fable of transmission, mediation and translation. The history of oneirocriticism is inextricably bound up with the history of writing; both offer up only irrecoverable origins. Like archaeological translation, dream-interpretation is always an inadequate, partial, selective procedure, only as complete as the next discovery that itself cannot be final. Foucault argues that Freudian dream-interpretation fails to recognise the overall structure of language, that meaning in dreams is only a part of something greater, less reducible:

Meaning does not appear, for psychoanalysis, through recognition of a linguistic structure, but must be extracted, deduced, gleaned from a word taken by itself. And dream interpretation, naturally, becomes a method designed to discover the meanings of words in a language whose grammar one does not understand; it becomes a method of cross-referencing of the sort used by the archaeologist for lost languages, a method of probabilistic confirmation, as in the deciphering of secret codes, a method of meaningful coincidings as in the most traditional arts of divination... Freudian analysis retrieves only one meaning among the many possible meanings by the shortcut of divination or the longer route of probability. ('15')

Foucault's remarks evoke the allure and excitement of discovery that accompanies Freud's pioneering work on dreams and the unconscious, his rearticulation of "lost languages". Psychoanalytic dream-interpretation replicates "the most traditional arts of divination"; the proclaimed ability to decipher "secret codes" and "meaningful coincidings" suggests the "magic power of words" that underpins the therapeutic efficacy of psychoanalytic practice. Yet "divination" suggests the foretelling of the future as much as a forgotten past, another example of how Freud's archaeology hovers between prophetic and physical science, between projection and recovery.

Do Freud's methods of dream-interpretation write across time in every sense, writing or crossing out time in the way that Derrida conceives of the word "origin" as always already crossed out, under erasure? Derrida emphasises that the conscious text (for example, a dream-interpretation that Freud produces) is not a transcription, "because there is no text present elsewhere as an unconscious one to be transposed or transported".<sup>(16)</sup> There is no original unconscious text, no originary archive:

There is no present text in general, and there is not even a past present text, a text which is past as having been present. The text is not conceivable in an originary or modified form of presence. The unconscious text is already a weave of pure traces, differences in which meaning and force are united - a text nowhere present, consisting of archives which are *always already* transcriptions.<sup>(17)</sup>

Dreams are only available to us as fragmentary reconstructions, a making new of a previous fiction. The dream-work irrecoverably defers, supplements rather than recovers an origin of a dream, its ultimate meaning. Mobile, shifting, making and transforming meaning, (ab)using



materials, dream-work *is* the dream, a process never authentic or present to itself.

### Psychoanalysis as narrative, or the Tail of the Lizard

Consider the tale of psychoanalysis: it appears to be a progressive, chronological unveiling of events (the patient's neurosis), a making clear to the other, or making clear of an "other" to the other (yet surface appearances can be deceptive). Having arrogated to himself the status of author, Freud makes a strong case for the efficacy and supremacy of the "narrative" practice of psychoanalysis. Freud privileges the investigative and therapeutic trajectory of the text, in its progression or linearity. Norbert Hanold becomes a patient and Zoe becomes the ideal analyst, an identificatory model for the "father" of psychoanalysis: the notion of becoming, of assuming and playing out a role is a vital constitutive element in the structure and configuration of phantasy throughout the story. Zoe conducts a "psychical treatment" (AL 62) of Hanold's delusion, excavating his repression and thereby facilitating his "cure"; Hanold slowly shakes off his repression, comes to awareness of himself and is thus able to benefit from her "treatment". Hanold is dependent on Zoe's therapy; he stumbles on truth, turning up his past as he wanders around Pompeii. He is a subject-revealed-to rather than a subject-who-reveals.

In Freud's theoretical work, the author/analyst chooses when to reveal a further secret, another piece of a jigsaw. Perhaps beguiled by the subtlety and liveness of his own reading, Freud accords the author (himself?) an omniscient status and priority: "Our author, who...never

introduces a single idle or unintentional feature into his story" (AL 92). The characters that never lived, the dreams never dreamed, become elements in the fable of psychoanalysis, a theoretical fiction in a strict sense, since a fictional case history "proves" or bears out psychoanalytic concepts and investigative methods. (The rationalization of the patient's behaviour and the demonstration of clinical mastery at the conclusion of Hitchcock's Psycho is a famous example.) Jensen's text lures in Freud, persuading him to read it as a psychoanalytic case study, but it is precisely this narrative lure that thwarts and resists Freud's totalizing impulse. He displays some awareness of the problems of founding a proof of psychoanalytic theory on a literary fiction, treating (in every sense) characters as real people, and placing trust in a text as authentic, self-present. He admits his reading is in danger of being conducted "as though the author's mind were an absolutely transparent medium and not a refractive or obscuring one" (AL 66). Obscure, refractive: the author's narrative strategies prevent the interpreter seeing clearly, attempting to mislead, disorientate, throw off the scent.

Psychoanalysis "falls" somewhere between a hermeneutic enterprise and speculation, between clinical observation and deduction and theoretical fiction. Does Freud simply write up his laboratory notes, or does he write to propose and speculate out of the discrete experiences and materials encountered in his practice? In formulating general psychoanalytic principles from his findings, simultaneously investigating and writing the structures of the mind, Freud is drawn to locate authority and knowledge in a privileged analyst-subject who works on an already delineated excavation site, with its hidden but

discernible structures that follow the patterns observed from previous, painstaking digs. The author/analyst knows in advance, can predict what site or field s/he will encounter, can foresee what type of story will be told by the patient/text. On the excavated site of Gradiya, Freud impresses himself on ground already marked, imprinted, traced out, not least by his own previous texts. The construction of this subject presumed to know, who "knows" in advance, is predicated upon the intention and control of the author/analyst. This authoritative figure is less an interpreter than an artist, inscribing each patient, each psychic structure, in the fiction of psychoanalysis.

Nevertheless, while Gradiya confirms this "fictive" impulse for Freud, it also destabilizes the centrality and privilege of any authorship. Freud's entire text privileges and must necessarily devolve and disperse the activity of interpretation. Hanold reads Zoe/Gradiya, Zoe/Gradiya reads Hanold, Freud reads Zoe/Gradiya and Hanold, Freud reads Zoe/Gradiya reading Hanold, Freud reads psychoanalysis through Jensen's story, his text "reading" all these readings: for all his pleasure in the unexpected narrative twists and turns, Freud's Gradiya is penetrated through and through by the drive to know, to foreclose interpretation, to understand how to understand. Zoe tells Hanold's story, provides the narrative interest, explains events, and leads the story to a conclusion. She also remains part of Hanold's phantasy, positioned as "author", narrator and character in this fiction. Thus the clear distinctions of "outside" and "inside" in the narrative structure are disrupted. When does Zoe speak the truth as foreknowing and when does she uncertainly respond to events? When does a "knowing" reading define her as equally in the know? Equally pertinently, in what way or

in whose name does Freud read Jensen's text, or any patient's dream-text? Storytelling takes on a strange volition and countenance (remember Jung's familiar faces) in Freud's version of Jensen's story. Who is telling whose story? Who might be the "real" author of Gradiwa? Subject and object, analyst and patient are caught up in the strategies of the analytic encounter, just as writer and reader are woven into textuality. By not clearly separating "fact" and "fiction" in presenting the case of psychoanalysis, Freud risks imitating the deluded Hanold, who "proved that his science was now completely in the service of his imagination" (AL 43).

### Living in History

Retelling Gradiwa is a chancy, halting affair, a speculative project or journey in the way that Derrida terms Beyond the Pleasure Principle a step beyond.<sup>(12)</sup> Freud's text oscillates between the unveiling of knowledge and a more uncertain crossing between past, present and future. With professed modesty and an apparent perfunctoriness that does not conceal his evident relish for narrative, Freud leads the reader through Jensen's story, though the route is hardly linear. At these stopping-points Freud assesses the validity of past psychoanalytic writings, particularly The Interpretation of Dreams. Not only does Freud consider where the text has reached, he speculates on and tests the ground ahead. To move forward in analysis, to move forward in a reading, means to think forward *and* back and to consider the present of this thinking, the conditions and context of this event.

Freud's texts go "before", testing and speculating as well as presenting data or empirical evidence.

In the essay Freud stresses that Jensen makes use of chance in his narrative (AL 67), yet "there is far less freedom and arbitrariness in mental life...than we are inclined to assume - there may even be none at all" (AL 35). Freud rejects the idea of totally "free" play, purely unbound energy, either in creative writing or psychic life.<sup>(19)</sup> Real dreams are not "unrestrained and unregulated" structures, and a creative imagination that imitates dreams is never "unfettered". Chance can be resolved into laws in the outside and inside world: "...what we call arbitrariness in the mind rests upon laws, which we are only now beginning dimly to suspect" (AL 35). Freud's suspicions offer a way of shifting knowledge from chance and superstition to demonstrable scientific laws, although these laws are only temporary stopping points on the journey of interpretation and discovery. This legal framework is always already established and its frame constantly shifts, always carrying within it the necessity of another reading. Chance and law have equal status in a fictional text.

Random events need not mean anything in "real" life, but they can have "meaning" in a dream or a text enclosed between two covers. As Freud emphasises, nothing in a dream is arbitrary or wasted. Equally, nothing in the reading of a text is ever totally irrelevant, superfluous or improper; iterability and non-saturable context are inscribed in the structure of writing. The reading process takes account of only relatively determined meaning and chance: a text is never complete or fully present to itself. In dreams, overdetermination is a knot, superimposition or blurring of signifying chains, but the nodal point of

the dream-text offers no single unitary meaning.<sup>(20)</sup> It is only a provisional centre, a temporary resting point for analysis and does not irretrievably tie down the movement of reading. It is possible to write of the chance of reading, the accidental detours, routes (mis)taken in the sense of making and taking meaning. The road of a reading is a road taken in chance, a calculated gamble, a risk. There is always a road not taken, a road spaced from the road of a reading. The royal road of "dreams", the highway to the unconscious, is spaced, differentiated from and related to other roads. It is not the only road to be read on the map, the road in itself: the road is not flawlessly signposted, marked or charted.

Different journeys, different destinations, different departure times; for a text so buried, entangled in the "past" at every level of narrative, its "time" is singularly problematic. The text constructs readings that operate on different time-scales. If reading follows the contours of the text, it traces the chances, coincidences, apparently prophetic moments that are seen as psychically or historically determined only at a later date, a further space, in the narrative. This text is going somewhere, perhaps back to Pompeii. Freud keeps alive, in modified form, the ancient belief that dreams constitute a privileged means to explain what has gone before, what is happening, and what will happen in a dreamer's life.

In Hanold's first dream, it is important to follow the complex narrative sequence, to follow the chronology, to mark time. It is rather difficult to trace where and when the dreamer "is" in the dream. Hanold finds himself in Pompeii on the day of the eruption, arriving before the

main event. When he sees Gradiva he is convinced that he is her contemporary: he is back in *her* time and place:

Till then he had had no thought of her presence, but now it occurred to him all at once and as though it was something natural that, since she was a Pompeian, she was living in her native town, and, *without his having suspected it, living as his contemporary*, (AL 38)

The last phrase actually implies that Gradiva lives in Hanold's time, which would be the present if it were not for the fact that he has been transported into antiquity. He sees Gradiva become monumentalized, her face growing paler as though "turning into marble", before the ashes bury her form. Thus he witnesses her become the relief that activates his obsessive phantasy. Hanold outlives Gradiva, watches her death, and awakes into a present that merges with the past of his dream. Reluctantly disclaiming the "reality of what he had dreamt" (AL p.39), he retains a conviction that Gradiva had lived and perished in Pompeii. When Hanold sees (or imagines he sees) Zoe/Gradiva from his window in "present" time, her presence is fleeting, enigmatic, offering only an alluring glimpse. This structure of deferred desire is played out in Pompeii, where Hanold goes back in time to meet Gradiva, who he knew and played with as a child. Since waking and sleeping are blurred, there is never any "real time" in this episode. Historical time-scales and perspectives seem to collapse together, like buildings in a ruined city.

In this dream, Hanold is seeing a figure in relief (a marble woman) come to life in a fantastic tableau, situated out of time, out of her previous context. Freud writes of the ways in which dreams treat chronological sequence:

In the first place, dreams take into account in a general way the connection which undeniably exists between all the portions of the dream-thoughts by combining the whole material into a single situation or event. They reproduce

*logical connection by simultaneity in time.* Here they are acting like the painter who, in a picture of the School of Athens or Parnassus, represents in one group all the philosophers or all the poets. It is true that they were never in fact assembled in a single hall or on a single mountain-top; but they certainly form a group in the conceptual sense. (TID 424-5)

This *mise-en-scène* of phantasy, this relief, brings together figures from different times and places, just as dreams can bring together the living and dead. This simultaneity adheres to a conceptual logic, collapsing time and emphasising the fictionality of phantasy production. Amidst this dream-logic, it is possible to conceive of phantasy as having no absolute origin. Dreams stage a past and future beyond the confines of an individual subject's history; in his case study of "Little Hans" Freud tacitly acknowledges that to concentrate on the role of infantile sexual impulses and parental prohibition in the production of phantasy and neuroses excludes "eventualities of life" (SE X 146). So, interpretations of dreams, phantasy and texts need to be read in a different time, a reconfigured sense of past, present and future.

Peter Benson highlights alternative approaches to reading narrative. Criticism can read inside the text, considering its features as the narrative progresses, or it can stand outside the finished work, scrutinizing the text from a secure position of absolute knowledge, a position that acknowledges a debt to Hegel:

Criticism is not *compelled*, even confronting a decisively circular text, to adopt this secure and stable stance as its framework. But Freud explicitly locates *psychoanalysis* ('science') in the place of Absolute Knowledge, *outside* the finished text, from where a 'better view' can be obtained. From here alone can Norbert's dreams be understood, since the necessary information about his life is only provided towards the end of the story. (21)



Neither writers nor analysts stand outside the text; they are enmeshed in the system of writing, which destabilizes assumptions about intention, meaning and communication. Equally, authors and doctors are not outside, but themselves subject to, the operations of the unconscious. Is the work of the writer ever outside textuality? Is psychoanalysis ever outside that which it treats? Benson notes that in Freud's text the coming-to-awareness of madness never becomes present, clear to itself, available for analysis or locatable (459). As analyst and character, Zoe speaks from sanity but "in" madness. Can a writer "stand in" for the unconscious? The classic text offers a contract guaranteeing eventual sanity (457), yet it is not clear who or what guarantees sanity in Freud's reading of Gradiva.

If psychoanalysis adopts the approach of standing outside the text, Hanold's behaviour can be explained retrospectively. The story makes it apparent that much of Hanold's delusion derives its material from childhood memories. Psychic fragments can be pieced together to trace the aetiology of his delusion. Yet this totalising reading presupposes a linear narrative and that the origin of the delusional structure can be traced. Freud retells the story in fits and starts; he repeats Jensen's narrative and therefore produces a different version. Zoe "as" Gradiva cures the fixation "on" Gradiva, poison thus becoming cure. Her treatment proceeds "by taking up the same ground as the delusional structure and then investigating it as completely as possible" (AL 47). Zoe is at once "in" Hanold's phantasy (in this case as analyst and character) and outside it: she must reproduce and unseat Hanold's delusion. She takes up a metalinguistic position, just as the analyst

must attempt to take up the ground of the dream-work while providing a logical, coherent reading of the incoherent, illogical dream-text.

Zoe's strategy outlines the ideal analytic encounter:

It would be a strange coincidence - but, nevertheless,  
not without an example or parallel - if the treatment of  
the delusion were to coincide with its investigation and  
if the explanation of its origin were to be revealed  
precisely while it was being dissected, (AL 47)

Note the latter part of the sentence: an origin that can be simultaneously revealed and dissected; presence and absence, completion and deferral, a supplementarity at the "centre" of delusion, phantasy or dream: "The disorder vanishes while being traced back to its origin; analysis, too, brings simultaneous cure" (AL 112). Here the analyst resembles a hybrid of explorer, archaeologist, interpreter, doctor and shaman. For all these knowing subject positions, however, it is striking that an origin is never recovered; it is precisely in tracing the structure of the disorder that an "origin" vanishes. It is an ungrounding similar to that which takes place in language as the effect of difference.

Zoe is a margin between two fields of force: text and meaning, author and truth. She represents the active analyst, both reader and author, an interpreter of events and the pivotal figure in text. Yet for all her activity in the narrative, Zoe is equally a passive object. As a representative of ideal femininity, she is gazed upon by Hanold and Freud; the corollary to this scopical drive is a will to mastery, and both male onlookers eventually solve the mystery of Zoe/Gradyva, though in a sense she herself has enacted this desire to know and control. She becomes both explanation and prize. Zoe also figures a site of possibility displaced across the roles or positions of author, character

and reader. She is ambiguously located between an allknowing individual "consciousness", a subject who spectates at the scene of phantasy and a figure who is caught up in that phantasy.

Zoe occupies the positions made available both to the dreamer and dream-interpreter. She shifts inside and outside the narrative, inside and outside Hanold's delusion. She is a participant in, and a commentator on, Hanold's dreams and phantasies. Zoe/Gradiva performs a "peculiar oscillation between death and life" (AL 103), speaking for and as the dead: "I have long grown used to being dead" (AL 47). In this gravitation or Gradivation, she is origin of the delusion and author of the cure, disturbing yet guaranteeing sanity, living in and out of the time of the narrative. Prefigured in Hanold's unconscious, she anticipates, plans ahead his cure, overseeing and foreseeing the course of events. She disturbs the distinctions between the inside and outside of the narrative, past and present, life and death, a liminal figure who impossibly bridges these divides. If dreams are bridges to the unconscious for Freud, the interpretation of dreams is an attempt to represent the unrepresentable, to construct a bridge between conscious and unconscious "territory", a bridge that leads strictly nowhere. Freud attempts to bring to light the shadowy activity of the unconscious, reading the unreadable: dreams, neuroses, hysteria, psychic disorder. Freud's complex identification with Zoe can be read as an idealized attempt to situate himself in her place among the living and the dead, the past and present, internal and external reality. Zoe is guarantor of sanity, reader of Hanold's delusion, because she has crossed over these divides. Like the Sphinx, she occupies and speaks from a borderland or uncertain realm: for Hanold, Zoe "is that 'third possibility' in every

dimension in which his mind is confused".<sup><22></sup> Is Zoe a bridge, a matter of the mind, a third possibility between mind and matter? Might texts be read as occupying this third site of possibility, a place of ceaseless interchange, at the margins of sense and non-sense, material and immaterial, science and literature, conscious and unconscious? In short, is Zoe an "ideal" reader?

### Science as a mistress

Towards the end of the essay, a different trajectory can be detected in Freud's reading. He appears not to endorse or go along totally with the "cure" of Hanold, nor does he seem particularly gratified (to use his own embryonic reader-response term) by the text's subsidence into a conventional love-story, with Hanold restored to masculine superiority, the epitome of psychic health. This return to normality might seem to be the desired outcome of psychoanalytic treatment, but Freud bemoans the commercial imperatives that persuaded Jensen to "insert" some conventional love interest "no doubt to the satisfaction of his female readers" (AL 110). The happy ending detracts from the real significance and intrigue of the work: "The author, in short, had quite arbitrarily tacked a love story on to his archaeological phantasy" (AL 110). Does this patronising tone display frustration at the ending of analysis, leaving no more text/patient to work on, no further opportunity for psychoanalysis to display its hermeneutic authority? Such a conclusion to the story grants an insufficient degree of pleasure, unsuccessfully assuaging the reader's curiosity and desire for mastery.<sup><23></sup>

Freud's investment in his interpretation of Jensen's text is strongly suggested by the phrase "archaeological phantasy". If intellectual pleasure is curtailed, this aggressive desire must be displaced onto a more openly sexual arena. As will become clear, Norbert Hanold may not be the only male figure in this fabulation of Gradiwa who begins to confuse science and desire. Once devoted to the pursuit of science, Hanold restlessly wanders the streets of Pompeii in search of Gradiwa, engrossed in his delusion, estranged from his former object of passion:

In this frame of mind he was even furious with his mistress - with science. When in the heat of the mid-day sun he wandered for the first time through Pompeii, 'the whole of his science had not merely abandoned him, but had left him without the slightest desire to find her again. (AL 89)

The slippage from "mistress" to "science" acknowledges the erotic investment of Pompeii as a site of archaeological fascination and as the haunt of the elusive Gradiwa. When his cure is complete, Hanold imposes erotic mastery over Zoe. The motivation and conduct of this role has ambiguous status for Freud, wavering between naturalness ("the aggressiveness which is a man's inevitable duty in love-making" - (AL 63) and violence ("his brutal masculine instinct for mastery" - (AL 111)).

The latter part of Freud's reading may be moved by the more radical trajectory and itinerary of desire that he broaches at the end of the essay, and which derives from the interruption or annulling of Freud's interpretive mastery. There is a correlation in content if not in intensity between Freud's dismissal of the love-story conclusion, Hanold's hostility towards the lovers in Pompeii and Freud's expressed wish, imbricated with Hanold's phantasy, to be present at the

destruction of Pompeii. At the end of his essay, Freud returns to Hanold's first dream, locating and articulating its strategies of desire:

In Norbert Hanold's first dream two wishes competed with each other in making the dream; one of them was actually admissible to consciousness, while the other belonged to the unconscious and operated from out of repression. The first was a wish, understandable in any archaeologist, to have been present as an eyewitness at the catastrophe in the year 79 A.D. What sacrifice would an archaeologist think too great if this wish could be realized in any way other than in a dream! The other wish, the other constructor of the dream, was of an erotic nature; it might be crudely and also incompletely stated as a wish to be there when the girl he loved lay down to sleep. This was the wish the rejection of which caused the dream to become an anxiety-dream. The wishes that were the motive forces of the second dream are perhaps less conspicuous; but if we recall its translation we shall not hesitate to describe them too as erotic. The wish to be taken captive by the girl he loved, to fall in with her wishes and to be subjected to her - for so we may construe the wish behind the situation of the lizard-catching - was in fact of a passive, masochistic character. Next day the dreamer hit the girl, as though he was dominated by the contrary erotic current. . . But we must stop here, or we may really forget that Hanold and Gradiva are only creatures of their author's mind. (AL 116)

This passage - abruptly foreclosed - can be seen as prophetic in Freud's work. Caught in the swirling, contradictory currents of desire, Freud begins to map territory beyond the pleasure principle, tracing the economy of the "death-instinct", the desire for mastery, compulsive repetitions and sado-masochistic drives, territory only charted in published form a decade later.<sup>24</sup> The reluctant disclaimer regarding the reality of literary characters raises questions about the distinctions between science and art, theoretical fictions and creative fictions. The wish-fulfilling motivations and capacities of dreams are also put in question; the strategies of desire, indeed the nature and dominance of the pleasure principle are thrown open to challenge. Dream-

work and dream-wishes are too complex to be covered by a simple formula that "dreams are wishes represented as fulfilled" (AL 115). The wish, not the dream-subject, is the "constructor of the dream": it is suggested that the wish produces the subject, not vice versa. This desire to look on, to witness and spectate describes or stages a scene of phantasy, a scene that testifies to the force of the death drive. Is it a desire for identification? Where does this desire come from? Is there a wish not to watch but be watched? Is it Freud or Hanold in the dream?

For Hanold, the dream-wish of seeing Pompeii at the moment of its ruin can be traced as a blending of "intellectual" and erotic desires, desires that can never be definitively separated. Archaeology can appear a cold science, with its fascination with marble women rather than flesh and blood, the morbid pleasure in living and feasting among the dead. Hanold remembers science only as an old aunt (AL 89); no longer a ravishing mistress, it offers only stale delights. Hanold's archaeological desire is reinvested, displaced, taken up by the desire to solve the enigma of Gradiva; by recovering this history, Hanold discovers the secrets of his own past, thus opening up a new life for himself. Freud's desire is to solve the enigma of the dream-wish and dream-work, and thus discover psychoanalysis. He seeks proof of laws of the mind, so that evidence of these shadowy laws can fill in gaps in human knowledge; psychoanalysis is engaged in excavating, uncovering structures that always already existed, though in different historical form and circumstances. Thus Freud can become an object of admiration and envy, a figure to be desired, loved like the unnamed doctor he writes of earlier. Freud's identificatory desire for Zoe is a move to

acquire her analytic authority and insight: Zoe becomes a scientific (or at least therapeutic) mistress.

Hanold feels rage and jealousy, both to Gradiwa and other "real", contemporary tourist couples; in its way, a desire to appropriate that relationship, to "be" in the place of that couple and thus obliterate them. This destructive impulse directed towards others is strangely complementary to an apparently contradictory drive in his archaeological phantasy, where he desires self-obliteration, the completion of desire by annihilation. Such would be the effect on a "real" onlooker of the final events at Pompeii. Yet both Hanold and Freud are positioned as onlookers, inscribed in but still "outside" this scene; the subject-in-phantasy is not seen, but remains a structural element that is a presence, if not present to itself, in the scene of phantasy.<sup>(25)</sup> The desire to know, control, maintain mastery over an object of study is as much a component of the death drive as the sado-masochistic aggression, the effects of which can be traced in this dream-scene.

The dream anticipates (it cannot actually imagine) the witnessing of a major historical event, thereby putting flesh back on the buried bodies, life into the devastated city, filling in the blanks of this filled-in moment of history in a manner that archaeology can never achieve. The significance of Pompeii lies in the fact that it is not "ruined", but preserved as a scene of phantasy:

The first was a wish, understandable in any archaeologist, to have been present as an eyewitness at the catastrophe in the year 79 A.D. What sacrifice would an archaeologist think too great if this wish could be realized in any way other than in a dream!

This wish, "located" in "Hanold's dream", represents the apotheosis of time-travel, the zenith of glory, fame and recognition - the precise



desires, motivations attributed to creative writers by Freud. This desire for recognition as an archaeologist is readily displaceable onto psychoanalysis, indeed perhaps a means to characterize its investigative methods. A field of enquiry without a weight of tradition, in its early years psychoanalysis took on the appearance of an *enfant terrible* for conventional science and philosophy. For its followers, it offered exciting discoveries, new methods of uncovering the secrets of human life. The "archaeological phantasy" is a re-living, the impossibility of living that time once more, but also the possibility of living that time (in) another time, in a foreseen but unforeseeable future, finding a future in the past.

Thus, a double movement: a desire to go back and forward, uncovering a desire to return to origins and to move forward to the completion, the fulfilment of desire. Freud, Hanold, Zoe/Gradiva, the reader of Jensen and the reader of Freud, all participants in three versions of Pompeii, one held in time, a liminal site between life and death (present), one at the moment of its destruction (past), and one that makes it possible to look forward in order to look back, to re-experience, to wish to become a resident of that city in its last catastrophic hours in 79 A.D. (future). To become a time-traveller, not out of time but across time, is not to deny the historical limits of the subject but to test a different temporality. Where can this temporality be found? In dreams, in texts. Who encounters this temporality, who encounters all these separate but interwoven moments? All those "subjects" caught up, implicated, engaged in reading and writing. Let us follow in the footsteps of Freud Bertgang/Gradiva - "one who steps along

brilliantly" - to look at two texts that foreground "dreams" of the body  
and "dreams" of history.

## Footnotes

1. An archaeological motif runs throughout Freud's work. His essay on Jensen's Gradiya was published just five years after his visit to Pompeii in 1902. Malcolm Bowie charts this archaeological interest in Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction. For Freud, archaeology represents "the supreme combination of art and science", exerting "a special fascination" upon him throughout his career (p.18). As Bowie points out, Freud's career develops during a "golden age" of archaeology, with Schliemann unearthing Troy, Evans excavating Knossos and Carnarvon and Carter discovering the tomb of Tutenkhamen. Both psychoanalysis and archaeology are concerned "with burial and excavation, with the making-present of a previously-lost past" (p.19). Both disciplines are engaged in the study of "anterior states", and the search for prehistoric origins resembles the search for original psychic material: "for Freud *that which came before*, whether in the life of a civilization or in the life of the mind, has a peculiar and unparalleled capacity to organise our perception of *that which is*" (p.18). Bowie also traces the competitive edge between psychoanalysis and archaeology. Freud endeavours to beat archaeology at its own game, allowing "the mental scientist access to an archaic order that the archaeologist as archaeologist cannot know" (p.21). That archaic order is the "fixed psychical structure" which psychoanalysis discovers in its daily practice (p.23). This contest of priority and authority may be seen as analogous to Freud's struggle with creative writers that is traced in this chapter.

In Language and the Origins of Psychoanalysis, John Forrester also traces the connections between psychoanalysis and archaeology. Archaeology requires "a theory of the productions of signs, a theory of representation"; if it is to prove a useful model through which to read the psyche, then psychoanalysis must read signs that "are first and foremost signs of absence and death": "If psychoanalysis is an archaeology of the living, it is no less true that its central preoccupation is absence and its signs, now complicated by the dimension of time, so that not only do signs witness absence, but also witness the change of such absence over time" (p.2). Freud's essay can be read persuasively as an archaeology of the living, an endeavour that necessarily must confront absence, death and "the dimension of time". In his excavation, not everything is brought to light.

2. Sarah Kofman discusses the ways in which Freud's "summary" of Gradiya breaks the "rules" of Freudian interpretive methods, since it separates form and content and reads the text in an exclusive and selective manner: "If, in order to make a correct study of the text, one must look at it in its totality, then the summary seems like a useless supplement tacked onto a text that is already full of meaning. Useless and even dangerous, since while giving the impression of faithfully reproducing the text's content and merely removing the pleasure incentive, it would in fact be suppressing part of its sense". In 'Summarize, Interpret (Gradiya)', trans. Sarah Wykes, in Freud and Fiction, [Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991], pp.87-8). Kofman argues that the effect of Freud's process of selection "is to make what is not (or does not seem to be) mysterious into a mystery, or to erase what is truly puzzling" (p.96).

3. Borch-Jacobsen, pp.57-65. (Further references given in main text.)

4. 'Divisions of deliria in Gradiya', in *Textual Practice*, Vol 4, No.3, (Winter 1990), p.455.
5. *ibid.*, p.460.
6. *ibid.*, p.451.
7. Freud might be said to follow in the footsteps of Marlowe's Faustus: "*ubi desinit philosophus, ibi incipit medicus.*" ("Where the philosopher leaves off, the physician begins"), in The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus, ed John J. Jump (London: Methuen, 1965), I.1.13.
8. Kofman, p.97.
9. 'On Narcissism' illustrates Freud's characteristic oscillation between empiricism and speculative theory. Freud addresses the problem of differentiating the ego-instincts, ego-libido and object-libido. He expresses distaste at "abandoning observation for barren theoretical controversy", but cannot "shirk an attempt at clarification": "It is true that notions such as that of an ego-libido, an energy of the ego-instincts, and so on, are neither particularly easy to grasp, nor sufficiently rich in content; a speculative theory of the relations in question would begin by seeking to obtain a sharply defined concept as its basis. But I am of the opinion that that is just the difference between a speculative theory and a science erected on empirical interpretation. The latter will not envy speculation its privilege of having a smooth, logically unassailable foundation, but will gladly content itself with nebulous, scarcely imaginable basic concepts, which it hopes to apprehend more clearly in the course of its development, or which it is even prepared to replace by others. For these ideas are not the foundation of science, upon which everything rests: that foundation is observation alone. They are not the bottom but the top of the whole structure, and they can be replaced and discarded without damaging it. The same thing is happening in our day in the science of physics, the basic notions of which as regards matter, centres of force, attraction, etc., are scarcely less debatable than the corresponding notions in psychoanalysis" (OM 69-70). Nowhere in this passage does Freud ascribe conclusive status to psychoanalysis as a field of enquiry. Is psychoanalytic investigation based on the solid foundation of "observation", or does it possess a "logically unassailable" foundation that lights up the nebulous uncertainties of empiricism? (The question of "speculation" has already been discussed in Chapter Two.) Freud also makes the strategic comparison of psychoanalysis with the respectable, established science of physics.
10. Anne-Marie Smith, 'Gradiya and Freud: Breaking the mould of femininity' in *Paragraph*, 15, No.2, (July 1992), p.198
11. *ibid.*, p.198.
12. See Benson, p.458. Benson argues that Zoe's characterization in terms of "feminine charm" enables her to be without an unconscious: "As a woman, she can live without repression through her adeptness at doubleness, an ability to speak (like the Sphinx, or the Pythian oracle) a more-than-one of meaning". Smith reads Zoe's ambiguous discourse in terms of "masquerade" and "the ironic function of femininity" (p.203).
13. Forrester, p.209.
14. Freud, Proust and Lacan, p.23.
15. 'Dream, Imagination, Existence', p.35.
16. 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', in Writing and Difference, p.211.
17. *ibid.*, p.211.
18. 'Speculations - On Freud', p.78.

19. This would lead to a reconfiguration of poetic licence; see the discussion of this issue in Chapter Three.
20. Bowie discusses the theoretical model that archaeology provides for psychoanalysis in terms of historical road-systems: "The straight causal road opened up by archaeology provides not so much a logical foundation for Freudian historical and hermeneutic procedure as an escape from that procedure at its moments of crisis or overflow. For Freud, in his discussions of case-material, is a multilinear historian of the psychical life, and in his dream-interpretations the manipulator of ramifying and imbricated causal schemes. Archaeology was more than a mere escape from all this analytic intrication: it was the dream of an alternative logic to the threatening and insidious logic of dreams" (Freud, Proust and Lacan, p.26).
21. Benson, pp.452-3. (Further references given in main text.)
22. *ibid.*, p.458.
23. Freud's equivocal reaction can also be read as symptomatic of an anxiety provoked by Jensen's metaphorical sexual success in "satisfying" the demands and expectations of his female readership.
24. The imbrication of the desire for mastery, death - "this most unwished for of all thoughts" - and archaeology surfaces in Freud's own dream-material: "...I had already been in a grave once, but it was an excavated Etruscan grave near Orvieto, a narrow chamber with two stone benches along its walls, on which the skeletons of two grown-up men were lying. The inside of the wooden house in the dream looked exactly like it, except that the stone was replaced by wood. The dream seems to have been saying: 'If you must rest in a grave, let it be the Etruscan one.' And, by making this replacement, it transformed the gloomiest of expectations into one that was highly desirable" (TID 588). The remains of this dream, an example of the transmutation of a "death-drive" into archaeological satisfaction, recur in Freud's Future of an Illusion (1927): "The sleeper may be seized with a presentiment of death, which threatens to place him in the grave. But the dream-work knows how to select a condition that will turn even that dreaded event into a wish-fulfilment: the dreamer sees himself in an ancient Etruscan grave which he has climbed down into, happy to find his archaeological interests satisfied" (PFL 12 196-7).
25. Smith, pp.200-1. Smith reads the dream as a phantasy of detachment that attempts to keep in place, to keep at a distance, sexual difference: "For Hanold, a form in which desire is acceptable means women cast in marble, bronze or plaster. This involves the repression of infantile sexuality and a corresponding fear of sexual difference...Zoe's irrecoverable distance is a projection but it is furthermore her ironic representation of his detachment. It is a function of femininity whereby she captures and flaunts the detachment of the male gaze with indifference". This can be read as an identification with an omniscient figure, if Gradiva as a marble relief is transformed into a bodied, analytic subject-presumed-to-know. But Hanold's (Freud's?) identificatory desire is directed at Zoe/Gradiva's impassivity and immunity from historical change. Thus, this identification is with a dead, irrecoverable other, an other without difference that closes off the circulation of desire. This may explain why, according to Smith, Hanold is desubjectivised in his dream. Borch-Jacobsen would contend that the dream-subject is *always* other to itself, and that subjectivity in dreams is constituted through alterity.

## ELIOT, THE UNCANNY AND CULTURAL PHANTOMS

Thus far a certain form of intra-and inter-textual "dreaming" has been elucidated, although questions of history and the body have been considered. The final two chapters will be concerned more thoroughly with reading a cultural or ideological "unconscious", through a range of nineteenth and twentieth century poetic texts. This chapter will examine T.S. Eliot's 'Gerontion' and The Waste Land alongside Freud's definition of the uncanny and a further exploration of Abraham and Torok's notion of the metapsychological "phantom". In doing so, a possible means of reading a private and public "unconscious" will be advanced.

### The Unconscious and the Individual Talent

Even as magisterial critic, renovator of poetic diction, promoter of artistic impersonality and social commentator, T.S. Eliot continually broaches the question of unconscious process in his writing. A brief overview illustrates that there is sufficient warrant in Eliot's critical and creative writing to consider the question of unconscious "influences". Most critics tend to stress Eliot's conscious command over his work, yet he writes that poetry "is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation".<sup>1</sup> Eliot appears to acknowledge a determining factor - the influence of the unconscious - outside the poet's conscious control. C.K. Stead indicates that Eliot was grappling with this question in the period leading up to The Waste Land:

Three essays written in 1919 - 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', 'Hamlet' and 'Ben Jonson' - indicate that Eliot in that year was wrestling with the problem of conscious direction and unconscious process in the writing of poetry.<sup>(2)</sup>

Eliot's theory of artistic impersonality suggests that the poet is a passive vehicle through which some outside agency, some "other", will communicate: technical considerations will be "enough to keep the poet's conscious mind fully occupied, as the painter's by the manipulation of his tools".<sup>(3)</sup> For Eliot the cultural renovator that "other" is the ideal Tradition: for Eliot the practising artist, it is the "first", psychic voice of poetry, unbidden, ultimately unknowable. In an act of "continual surrender", the poet somehow taps into this unquantifiable resource.

In Tradition and the Individual Talent, Eliot compares the poetic mind to a catalyst in a chemical reaction: the poet's mind is the shred of platinum, which remains "inert, neutral, and unchanged" during the process. This complex reaction brings about the correct combination of elements :

The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together.<sup>(4)</sup>

Eliot distinguishes between emotions and feelings, the elements that "enter the presence of the transforming catalyst": emotions pertain to the person "who suffers" while feelings inhere "in particular words or phrases or images" (18). Emotions are deliberate, intentional, whereas feelings are associative: unconscious may "respond to unconscious" and "swarms of inarticulate feelings are aroused" (148). Antony Easthope suggests that "emotions" refer to the conscious or pre-conscious and "feelings" signify the unconscious.<sup>(5)</sup> Eliot's analogy of the catalyst

curiously echoes the scientific or technological terms adopted by psychoanalysis in metapsychological theory. Eliot asks the same questions as Freud grapples with in his speculation on the 'Mystic Writing Pad': what makes the mind work; how can it be represented; does the psyche resemble a machine? This machinic trope may be seen to relate to the anxieties about technology and the "mechanical" status of urban life in The Waste Land. Before examining the "secrets" of this central modernist text, we must turn to 'Gerontion' (ECP 39-41), a poem which appears to stage the workings of a mind, with a "swarm" of inarticulate thoughts flitting through the "windy spaces" between conscious and unconscious. In doing so, 'Gerontion' anticipates many formal and thematic strands of The Waste Land.

#### 'Gerontion'

The house where the protagonist in 'Gerontion' muses has been consistently read as a figure for the mind, an image of the skull or head. This trope is linked to the connotations of ownership, authority and possession associated with property. The house is rented, dilapidated, riddled with draughty gaps and spaces. If the house is associated with the head, then this structural instability proposes an analogy with an ego whose integrity and authority is under erasure. The text's setting in a house that is both "literal" and metaphorical disorders clear distinctions between an inner and outer world, and this uncertainty is compounded by the status of the protagonist. F.R. Leavis states that the poem lacks narrative or logical continuity, and evokes the "immediate consciousness" of an isolated old man.<sup>(6)</sup> Conversely,



Maud Ellmann argues the poem is a house of text where the speaker is immured in the prison-house of language: "The house in which the speaker stiffens is built out of the words he frames around his own vacuity".<sup>67</sup> Thoughts are "tenants" of the draughty house, and the outside world dissolves into reverie. For all the speaker's repetitious reflections, the prevailing sense is that of doubt and paradox.

With a decentred "self" installed in the house, coupled with radical epistemological uncertainty, there is a curious echo of Beyond the Pleasure Principle: "Vacant shuttles/ Weave the wind". The "shuttles" can be taken as another term for bobbins or reels. The tenancy of the house is concerned with genealogy, a matter of inheritance: the old man is read to "by a boy". This oddly recalls Freud observing little Ernst's game of *fort/da*: the poem rehearses a similar trajectory of repetitious and speculative reeling. The text speculates on an unknowable history and an uncertain future, despite the references to "Christ the tiger" coming in spring. With an insecure tenancy and a "dry brain", the protagonist has only modest investment in that future. (When the stakes about the future of culture are raised in The Waste Land, the dramatic breakdown takes place alongside the hope of renovation, in the guise of "a peace that passeth all understanding".) The "beyond" of history, knowledge and the self returns in the closing lines to disrupt "a thousand small deliberations". It is "Beyond the circuit" of the hesitant, repetitive meditations on sex and knowledge, beyond the safety of the house. There is no closure, no textual "sleepy corner": the repeated emphasis on spacing attests to the violent gusts of difference sweeping through the text.

C.K. Stead suggests that the house is a brothel, where the speaker phallically stiffens "in a rented house".<sup>(8)</sup> This reading paves the way for an almost classic Freudian interpretation. There is phallic symbolism ("cutlass", "knob" and "Horn"), images of the female genitals ("hot gates", "passages", "corridors" and the "Gulf"), oral imagery ("Us he devours", "pungent sauces", "To be eaten, to be divided, to be drunk/ Among whispers") and anal ("the salt marsh", "Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds"). The poem ends with "the circuit of the shuddering Bear/ In fractured atoms", which Hugh Kenner proposes as orgasm<sup>(9)</sup>, but the image of dissolution might equally allude to the shattering reintrojection of sexual aggression. Sexual fulfilment is deferred or thwarted: "We have not yet reached conclusion". Just as the poem is saturated with allusions to sexual desire, so it is littered with images of sterility. Idealized love turns into fear and threat, instituting a sense of transcendent horror and absence: "I that was near your heart was removed therefrom/ To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition". This recollection produces a type of reversed synaesthesia - "I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch" - but the protagonist's fate is to maintain "contact" with this "adulterated" passion. Memory is insistent, ineradicable. Desire is unappeasable - "the giving famishes the craving" - but always posthumous. If "stiffen" recalls the Elizabethan pun "to die", which links sex and death, then the text plays out a living death. In this phantasy of sexual alienation and anxiety, sex leads inevitably to physical destruction, madness and death - a nightmarish schematism more fully elaborated in The Waste Land.

Another "Freudian" reading of the house may provide a more persuasive connection with the trope of history and knowledge in the

poem. In 'The Uncanny', Freud comments that in dreams and phantasies the house can represent the womb, the "former *Heim* [home] of all human beings..the place where each one of us lived once upon a time and in the beginning" (AL 368). Freud notes that this first home is an uncanny place, long forgotten but once familiar, evoking a much-repressed nostalgia. The womb's *unheimlich* character thus associates with the haunted house, another uncanny home traced in Freud's long etymological preamble. The "sleepy corner" of 'Gerontion' is a site of airy spirits and draughts, the old man a "Dull head among windy spaces". He declares that "I have no ghosts" but there are distracting noises off: the coughing goat, the sneezing woman and the ceaseless wind. Memories of mysterious but named figures drift through the ramshackle structure of the text, walking the house like ghosts, restless and insistent absences. Occupied by tenants, the house is not possessed in a legal sense but is possessed in the sense of supernatural inhabitation. If the head and the house are equated symbolically, then the I/ego/mind that provisionally centres the text can no longer be said to be master in its own house:

Rather than the master of its mansion, the ego turns into the tenant of a rented house, Selfhood can no longer hold itself intact, any more than Gerontion can seal his house against the wind, for writing threatens the interiority on which the very fiction of the self depends.<sup>(10)</sup>

The "wilderness of mirrors" suggests fractured identity, a self that sees itself only as multiplied "variety". The "tenants" of the penultimate line may refer to the old man and the boy, but equally to split subjectivity and multiple selves. As the nominal householder and self, the old man is articulated in his own displacement, an articulation emphasised by the deployment of recurrent negatives

throughout the text. This displacement modulates into dispersal when, with centrifugal force, the wind scatters the whirling "I" of the stormy conclusion.

'Gerontion' offers and refuses any classic psychoanalytic reading; the *unheimlich* character of its homely scenario ensures that it cannot be reduced to fixed symbolic equivalences. It is precisely the effect of the uncanny that it produces ambiguity and ambivalence: it both invites and resists symbolic decoding. The uncanny frames 'Gerontion': the poem disturbs the boundaries between inside and outside, reality and fantasy. Gabriel Pearson concludes that the poem is "unreadable", reducible only to its grammatical components.<sup>(11)</sup> Maud Ellmann contends that traditional readings, which note the poem's echoes and associations, replenish its broken images with memory and sense, actually reversing the text's insistence on gaps and emptiness, covering over its "eternal silence and infinite spaces".<sup>(12)</sup> The echoes of 'Gerontion' have attracted and frustrated many critics. F.O. Matthiessen, for example, unequivocally states that the poem depicts "the horror of a life without faith, its disillusioned weariness of knowledge, its agonized slow drying up of the springs of emotion". Yet he then remarks that the images in the text become "unconsciously general", without specifying what is meant by the general unconscious<sup>(13)</sup>; this latter comment runs counter to Matthiessen's previous magisterial pronouncement, since these "unconscious" images mitigate against secure or wholly objective interpretation. Such critical confusion reiterates the poem's oscillation between coherence and indeterminacy, holding out and forestalling the promise of revelation:

Signs are taken for wonders, 'We would see a sign!'  
The word within a word, unable to speak a word,

Swaddled with darkness,

The echo from the nativity sermon delivered by Lancelot Andrewes underscores a yearning to convert words into the Word. "Swaddled" suggests a womb-like prelinguistic realm of wholeness. "Swaddled with darkness", meaning is enclosed, veiled, hidden: yet this very concealment ascribes an almost magical power to words. (This perhaps recalls the "magic word" that cryptanalysis seeks to uncover.) Instead of a plenitude of meaning, however, the text offers digression, deferral and images of aridity and vacancy. In the poem, signs tend to fragment and disperse, confirming the enigmatic, deceitful potential of language to offer and withhold the hope of understanding. Each "word" is metonymically displaced by another "word", the repetition emphasising absence rather than completion. This displacement, frustrating the "swaddled" child of language, can be read in Lacanian terms: "Language imposes a chain of words along which the ego must move while the unconscious remains in search of the object it has lost".<sup>14</sup> In this case, the lost "object" would be Logos yet, as Gabriel Pearson comments, "'Gerontion' implicitly demands Logos, while Logos does not inhere in the ordering of the poem".<sup>15</sup> The text's disorientating darkness is a challenge not only to the restlessly speculating protagonist but also to its readers.

The passage on history is structured around a pattern of desire and denial. The text "would see" a sign in history, but history is perceived as a dark, bewildering maze:

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now  
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors  
And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,  
Guides us by vanities. Think now  
She gives when our attention is distracted  
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions

That the giving famishes the craving, Gives too late  
What's not believed in, or if still believed,  
In memory only, reconsidered passion,

History is portrayed as stereotypically feminine, contradictory and deceitful. Tony Pinkney notes that the con- and cun- roots are etymologically affiliated within the range of meanings "to find, to imagine, to know". Sexuality (particularly the female) and epistemology are brought into "disquieting proximity".<sup>(16)</sup> This would relate again to the word being "Swaddled with darkness", which imbricates the sexual, epistemological and maternal. The "cunning passages" and "contrived corridors" of history recall the "dark caverns" of the female body in 'Hysteria' (ECP 34). Femininity represents the unknowable, the "supple confusions" of history associated with the mysterious recesses of the female body. History, like sexual difference, is a labyrinth of blind alleys and secret spaces, a cryptic code to be deciphered. The repetitive emphasis on "giving" only accentuates absence: lack, and the endless circulation of desire structure the protagonist's speculations. Past and present resembles "a wilderness of mirrors". Hugh Kenner stresses that the poem is an image of Europe in 1919<sup>(17)</sup>, but Stan Smith links this "wilderness" more specifically with the Hall of Mirrors at the Versailles peace treaty.<sup>(18)</sup> David Trotter argues that the empty public ceremony of the failed Paris Peace Conference exemplifies a sense of hollow history.<sup>(19)</sup> This feminized history, with its duplicitous, echoing avenues and serpentine intricacies, excites and undermines ambition. Its "cunning passages" entangle and dissipate passion: it entombs and buries desire alive. History thus resembles a maze of catacombs, anticipating "rats' alley/ Where the dead men lost their bones" in The Waste Land.

The repeated injunction to "think now" is a vain response to the supple confusions of memory and desire. It also implies a blank mind, the old man's dry brain or dull head. Cairns Craig argues that the poem displays the broken bridge of memory, and that culture indeed permits no memory.<sup>(20)</sup> Ellmann contends that the poem "erases history, if history is understood as the progressive revelation of the truth, rather than the traces of an alterity".<sup>(21)</sup> The poem's repetitions are as much a means of forgetting as remembering, and Ellmann remarks that the poem is less to do with history than amnesia. History becomes an act of forgetting; this accords with Eliot's view that writing brings forgetfulness.<sup>(22)</sup> Yet the references to the squatting Jew indicate that some cultural memory returns, activating a seam of anti-semitism and racial tension that runs through Eliot's early poetry and much early twentieth century thought and aesthetic production. The Jewish owner squats on the window-sill, in a posture of physical grotesqueness which also implies that he produces the "merds". As landlord he presides over a slum dwelling, but as a squatter his ownership is rendered illegitimate, like his dubious lineage "Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp". He is made to exemplify the squalor he foists on his tenants. The "jew" remains uncapitalized, Pearson arguing that "[a]s a linguistic act, it reads like paranoid retaliation, a cutting down to size by castration".<sup>(23)</sup> Ellmann proposes that the "fascistic" image of the Jew "reduces history to vagrancy, contagion, and miscegenation rather than the revelation of the spirit".<sup>(24)</sup> The Jewish owner is representative of a wilful, disordered, sexually and spiritually corrupted history. For all the text's amnesia, the tremor of racial and political tension

(which resurfaces in The Waste Land) is an historical trace that the text cannot erase, an insistent memory it cannot evade.

History is represented as a knowledge tantalisingly absent, a cryptic communication to be decoded, yet it is also vaguely terrifying. The house is an empty shell full of echoes and recesses, just as history is redolent with secret messages and corridors. Ghosts and whispers reverberate in the text's hollow centre, disturbing the protagonist's sleepy corner, which becomes a prison or tomb. In 'To Sleep' Keats invokes sleep to "Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards,/ And seal the hushèd casket of my soul".<sup>(25)</sup> The "hushèd casket" suggests a coffin or tomb, and the trope of sealing or locking up the "soul" evokes the notion of the crypt. Encrypting is a matter of entombing something - a memory, secret or "body" - that remains both dead and alive and is never fully laid to rest. Ghosts and whispers flit through the house's windy spaces. In 'Gerontion' the seals to restful sleep are already and irretrievably broken, reminiscent of the "seals broken../ In our empty rooms" in The Waste Land. The text simultaneously seeks the key to understanding and keeps the secrets of the house, exhibiting a conflicting impulse to set loose its ghosts and keep them buried. 'Gerontion' acts as a visitation (in the sense of inspection and haunting) of the crypt of the mind.

The repetitions and claims to transcendent knowledge that make up the brickwork of this rented house can be read as figuring psychic fragmentation, explicable through categories like neurosis and megalomania. Yet, as has already been seen, it is problematic to apply a pathology to the bodies - author, character and reader - implicated in the traditional structure of reading. The range of cultural reference in



'Gerontion' suggests a much wider condition, one that is never fully subjective or intersubjective. The text is hollowed out, inscribing a vault or chamber of secret memories in various kinds of body: the textual body, the private body and the cultural body. The Waste Land is marked in similar fashion, and plays out a similar network of concerns surrounding sexuality, knowledge and social relations. It too is haunted by ghosts and bodies that will not rest. The first task in engaging with the poem is to consider the nature of the "mind" or "voice" represented in the text; then the text will be read through various categories of the uncanny and also with reference to Abraham and Torok's concepts of the phantom and the crypt.

### The First Voice of Poetry

As Antony Easthope comments, The Waste Land typifies the modernist poetic text in its experimental formal composition: "...the text releases words, writing, from its prison in any determinate context, surrounds it with space on the page and leaves it to attract a swarm of suggestions, overtones, connotations, resonances".<sup>(26)</sup> Enacting transformations and shifts in perspective through repetition, distortion, syntactical disruption and "local intensities"<sup>(27)</sup>, the poem operates in a mode suggestive of dream-work. As Lacan states, "Discontinuity...is the essential form in which the unconscious first appears to us as a phenomenon" (FFC 25). Comparing the form of the poem to a dream is not a new critical enterprise; reading The Waste Land also throws into sharp perspective changing critical assumptions about reading culture, literature and the unconscious. Graham Hough claims that the text

illustrates "the disordered concreteness of dream"<sup>(28)</sup>, and David Craig notes that the method of "running-on" from one social scene to another is like a dream-scape. Although couched in a tentative manner, Craig makes a telling comment: even critical responses to the poem move in shifts that are "not quite conscious."<sup>(29)</sup> Stephen Medcalf also concentrates on the text's effect on critical reading: "The painful abrupt fragments of The Waste Land, like some kinds of memory and remorse at the end of sleep, make it their business to wake us and to keep us awake".<sup>(30)</sup>

Other critics concentrate less on the "unconscious" work of the poem than on its meaning. For Lionel Trilling the poem reads like a psychoanalytic dream interpretation, which perhaps accounts for the "lively" interest taken by literary criticism in the text's latent and ambiguous meaning.<sup>(31)</sup> To follow the implications of Trilling's argument, the writer is the analysand and the critic the analyst, treating (the therapeutic pun is intentional) the poetic text like a dream-text; the substance of the poem becomes an analogue for the analysand's free association in the consulting room. To extend the analogy, the poem is a secondary elaboration, a waking report of an anterior "dream". Trilling takes account of the text's ambiguous content but overlooks the role of critic and reader in interpreting such an elusive text. David Craig's notion of critical responses and shifts that are "not quite conscious" is more persuasive in that it acknowledges the influence of the unconscious on both the reader and the writer.

Cairns Craig argues that critical reading strives to close the gaps in a modernist text by supplying it with a coherence it appears to lack:

Faced by the open poem we seek an ingress to the author's psyche, or his reading, or his personal life, or his

unconscious, in order to know that we are providing the poem with its appropriate links,<sup>(32)</sup>

This approach presupposes an "intention" behind the text, a clear expression of the the author's thought or personality that can be revealed if only readers and critics can make the "correct" response and interpret the clues "properly". This assumes that the writer is in conscious control of a text and that a successful reading depends upon making the "appropriate" associations. Craig also attributes an unconscious only to the author. The Waste Land is charged with desire, but the figuration of desire in the text relates to readers and critics as well. As Freud suggests, the associative method of interpretation "fills in" the gaps in a recounted dream, makes its juxtapositions intelligible:

My patients were pledged to communicate to me every idea or thought that occurred to them in connection with some particular subject; amongst other things they told me that a dream can be inserted into the psychical chain that has to be traced backwards in the memory from a pathological idea, (TID 174)

This description suggests the interpretative process of association and connotation demanded by the textual composition of The Waste Land. Yet Freud does not claim that free association is an infallible interpretative method: dream-analysis arrives only at a partial interpretation of a dream. The dream-text cannot be reduced to a single phantasy or an essential meaning: other, irrecoverable, meanings are possible. The poem carries within it hints and lures to its meanings - the means of its interpretation - yet, Sphinx-like, frustrates and resists the act of understanding. The Waste Land, then, resembles a dream if, as Lacan argues, dreams are made for the recognition, if not the comprehension, of desire (E 260). Yet this returns to a recurrent

question: whose dream would the poem represent, and how could the text be analysed as such? In the wake of 'Gerontion', it becomes clear that the textual unconscious is not definitively "personal" or "collective": these categories are interwoven, inseparable.

Much critical debate on The Waste Land has surrounded the issue of the text's narrative viewpoint; does the poem manifest a collective cultural consciousness, or a single dramatized consciousness? Antony Easthope offers several reasons for identifying a single (albeit qualified) speaker, or a consistent psychological disposition in the poem. The first person singular appears over thirty times in the text and the dialogue of each character is enclosed in inverted commas, rendering it grammatically distinct from the central speaker. These snatches of dialogue may be overheard, recollected or imagined; they may be attributable to "outside" speakers or inner voices, a characteristic effect of Eliot's poetry, typified by the figure of Prufrock. Such voices may represent a variety of guises and personae assumed by a central figure who displays a consistent attitude towards events. Terry Eagleton argues that underneath the disrupted, discrete surface, the poem has a coherent structure: "The diverse, divided materials of Eliot's poem are tamed to a coherent narrative, the shattered human subjects of the work unified to a single ego".<sup>(33)</sup>

For F.O. Matthiessen, the poem projects an all-pervasive consciousness, a "whole complex state of mind".<sup>(34)</sup> C.K. Stead argues that this consistency of feeling lends the poem an organizing principle:

The Waste Land is composed of a series of projections of states of feeling, having no fixed centre but their common origin in the depths of one man's mind.<sup>(35)</sup>

Whose mind does Stead adduce here, and is it necessarily a man's? This statement closely links protagonist and poet as locus of an organizing principle for the poem. Given the background to the writing of The Waste Land, it is tempting to regard the poem psychobiographically as the evocation of private trauma. Around the time of writing The Waste Land, both Eliot and his wife Vivien were suffering from various emotional and somatic disorders, and made therapeutic retreats to Margate and Lausanne, retreats which prompted the poem's completion. In The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism, Eliot argues that some artistic creation can be a direct consequence of illness:

I know, for instance, that some forms of ill-health, debility or anaemia, may (if other circumstances are favourable) produce an efflux of poetry in a way approaching the condition of automatic writing.<sup>36</sup>

Although hardly attributable to a "friendly demon", this efflux proves a powerful source of material or even Romantic "inspiration". Poetry can issue forth spontaneously, determined at least in part by drives or influences beyond the poet's conscious control, thereby relieving psychic tension and anxiety. Eliot claimed that writing 'What the Thunder Said', textually the most complex section of the poem, proved therapeutic.

In total contrast, Barbara Everett asserts that the poem possesses neither meaning, protagonist nor mythic wholeness:

The only rhetorical rule is the extreme discreteness of its mixed and broken formalism; hardly a word in the whole that does not rest within a local convention, but hardly a convention that is not violated and confused. All the attempts to rectify the poem by imposing upon it unifying categories that improve this situation merely distort its essential medium. The Waste Land has neither 'story' nor 'narrator' nor 'protagonist' nor 'myth' nor 'themes' nor 'music' nor 'locale'; these are exact and technical terms deriving from conventions which the poem includes only to

fragment and deny.<sup>(37)</sup>

Everett sees the poem as an endless, anarchic play of textuality, utterly open, disrupting and denying any subject position for the reader. This decentring process has repercussions at the level of the unconscious, ensuring that the ego is not master in its own house. Her reading is open to challenge: the claim that the text has no meaning or coherence imposes a totalising view, a view that must in fact remain partial and provisional. Nonetheless, Everett makes a forceful case against the notion of a protagonist.

Similarly, Graham Hough asserts that The Waste Land preserves no psychological continuity inherent in a single represented consciousness, foregoing any unifying principle:

Who was Tiresias? A man who had also been a woman, who lived for ever and could foretell the future. That is to say, not a single human consciousness, but a mythological catch-all, and as a unifying factor of no effect whatever.<sup>(38)</sup>

Cairns Craig, too, suggests that the poem's images are freed from location "in any particular psyche".<sup>(39)</sup> While some critics confront this apparent decentredness by attesting that The Waste Land is full of separate characters and voices, others attribute the central voice to Tiresias, encouraged or misled by Eliot's own note:

Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a 'character', is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest...what Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem, (ECP 82)

Leavis declares the poem "an effort to focus an inclusive human consciousness" of which Tiresias is an "appropriate impersonation".<sup>(40)</sup> The text's divergent voices are merged; Tiresias is not an isolated individual but emblematic of cultural consciousness, a unifying factor for the discrete material of the poem. Thus Tiresias can be seen as a

representative figure that speaks "culturally" and "individually", located as omniscient observer and commentator.

So, Eliot's critics suggest, variously, that The Waste Land either dramatizes a single speaker, with an internalized vision projected onto the world; that only an utterly dispersed, discrete series of perspectives is offered; or that a more general state of mind occupies the text's available space and monopolizes its narrative perspective. This point of view appears all-encompassing, its pervasive narrative "eye" testifying to a scopophilic drive to master the world. Yet a reading cannot concentrate on tracing who or what sees at the expense of *how* the text sees. The manner of the text's seeing and knowing is as important as what it sees and comprehends. Two readings, fifty years apart, imply that the poem rehearses a "nightmare" or phantasy that is both private and public. Operating from a Jungian perspective, Maud Bodkin writes that via myth and legend The Waste Land depicts a cultural and private "phantasmagoria - the shifting play of figures, as in dream, delirium, or the half-discerned undercurrents of consciousness".<sup>(41)</sup> Gareth Reeves regards the poem's projected "nightmare" as private, yet its portrayal is derived from a particular literary source and has particular cultural implications. Reeves highlights Eliot's indebtedness to The Aeneid, which contains moments of nightmarish vision, obsessive despair and obsessed consciousness: "One way of regarding The Waste Land's urban visions..is as private and nightmarish illusion. Vatic pretension becomes private phantasmagoria".<sup>(42)</sup> From markedly different critical perspectives, Bodkin and Reeves each propose readings of the poem that interweave notions of both a private and a cultural "unconscious", whilst also evoking ghosts and phantoms. In the poem an

hostility to the "immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history"<sup>(43)</sup> runs alongside anxiety about "private" and social relations. With the border between reality and fantasy blurred or dissolved, the categories of public and private become inextricably entwined. The next section proposes to map this reticulation of individual and cultural traces.

### Secret histories

Allan Lloyd-Smith links Freud's notion of the uncanny with Abraham and Torok's theory of the phantom. He argues that "unresolved contradictions, unadmitted fears and desires, and incompatible assertions of the culture" produce the slippage, estrangement and discontinuity that characterises uncanny effects in a literary text.<sup>(44)</sup> Thus the uncanny is seen in cultural terms, and not only as a feature of individual psychopathology. Abraham and Torok depart from the universalizing tendency of traditional psychoanalysis to see patterns of individual development as uniform and highly schematized by stressing that childhood development does not proceed in predetermined ways. The process of individuation is non-linear, open to influences outside immediate or lived experience. Lloyd-Smith notes "the openness of their model to cultural determinants as well as to more strictly personal ones: the child is absorbing a cultural inheritance incorporating certain secrets, absences, or silences".<sup>(45)</sup>

The phantom can be understood to mean "a delusion of the living provoked by the tormenting unconscious suspicion that something had been left unsaid during the life of the deceased".<sup>(46)</sup> Abraham argues that



the effect of the phantom can be produced outside of individual experience and the family structure: he claims that "what haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others".<sup>(47)</sup> Nicholas Rand comments that "the phantom represents the interpersonal and transgenerational consequences of silence".<sup>(48)</sup> Freud shows that *heimlich* can mean not only familiar and known, but that which is concealed, withheld or hidden. Even in its etymological definition, the uncanny ciphers secrets, evoking a strangeness or magic in the homeliness of language. As a figure of psychic concealment which functions as the unwitting reception or the encrypted awareness of another's secret, the phantom connects with the uncanny in its relation to secret or forgotten histories and silenced transmissions. Nicholas Rand remarks: "The combined theories of individual psychic concealment and secret transmissions over the generations have the wider potential of enriching our ideas of political history, social movements, and ideological currents".<sup>(49)</sup> By associating the uncanny and the phantom, Lloyd-Smith proposes a model of reading that thinks together individual and social hauntings, private trauma and a culture's silenced historical "secrets":

Abraham and Torok's theories of the phantom and cryptonymy offer a possibly larger purchase on the determinants of the uncanny if we are able to interpret them in this wider cultural sense; that is, not simply as descriptive of individual neurosis, as in the Wolf Man's pathology, but interpretive of cultural encryption, of the magic words a culture does *not* say to itself.<sup>(50)</sup>

The notion of the crypt also involves ghosts. The Waste Land is filled with ghosts, echoes and buried traces. Tiresias, who can be located as the hollow "centre" of the text, can be read as a ghost or phantom within this cryptonymic structure. As indicated earlier, for

Abraham the phantom coincides with Freud's conception of the death instinct. Thus, a radical otherness flits through Tiresias - a foreign body, like Torok's characterisation of the death instinct - and thereby through the text. Following Derrida's differentiation between the crypt and the ghost, Tiresias can be read still further as an unsettling, disturbing figure. Derrida argues that, though connected to the crypt, the ghost is a more complicated concept: the ghost is "the effect of another's crypt in my unconscious".<sup>(51)</sup> Tiresias would therefore be the effect of cultural mourning, a figure bearing the memory of the dead and historical loss, doomed to stalk the earth and awaken the reader's memory. Michael Levenson notes that "a strain exists between the presumed identity of the poem's speaker and instability of the speaker's world".<sup>(52)</sup> Tiresias represents an "intermittent phenomenon", and the "heterogeneity of attitude" in the poem makes it difficult to posit a single, or many, speakers (171). Levenson links the topos of the risen god and the return of the dead "as wandering ghosts that haunt the living": both gods and ghosts are caught between a return to life and an inability to die (173). This has bearing on the "loss of clear boundaries between life and death" and "the disembodied character of consciousness" in the poem: "both textually and historically..the poem oversteps boundaries, moving among voices, between bodies, over space and through time" (175). Levenson's notion of wandering ghosts in the text intertwines the traces of lost faith and cultural "absence" that connect the uncanny and the concept of the phantom. Tiresias figures a form of wandering ghost in modern society, bearing secrets within his absent presence, the carrier of buried and unspoken cultural memory. Tiresias is at once the knowing carrier of secrets - making them

*heimlich* - and also the unconscious transmitter of foreignness, unaware of the dislocations and visitations he effects. As repository of secret histories, Tiresias can be read as a participant in, and victim of, transgenerational haunting.<sup>(53)</sup>

To read Tiresias as a ghostly channel of communication, and to begin to consider what memories are concealed in the text, raises once more the question of automatic writing. Wayne Koestenbaum suggests that the condition of Vivien - it appears, for example, that she had an ability to lapse into trances and act as a medium - formed an integral part of Eliot's work.<sup>(54)</sup> (Whilst resisting the biographical lure, this would connect with a prophetic strand in the poem, particularly the epigraph referring to the Cumaean Sybil and the figure of Madame Sosostris.) Koestenbaum stresses a link between Eliot's ideas on automatic writing and psychoanalytic investigations into auto-hypnotic absence. In their analysis of Anna O., Freud and Breuer state that auto-hypnotic absence

may well be likened to a dream in view of its wealth of imaginative products and hallucinations, its large gaps of memory and the lack of inhibition and control in its associations. (PFL 3 100)

Here both hypnotic states and automatic writing are seen as analogous to the more disjointed, less inhibited psychic framework of dreaming. If poems are considered to be imaginative products, then much of Eliot's earlier poetry replays a form of auto-hypnotic absence, full of gaps in memory and diverse associations. Poetry would thus be understood to speak hypnotically as "other", a cipher or unstable transmitter of "memory". This would perhaps accord with Eliot's theorisation of the act of writing in Tradition and the Individual Talent, where the poet

remains a passive attendant in the creative process. The poet is a "neutral" medium, a transmitter of that cultural "unconscious" which is the mind of Europe from Homer to the present day. Here, the notion of a textual memory or unconscious cannot be decidably attributed to an author, character or reader.

Stan Smith has recently mapped the function of Tiresias in the poem onto Eliot's theorisation of the creative process, arguing that "Tiresias' doubleness lies in his being simultaneously the man who suffers and the artist who creates".<sup>(55)</sup> This would position Tiresias as interpreter and interpreted, reader and text. Voices speak through Tiresias, a figure who is transmitter and receiver, a nodal point of communications between past and present, the living and the dead, reality and fantasy, stability and dissolution. Tiresias haunts a site where these categories invade and contaminate each other. A figure of "secret" significance, Tiresias voices and conceals his knowledge, consistently blinded or struck dumb at moments of crisis in the text. At these points, Tiresias resembles the subject of dreams, a figure (or phantom) that is non-reflexive, recognises no contradiction or difference, yet that encounters *only* difference in the dream-text.

Positioned between agency and passivity, male and female, blindness and insight, Tiresias carries secrets that can be mapped onto gender and social relations. Tiresias is as much a symptom as a diagnostician of modern urban culture.<sup>(56)</sup> In Thebes, he witnessed familial conflict and political upheaval, foretelling the doom of Oedipus and Creon. Yet even as the text positions an omniscient, foresuffering observer whose gaze is restless and invasive, there are recurrent strategic instances of silence, blindness and incomprehension. Given his blindness and his role

in the Oedipal tragedy, the figure of Tiresias relates to the castration complex. (When referring to the bisexual Tiresias, the male pronoun can be considered as under erasure.) The text emphasises the visual drives, the obsessive gaze and sightlessness; there is evidence to support a reading of the poem in terms of anxiety surrounding castration. Easthope, for example, places "castration" within the "overdetermined structure" of the speaker's experiences.<sup>(57)</sup> To situate the fear of castration, or any pathological structure, as the key to interpreting a text, involves problems of attribution. It also presumes that psychic development is uniform and universal, thus eliding cultural, gender and historical differences. While castration anxiety can be identified as a figurative structure in the poem, phallogocentric authority is undermined in terms of politics, textuality and sexuality.

The cultural resonance of Tiresias raises the spectre of maternal incest which, according to Freud, motivates a tendency towards debasement in masculine love. Freud asserts that men are more likely to overvalue and remain fixated on the earliest sexual object; men seek new objects based on the the imago of infantile objects, and in certain circumstances the libido may turn from reality, becoming fixated on incestuous objects in the unconscious. Thus any love for another woman risks recalling the forbidden image of the mother. This explains a tendency on the part of men to separate sacred and profane (or animal) love: "Where they love they do not desire and where they desire they cannot love" (SE XI 183). The consequence of this split is the debasement of the sexual object, with overvaluation being reserved for the incestuous object and its representatives. The masculine tendency is to regard the sexual act "basically as something degrading, which

defiles and pollutes not only the body" (SE XI 186), and this disgust can result in impotence. Freud's observations will be seen to provide an interesting gloss on Eliot's own comments about the "cheery automatism" of modern sexuality.

The mythological neutrality of Tiresias - bisexual, blind, omniscient - is compromised by the context of his initial appearance in the text, as recipient of the homosexual overture by Mr. Eugenides. Wayne Koestenbaum offers a part-biographical interpretation of the poem, citing the homoerotic nature of Eliot's collaboration with Ezra Pound. He proposes that the Fisher King myth signifies not fear of castration but dread of anal penetration: "Despite New Critical smokescreens about Fisher Kings and symbolic wounds, castration is not the unmaning that the poem fears".<sup>(58)</sup> During his editing of the text, Pound readily identified hyacinths with homosexuality, so the approach by Mr Eugenides may be measured against the scene in the hyacinth garden as another moment of sexual crisis and inaction. This reading accounts for the images of shattered male sexuality and the evident horror of female sexuality that fills the poem. For Koestenbaum, the ambiguous sexuality of Tiresias casts the shadow of an unnerving, intangible "other" that haunts the text:

...through Tiresias, Eliot describes (from the inside)  
an epoch we might call the Age of Inversion, when  
heterosexuality was in the process of being undermined  
and traduced by its eerie opposite.<sup>(59)</sup>

The hooded figure of Tiresias - "I do not know whether a man or a woman" - no longer acts as a mask, exemplary model or visionary guide. Not only does he cast the shadow of homosexuality, he occupies the "space" of

sexual difference. The sexual difference represented by Tiresias is mysterious and disruptive.

### Immemorial Ways of Life

Theories surrounding the predominance of the uncanny in nineteenth century literature focus on the shift from an age of religious faith to a secular understanding of the world. In the face of social change a nostalgia remains for an older "organic" society, "a suppositious lost community". Lloyd-Smith comments that, particularly in nineteenth century fiction, "[t]he vanished lost order, which is invented as a compensatory fantasy in the face of levelling market forces, efficiency, and anonymity, is perceived from the outside, but imagined to have an inside, to be a container of lost meaning". This empty centre is in some instances termed the God-shaped hole. Following Foucault's definition of transgression as the profane in a secular world, Lloyd-Smith argues that the transgression which initiates uncanny effects produces "not a rediscovery of the sacred, but a realm of nothingness, of an unbearable absence of meaning".<sup>(60)</sup> This notion of transgression suggests those hollow moments of paralysed vision and speech in much of Eliot's earlier poetry. The "ideological fable"<sup>(61)</sup> of a previous natural order pervades critical readings of The Waste Land; this nostalgia posits a dichotomy between tradition and innovation, ancient over modern, organic and inorganic, the natural and mechanical world. In each case the former term is privileged. The poem's critics have consistently (mis)recognised this nostalgia, as if the text were uncannily anticipating their desires and designs.

Most literary criticism has tended to share and sympathize with Eliot's view of modern industrial society, echoing the poem's apparent lament for an idealized rural existence. Some opinion echoes Eliot's own line that the poem is merely a personal "grouse" against life, but the prevailing critical view has been that the poem offers an objective, valuable and entirely appropriate critique of twentieth century society. Eliot's deployment of the rebirth myth is a legitimate, necessary and inevitable intellectual response to "social disintegration".<sup>(62)</sup> Such has been the unanimity between commentators that the poem appears to have produced an uncanny reading effect, forereading critical responses, determining its reception and interpretation in advance. Graham Hough detects an underlying coherence granted by the rebirth myth:

Many of the great works of modern literature seem to exist in a vacuum, to spring from no particular society and to address no particular audience. The Waste Land is founded on a vegetation myth that is universal rather than particular.<sup>(63)</sup>

Eliot's poem is perceived to engage directly with its own historical "moment" while also offering a model of universal cultural understanding. In fact, the poem does not exist in a vacuum; it addresses a narrow range of readers and applies the vegetation myth in a particular manner. Hough contradicts his own ahistorical assertion: "The Waste Land presents the plight of our time, in the methods of our time. If it seems confused, well, so are we".<sup>(64)</sup> Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley have recently formalised this critical confusion, resolving the poem's dispersed textuality and implying the underlying coherence of its discourse whilst denying it "meaning": "The poem is a bundle of meanings that merely coexist. They cannot be analysed into a pure message, and that is the poem's pure message".<sup>(65)</sup>



It is Leavis who explicitly underscores and consolidates the poem's ideological significance, formulating the standard approach to the work. He dehistoricizes human existence into a mythical contrast between rural and urban, agrarian and industrial, "organic" and "manufactured" life. Leavis contends that The Waste Land recollects a lost pastoral innocence, when people existed in harmony with the natural environment:

The traditions and cultures have mingled, and the historical imagination makes the past contemporary; no one tradition can digest so great a variety of materials, and the result is a break-down of forms and the irrevocable loss of that sense of absoluteness which seems necessary to a robust culture...In considering our present plight we have also to take account of the incessant rapid change that characterizes the Machine Age. The result is breach of continuity and the uprooting of life. This last metaphor has a peculiar aptness, for what we are witnessing today is the final uprooting of the immemorial ways of life, of life rooted in the soil.<sup>(66)</sup>

Here the "soil" is held to be a fertile, sustaining source of cultural validity and intrinsic good, a way of life that is not immutable, however: "It does not seem likely that it will ever again be possible for a distinguished mind to be formed...on the rhythms, sanctioned by nature and time, of rural culture" (45). Only the "sympathetic magic" of fertility rites and vegetation cults can "express an extreme sense of the unity of life" (93). (How an urbanized academic would react when witnessing such rites in their most "uncivilized" form is another matter.) The modern Machine Age is characterized by anomie, disorder and spiritual crisis. In contrast, traditional rural values signify coherence, regeneration and spiritual truth. Leavis sees this pastoral ideal as reality, though the distinction between country and city is more a form of ideology than veritable truth.<sup>(67)</sup>

Gareth Reeves argues that Eliot values rural tradition from a different perspective. Following the example of Virgil, Eliot establishes agriculture as the fundamental constituent of civilization. Rural life became the prototype or paradigm of orderly society, signifying piety, tradition, family values, loyalty to the state and reverence for its leader:

The implication is not that all societies worthy of the name should be agrarian; rather, it is that they should maintain the sort of hierarchical relations, from the 'particular' to to the 'general', which are typical of an agrarian society.<sup>(68)</sup>

Reeves stresses that Eliot regarded this agrarian Utopia as probably unrealizable, but as an ideal to which society should strive. Without doubt, the rural paradigm displaced onto Imperial rule represents the putative "robust" and "absolute" culture that Leavis espouses. This argument is strengthened by evidence from Eliot's own critical writings. In After Strange Gods, he formulates a quasi-fascist philosophy:

The population should be homogenous; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to be fiercely self-conscious or both to become adulterate. What is still more important is unity of religious background; and reasons of race and culture combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable. There must be a proper balance between urban and rural, industrial and agricultural development. And a spirit of excessive tolerance is to be deprecated.<sup>(69)</sup>

Social and artistic progression are inimical: The Waste Land exemplifies modernist technical innovation yet conflicts with the development of mass democratic urban society. This conflict defines the dynamic of Fascism, which endorses a radical social and industrial transformation based on traditional agrarian values.

Terry Eagleton rehearses a familiar distinction between radical form and conservative content, arguing that the text formulates an

ideology of cultural knowledge rather than cultural disintegration. History is not futile or exhausted, since culture remains available to renovate and restore: "The Waste Land's fragmentary content listlessly mimes the experience of cultural disintegration, while its totalising mythological forms silently allude to a transcendence of such collapse".<sup>(70)</sup> This reading may be borne out by Eliot's own version of literary tradition, which attempts to resolve the conflict between innovation and convention. The ideal order absorbs innovative and progressive works, neutralising their radical and subversive qualities: "The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them".<sup>(71)</sup> The new work thus integrated, the order is once more complete, speaking "with old authority and new culture".<sup>(72)</sup> So, to conclude: The Waste Land and its critical "heritage" retains a lingering nostalgia for a pastoral ideal that signifies hierarchy, tradition and stability. Yet some of the political consequences of that ideal - with its elitist and implicitly authoritarian rejection of an urban, mass democratic culture - in the twentieth century remain the text's greatest silence, its unspeakable, secret history.

### The Uncanny

It is not a difficult task to trace the more explicit ideological freight in the poem's critical heritage, yet it remains less easy to expose the ciphered secrets lodged in the body of the poem. To begin to trace its cryptic networks, its hidden script, we must return to Freud's

work on the uncanny. Freud identifies the common causes of *das unheimlich*:

..animism, magic and sorcery, the omnipotence of thoughts, man's attitude to death, involuntary repetition and the castration complex comprise practically all the factors which turn something frightening into something uncanny. (AL 365)

Eliot's early poetry in particular exhibits some, if not all, of these uncanny features. The omnipotence of thoughts harks back to "the old, animistic conception of the universe, and is characterized among other things by "the subject's narcissistic over valuation of his (sic) mental processes". It also involves magic and "the attribution to various outside persons and things of carefully graded magical powers" (AL 362-3). This animistic stage of human cultural development was a response to the "manifest prohibition of reality" (AL 363). The omnipotence of thoughts is thus related to the realm of spiritual belief. The poem fissures the notion of a coherent and rational modern self: there are recurrent motifs of magic and sorcery, and the distinctions between the literal and the figurative are disordered. The text is haunted by the representatives of ancient power and wisdom, as if it carries within it unknown knowledge that cannot be accessed except in cryptic echoes. The tone of vatic prophesy and megalomania in The Waste Land can be equated with the overvaluation of thoughts.

Compulsive and "involuntary" repetition is bound up with the will to mastery and the death drive. Freud associates the double and compulsive repetition with the diabolical, an association that is suggested in Eliot's commentary on the German poet Gottfried Benn. Eliot stresses that, in the act of writing, the poet is not simply concerned with finding the right form of words:

He is oppressed by a burden which he must bring to birth in

order to obtain relief, he is haunted by a demon, a demon against which he feels powerless, because in its first manifestation it has no face, no name, nothing; and the words, the poem he makes, are a kind of form of exorcism of this demon, he is going to all that trouble, not in order to communicate with anyone, but to gain relief from acute discomfort...<sup>(73)</sup>

Does this faceless, nameless other refer to desire, the death drive, or the other that is the self? The poem is not intended to communicate with anyone, just as Freud stresses that "a dream does not want to say anything to anyone" (ILP 270). This demon is an intimate yet unrecognisable phantom, a burden which is brought to birth.

It is possible to link the figure of the double, "man's attitude to death" and "involuntary repetition" with another factor in Hoffmann's story, the motif of the automaton. Freud's essay succumbs to its own uncanny effect, its silenced but insistent otherness. Freud considers that Olympia's wavering between living and inanimate is a relatively minor thematic strand of the story, its uncanny effect a residue of infantile fantasy. Yet the doll which is mistaken for a real human being is surely the most *unheimlich* concept for the human subject. He goes on to emphasise that the uncanny is predominantly structured around the disruptions enacted by the double and the return of the dead, which again points to the significance of the automaton figure. The almost-perfect automaton, Olympia functions as a "human" figure almost indiscernible in its strangeness, performing a similar role to the double. Demonstrating the effacement yet necessary re-inscription of Olympia, Hélène Cixous argues that the double produces "the ghostly figure of nonfulfilment and repression, and not the double as counterpart or reflection, but rather the doll that is neither dead nor alive".<sup>(74)</sup> In The Waste Land, the female figures as an automaton and a

frightening double. This motif at the heart of the text represents women as wavering between body and machine, the living and dead, their physical and psychical impulses reduced to mechanized functions; equally, women offer a deathly reflection of the male narcissistic gaze.

### The Omnipotence of Thought

The text attempts to establish an authoritative voice which transcends each sterile, derelict panorama that it depicts. The mock epic tone of the opening passage of 'A Game of Chess', for example, implies that the present is a shabby imitation of the past. Literary tradition and its treasure-house of language contrasts with the ragtime lyric and banal dialogue recorded in the section. The inflated, ornate diction inscribes a cherished literary tradition and cultural continuity as much as it describes a woman who exists in the passage as little more than an "implied sensibility".<sup>(75)</sup> The text privileges a field of cultural reference and knowledge elevated above "ordinary" life. The Baudelairean rhetorical address to the "hypocrite lecteur", however, shifts the locus of the text's gaze onto the reader: this strategy seeks to make the reader complicit in this phantasy, which then can be offered as a shared, public vision. In 'The Burial of the Dead', the old Testament allusions from Ezekiel, Ecclesiastes and Isaiah to prophets exiled in the wilderness imply a superior cultural wisdom able to override this vision of contemporary futility and devastation. The portentous vatic intensity attempts to impose some patriarchal order and meaning onto the "heap of broken images" and the "stony rubbish". From

the protective darkness of the red rock, the text offers spiritual insight that is deferred and unspecific:

I will show you something different from either  
Your shadow at morning striding behind you  
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;  
I will show you fear in a handful of dust,  
(The Waste Land, ECP 63-79, 11,27-30)

After the hiatus in the hyacinth garden, the text turns to another seer, Mme Sosostris. Possessor of psychic and cultural knowledge, she mediates mythic memory and the desire to foretell the future. Mme Sosostris represents the text's contradictory notions of knowledge and existence. At one level, the sinister potential of knowledge becomes palpable, and the hyacinth garden is just one example where the text recognises and knows the "horror" of the modern world, a horror that paradoxically remains unknowable and inexpressible. Fortune-telling becomes symptomatic of the decline of culture: tarot-reading is all that the modern age has to offer in terms of insight or knowledge. No longer does society turn to its poets and philosophers for a vision of the future. As such, Mme Sosostris may be an ironic refraction of Tiresias or even the intellectual who reads much of the night. They are the true possessors of knowledge. Yet the text privileges, although in veiled form, an alternative discourse. The folk wisdom of Mme Sosostris is not subverted or ridiculed; her predictions come true, at least within the "reality" of the text. The tone of familiarity perhaps characterizes her as "canny", in the dual sense of cosy and possessed of occult powers (AL 345). The clairvoyant operates in some ways like a cultural curator: a secret, timeless knowledge underlies the business of fortune-telling. After positioning Tiresias as the superior cultural commentator, Mme Sosostris functions as a potentially bogus, but nonetheless insistent,

soothsayer. Implicitly, it is the female who is ascribed the true voice of authority, a precedent already set by the epigraph's evocation of the Sibyl. Her cards depict emblems and figures from primeval myth, fusing the Grail legend, the Hanged God and the Fisher King myth. Tarot-reading suggests a latent system or structure to the blank universe, a hermeneutic of modern existence. The passage confirms, not the dissolution of faith, but the survival of cultural knowledge.

In the final section, 'What the Thunder Said', the text adopts a megalomaniac tone, uttering mystical pronouncements in the guise of one (mainly a Hindu prophet) who possesses secret, ultimate knowledge. The key will break the "seals" to sexual freedom and mystical knowledge and unlock the prison of modern existence (ll.411-14), thereby also reintegrating a shattered masculinity, reviving "for a moment a broken Coriolanus" (l.416). The poem ends with a collocation of textual, psychic and cultural breakdown, yet the text does not lose all sense of reference. The literary allusions imply a residue of cultural knowledge, providing some fragments to shore against the ruins of a crumbling "private" sanity and fracturing European civilization. Amid this scattering, the text is drawn to ancient cultures, the earliest repositories of knowledge and order. It offers a return to origins reminiscent of 'Burnt Norton' in Four Quartets: "In my end is my beginning" (ECP 204). The final utterances, aiming at vatic intensity, summarise a quest for transcendent knowledge, a desire to restore psychic potency and coherence to a culture. The textual emphasis rests on "Damyata" - control - striking the prophetic note and suggesting that authoritarian paradigm sought throughout the text.<sup><76></sup> It gestures towards a coherence which can reconcile conflicts both in the body and



in society, in subjects and between subjects. Such coherence can be brought about only by effacing certain bodies, both individual and collective. Yet these bodies remain ciphered, encrypted in the body of the text and the social body.

### Memory and Desire

The opening passage enacts a pattern of arousal and denial, desire and negation, a "trajectory of depletion" repeated and amplified throughout the poem.<sup>(77)</sup> The first line recalls Chaucer's April, with its sweet showers, health and vigour; yet this new season begins in "the cruellest month", comparing unfavourably with deadening winter. Life reluctantly stirs: desire is automatic and mechanical. Spring, like the poem, emerges despite itself:

April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain,  
Winter kept us warm, covering  
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding  
A little life with dried tubers. (ll.1-7)

Active reproductive verbs end each enjambed line, only to be negated immediately. April has to breed life out of a "dead land"; "stirring" and "covering" mingle with the lumpen, colourless "Dull" and "Earth". The covered earth suggests a grave-yard rather than crop planting, sexual coupling or natural regeneration. In this waste land, desire cannot remain buried. Daniel Gunn comments: "Desire - even for an end - is always a beginning, here one which is fraught with resistance".<sup>(78)</sup> Endings and beginnings echo Four Quartets, a poem that Mick Burton contends is the "search for a form of subjectivity without Desire".<sup>(79)</sup>

Such a reading could apply equally to The Waste Land, though it lacks the former's "authority". The "desire" to eradicate desire is doomed from the outset of the poem, since the dull roots begin to remember. Memory - painful, pleasurable, recalcitrant, irrepressible - links intimately with desire. The text's sterile, entombed centre of consciousness (if such it is) both welcomes and fears this reactivation of desire. Forgetful snow has dulled the edge of remembered desire and the paralysis or emptiness of the psychic grave has kept memory and desire in little need of nourishment. Yet, like the turning of the seasons, memory returns, like desire, in a voice that "is low" but whose "insistence is indestructible" (FFC 255).

This hesitant natural awakening is displaced onto a social world emerging from the chaos of recent history, reeling from the turmoil of world war and the Russian Revolution. Remembering means confronting the upheaval and fragmentation of European civilization. Ostensibly set in pre-war Germany, the text recollects a world of high culture and privilege. The elegant, leisurely indulgence exemplifies an old aristocratic order. Amid the genteel conversation and behaviour, desire barely registers. Now defeated, Germany has most to remember and most to forget. Radically altered perceptions of national boundaries and ethnic identity in the wake of conflict threaten what remains of this decadent stability: "Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litaeun, echt Deutsch." ("I am not Russian at all; I come from Lithuania, a true German.") In 'Death by Water', "Gentile or Jew" evokes the racial tension that has helped to destabilize post-war Europe, part of a cultural upheaval that challenges old order and tradition. Only death, picking "bones in whispers", is a certainty, the ultimate "handful of dust." These tremors of racial

tension allude to what Eliot termed "the present decay of Eastern Europe" in his note on 'What the Thunder Said' (ECP 84). Memory then returns to idyllic childhood, although even in this world of innocence and purity, desire intrudes:

And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke's  
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,  
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,  
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went,  
In the mountains, there you feel free, (ll,13-17)

Here childish play takes on a different dimension. In dreams, according to Freud, flying or rapid movement signifies "general sexual excitement" (ILP 158). "And down we went" is couched in childlike language but the reference has an implicitly sexual register. The physical contact between Marie and her cousin arouses both fear and stimulation, anxiety and release. (30)

The anticipated revelation of "fear in a handful of dust" foretells an experience of transcendent horror rather than of consummate love or knowledge. The "shadow" signifies the presence of an "other", an effect of memory and desire which, like shadows, remains indistinct, intangible but inescapable throughout the poem. The transaction between memory and desire is mapped onto a pitiless desert landscape:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow  
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,  
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,  
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,  
And the dry stone no sound of water, (ll,19-24)

Nothing clutches: civilization has expired and drought has withered Leavis's "immemorial" ways of life rooted in the soil. Modern urban society has destroyed a pastoral existence, the idealized harmony of man and nature. "Son of man" frames the scene in an explicitly masculine

context, but everywhere patriarchal ascendancy is subverted. Images of fractured masculinity abound: the man-made world lies in ruins. This echoes Shelley's "Ozymandias", where a broken image of masculine power and lineage decays in the desert: "Round the decay/ Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare/ The lone and level sands stretch far away". The verse cited from Ecclesiastes - "And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief" - depicts the desolation and decay of old age.<sup>(21)</sup> Here lies the real ruin of masculinity; desire and sexuality evaporate to leave a barren waste land. Desire degenerates into sterility and fragmentation. The desert needs fertility, but the opening passage contends that it is precisely desire that turns the world to emptiness and waste.

In the opening to 'What the Thunder Said', any distinction between reality and fantasy is eroded: in this dead zone, everything is "unreal". Perceived cultural collapse is closely interwoven with the dissolution of reality. There are obsessive images, hallucinations ("Who is the third who walks always beside you?") and imaginary noises like birdsong, dripping water and murmuring crowds. Above all, there is another wilderness of physical insufficiency and cultural decay:

Here there is no water but only rock  
Rock and no water and the sandy road  
The road winding above among the mountains  
Which are mountains of rock without water  
If there were water we should stop and drink  
Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think  
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand  
If there were only water amongst the rock  
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit  
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit  
There is not even silence in the mountains  
But dry sterile thunder without rain  
There is not even solitude in the mountains  
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl  
From doors of mudcracked houses... (11,331-45)

The repetitive force and patterns of images - rock, water, sand, mountains and repeated negatives - underscore bodily privation and fear. The overdetermined references to thirst, heat and pain attest to the uneasy, even traumatic in-corporation of bodily need. This desolate, inhospitable environment appears to come as an inevitable consequence of social fragmentation and turmoil: "The shouting and the crying/ Prison and palace and reverberation" (ll.325-6). The text links the disintegration of contemporary Europe with fragmenting masculinity: "falling towers" at once provides an image of political upheaval and undermined phallic dominance. The "hooded hordes" that swarm "over endless plains" can be read as epitomizing the bewildering variety, rapidity and anonymity of urban civilization. Yet the image traditionally refers to the East; Leavis suggests that it applies to Russia, a reading made explicit and elaborated upon by David Craig and more recently Stan Smith, both of whom stress the poem's fraught engagement with the Russian Revolution.<sup>(82)</sup> Yet, the poem employs this particular example of historical upheaval, not to confront the "present decay" of Europe, but to imply that the pattern of violence and chaos is an inescapable feature of cultures that cannot set their lands in order.

Again the text enacts a pattern of desire and depletion: "The awful daring of a moment's surrender/ Which an age of prudence can never retract" (ll.403-4). Alluring and desirable, the black-haired woman is surrounded by bats and bell-towers, the trappings of Gothic horror and phantasmagoria (ll.377-84). The bell tolls for this momentary pulse of desire: the upside-down towers (l.352) suggest a limp phallus, while the "empty cisterns and exhausted wells" (l.354) signify impotence. Awakened desire leads only to despair and death, "tumbled graves" and "dry

bones". The "decayed hole among the mountains" (l.383) is another version of rat's alley". The "empty chapel" betokens spiritual absence and also resembles a burial chamber. As in 'Gerontion', a building stands for a state of mind. Derelict, windowless, the chapel resembles a sightless, hollow skull. This picture of spiritual and psychic emptiness has its parallel in the Grail Legend; nearing the Chapel Perilous, the questing knight faces his final test, the vision of nothingness. The Gothic elements of this passage, and the recurrent motif of a hollow centre, once more bring together the uncanny and the crypt. The next task is to consider what it is that constitutes the central absence of the poem.

#### The Hyacinth Garden

The scene that takes place in the hyacinth garden constitutes a recurring nightmare, insisting in the text precisely because it dissolves the borders between the real and the fantastic. It forms the equivalent of an anchoring point in a dream, knotting together the threads of desire, memory and forgetting that track across the text. The passage ends in the haunting silence of a memory, or the dark silence of the tomb. Placed between quotations from Wagner, the passage should enact a passionate duet but desire is simultaneously ignited and extinguished:

...when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,  
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not  
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither  
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,  
Looking into the heart of light, the silence. (ll.37-40)

An exemplary Romantic scenario is sabotaged; something occurs "to check the drive of desire".<sup>(83)</sup> The positive words denoting action and human contact - "Speak", "Living" and "Looking" - are negated by the line endings that attest only to lack, absence and failure: "not...neither...nothing...silence." Instead of spiritual fulfillment or sexual release, there is overwhelming fear in the "heart of light, the silence." Just as Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden, the episode brings about a terminal Fall from a state of innocence and hope: the promise of fullness, completion and spiritual love is dashed. This knowledge threatens to fracture the text, bringing it up against its own abyssal silence.<sup>(84)</sup> Potential paradise becomes a living hell and the spectator is left "neither/ Living nor dead".

'A Game of Chess' follows a similar trajectory of depletion, projecting a vision of idealized feminine beauty and attraction which quickly declines into images of thwarted and debased sexuality. An obsessive, voyeuristic gaze is drawn to the woman seated at her dressing table. Positioned as an idealized, passive object within the text, she resembles Cleopatra, Dido, Belinda and Imogen: all literary constructs, elevated but limited by masculine imagination. Like the hyacinth girl, however, the woman's ineffable beauty proves alluring but false. Stirring sexual desire taints this ideal image, clouding the scene's lustrous looking-glass.<sup>(85)</sup> The female body no longer plays back an idealized reflection of the male voyeur, and the passage degenerates into images of rape, violence and death:

The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king  
So rudely forc'd; yet there the nightingale  
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice  
And still she cried, and still the world pursues  
'Jug Jug' to dirty ears. (ll.99-103)

Obscene, filthy, sex connects intimately with Philomel's brutal murder and mythical transmutation. Desire leads only to death and destruction, resulting in the reverse of what it intends: "I think we are in rats' alley/ Where the dead men lost their bones" (ll.115-116).<sup>(86)</sup> The syntax implies that the men were already dead before entering the alley, a living death that makes sexual intercourse impossible. "Withered stumps of time" - broken columns, skeletons or decrepit old men - offers another fractured phallic image bound up with decay and death. The idealized female object frustrates desire, producing only blindness ("Those are pearls that were his eyes") and emptiness ("Nothing again nothing"). Tense urgent questioning disperses into frustration and near-inarticulacy:

'My nerves are bad to-night, Yes, bad, Stay with me,  
 Speak to me, Why do you never speak? Speak,  
 What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?  
 I never know what you are thinking, Think,' (ll.111-114)

The text appears to record a woman's agitated, neurotic speech, yet the repetitious, disjointed words could be attributable to a male observer, whose own anxiety is projected onto the external figure of the woman in the guise of female "chatter". 'Hysteria', for example, displaces male anxiety onto the figure of the neurotic society woman, a contemporary stereotype. As Elizabeth Bronfen remarks, hysteria has other significance: the hysteric "exists within her cultural system by evoking the presence of a double; a rhetorical articulation of death".<sup>(87)</sup> This doubleness will be seen to acquire greater significance in relation to the recurring motif of the automaton.

The scenes by the Thames serve to silence this disturbing chatter, and yet this very act of silencing produces an "other" female voice,



that gusts and resonates throughout the poem. The river - site of royal romance and literary imagination - has become sullied by industrial progress and the pollution of modern urban society. Initially male potency seems to be spent, "departed":

While I was fishing in the dull canal  
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse  
Musing upon the king my brother's wreck  
And on the king my father's death before him, (ll.189-92)

The "nymphs" no longer inhabit the river bank, depriving the Thames of its mythic status. This lost idealized femininity, tinged with classical beauty and carnality, leaves only debased sexuality in its wake. The archaic "Leman" recalls the whore, the functional sexual object satisfying corporeal needs and the typical obverse of the virginal, spiritually valorized female figure. Sex again provokes images of death and dirt: the rat reappears, accompanied by "the rattle of the bones" (l.186). "White bodies naked on the low damp ground" (l.193) could be lovers or rotting corpses. The exalted river-boat romance of Elizabeth I and Leicester is just one of a series of doomed affairs that are enacted in close proximity to water. The closing section recounts a more disconcerting encounter on the river:

The boat responded  
Gaily, to the hand expert with sail or oar  
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded  
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient  
To controlling hands... (ll.418-22)

Again the woman remains impassive; the text only stresses that she *would* have responded, not that she actually *did* respond. On this occasion, with aggression now surfacing, the man takes positive action of a violent kind. As Kenner argues, the "controlling hands" may refer to strangulation, the only means to achieve mastery over the woman, to make

her heart respond.<sup>68</sup> This instance of implicit male violence is placed immediately prior to the text's final dissolution into apparently unrelated fragments. Tony Pinkney remarks that the strict classicism privileged in some Modernist practice (perhaps most notably by T.E. Hulme, who predicted "a period of hard, dry classical verse") is engaged in violence against the elusive sign, and that this is also implicitly violence against women. The slippage of language can be controlled only by immobilizing the female in writing.<sup>69</sup> In the case of this passage, neither the excesses of *écriture* nor the figure of the female can be laid to rest.

The death of Phlebas reiterates this textual thread. Salt water turns the mariner's eyes to pearl, echoing events in the hyacinth garden. As representative of a new social and economic organization the merchant, preoccupied with "profit and loss", subsides with his goods. This demise suggests a link between class, sexuality and death that is more pronounced in regard to female figures in the text. The sea bed figures as a site of obliteration or dispersal, and the dilution of desire finds its index in the text's drowned figures: Ophelia, the Thames daughters who are all undone close to water, and even the hyacinth girl ("your hair wet"). An early draft of 'Death by Water' makes clear that the passage is sailing into the realm of dream and nightmare, echoing Conrad, Melville and Coleridge:

We ate slept drank  
Hot coffee, and kept watch, and no one dared  
To look into another's face or speak  
In the horror of the illimitable scream  
Of a whole world about us, One night  
On watch, I thought I saw in the fore (cross-trees)  
Three women leaning forward, with white hair  
Streaming behind, who sang above the wind  
Frightened beyond fear, horrified past horror, calm,  
(Nothing was real) for, I thought, now, when

I like, I can wake up and end the dream,<sup>(90)</sup>

This passage rehearses a familiar set of patterns: alluring yet dangerous feminine sexuality, obsessive gazing and overwhelming horror.

The Thames-daughters' stories testify to attempted seduction and thwarted desire. Like the commuters flowing mechanically over London Bridge, the first woman has been "undone" by the city in an act of automatic, unfeeling seduction:

'Trans and dusty trees,  
Highbury bore me, Richmond and Kew  
Undid me, By Richmond I raised my knees  
Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe, (11.292-5)

Sexual failure is bound up with drab urban existence. In contrast to the ornate splendour of the royal barge, the woman is sexually betrayed on the river by an empty, listless sexual act. She echoes La Pia in Purgatorio, conflating love and death. The second woman, life and energy dissipated, manifests only entombed desire: "My heart/ Under my feet" (1.296). Indifferent to the man's remorse - "After the event/ He wept" - she displays a similar lack of communication to that shown in the previous passage. The third woman sits on Margate sands, seduced, presumably rejected and in danger of lapsing into complete inarticulacy: "I can connect/ Nothing with Nothing" (11.301-2). Like the violated Philomel, the silence of these abused women "says everything and nothing".<sup>(91)</sup> In the text, women's knowledge is foreclosed, leaving their bodies to bear the marks of degradation: "The broken fingernails of dirty hands" (1.303). The reference to Aeneas ("To Carthage then I came") recalls Dido who, in a sacrificial gesture of mute despair, her destiny shaped and demarcated by masculine design, committed herself to the flames. Even as the text installs woman as pitiful victims, it is

attempting to eradicate their disruptive, alien presence. Stan Smith comments:

..what The Waste Land repeatedly offers is the identification of the female with a mute, incommunicable atrocity. The women of this poem all foregather round the concept of voice and its repression.<sup>(92)</sup>

The scene in the hyacinth garden leaves a highly visible gap in the text, a gap that inscribes a silence: it is what remains unsaid about the episode that is most revealing. The experience cannot be fully comprehended or recollected; the text "remembers desire but not its anatomical configurations".<sup>(93)</sup> The smell of the flowers and the girl's wet hair provokes only a disavowal of all physicality in the scene. Sight and speech are nullified: the need to see and know, the impulse to scopophilic mastery, is thwarted by a radiant vacancy. This lack or insufficiency is explicable in Lacanian terms:

From the outset, we see, in the dialectic of the eye and the gaze, that there is no coincidence, but, on the contrary, a lure. When, in love, I solicit a look, what is profoundly unsatisfying and always missing is that - You never look at me from the place from which I see you. Conversely, what I look at is never what I wish to see. (FFC 102-3)

An unbridgeable gap exists between desiring subject and desired other, between signifier and signified. For Lacan, that gap or unsatisfied need constitutes desire, ever-diminishing but indestructible. A narcissistic tendency, the impulse to gaze, structures the scene in the garden. The hyacinth girl provides an ideal mirror image for the male onlooker: she is situated in the text as an ego ideal. By defining the male subject in terms of its object as a single, unified ego, the heap of broken male images that litter the poem can be reconstructed and reintegrated.

This narcissistic project tends towards sexual over-valuation: the hyacinth girl is positioned as an "idealized loveliness"<sup>(94)</sup>, provided with typical Romantic trappings. This idealized beauty is a version of self-love, although such narcissism is unstable: "Because of its fundamentally narcissistic structure, such love turns round easily into a complementary opposite".<sup>(95)</sup> This connects with the figure of the double, which according to Freud initially appears as "an assurance of immortality" in a state of primary narcissism, but returns at a later stage as a "harbinger of death" (AL 357). The appearance of the double provokes both fear and aggression. In 'A Game of Chess' the valorized self-image reflects back a terrifying blankness, a void of inadequacy and guilt. The male voyeur loses his superiority; he certainly does not see what he wants to see. This reflection blinds and strikes the speaker dumb: his eyes are turned to pearl and he comes to see "the organic as mineral, the world as a desert".<sup>(96)</sup> Looking, the dialectic of eye and gaze, becomes central to the poem. Beginning "I myself saw with my own eyes", the epigraph emphasises, even overdetermines, the act of voyeurism, anticipating the scopic drive within the text.

'The Fire Sermon' alludes to the Buddhist Fire Sermon, where Buddha instructs his priests:

The eye, is on fire; forms are on fire; eye-consciousness is on fire; impressions received by the eye are on fire; and whatever sensation, pleasant, unpleasant, or indifferent, originates in dependence on impression received by the eye, that also is on fire. And with what are these on fire? With the fire of hatred, with the fire of infatuation,..<sup>(97)</sup>

Here the eye is presented as an instrument or receptacle of "passion"; it both gazes with desire and receives back that desire. The scopophilic drive is thwarted, and the eyes are turned to pearl. Pearl is hard and

solid, however, and may suggest that the eye provides a locus of stability and coherence, instituting a correspondence between world and body. The fire of hatred is matched by the fire of infatuation; the intensity of "burning", repeated five times in four lines, evokes an irresistible voyeurism and a desire to be purged (by flame) of such a damaging compulsion. The passage can be read as following a masochistic trajectory. In 'The Economic Problem of Masochism', Freud argues that to sustain life, the libido must deflect the destructive tendency of the death instinct onto the outer world, but in certain circumstances this sadistic instinct can once more be introjected, producing a secondary masochism (OM 419). A sadistic instinct - which posits the Thames-daughters as helpless, degraded victims - is introjected back: the refining blaze extinguishes the heat of passion, fighting fire with fire, serving a desire for self-destruction. The repetition of "burning" not only mimics the compulsive fervency of the death instinct, it also recalls neurotic ritual, interesting in a passage where Eros and Thanatos are in close proximity.

These pathological tendencies cannot be attributed solely to an author or a protagonist: these tendencies work at the level of figuration and they insist in cultural representations of the female, as the field of reference in the poem bears out. A recurrent pattern has been traced in this section: reflections, blindness, emptiness, silence, compulsive repetition and bodies that are both living and dead. These factors take us back to Freud's reading of Hoffmann's 'The Sandman': they recall not merely a castration complex, but also the figure of the double and the figure of Olympia, the female automaton. It will be seen

that these figures offer perhaps the most significant means of linking The Waste Land, the uncanny and a cultural repressed.

### Automatism and sexuality

Freud defines the uncanny in terms of semantic instability: within the system of representation its rhetorical strategy is to subvert stable concepts, thus producing semantic slippage and ambivalence. The uncanny sets fixed limits and margins in motion. Elizabeth Bronfen comments that "the most important boundary blurring inhabited by the uncanny is that between the real and fantasy".<sup>(98)</sup> One of the most uncanny moments of undecidability occurs when it is uncertain if a body is animate or inanimate, hovering between living and dead, human or machine. Such a hesitation includes the figure of the automaton. As Bronfen points out, these undecidable situations can also refer to the appearance of ghosts and the return of the dead:

One could extend Freud's definition to include instances that involve the ambivalent distinction between a material animate, immediate and literally self-present body and its representation, as immaterial, inanimate, belated 'figural' body signifying through the interplay of absence and presence. (113)

Since this oscillation between absence and presence, visibility and invisibility also activates metaphorical fears of castration, "the uncanny always entails anxieties about fragmentation, about the disruption or destruction of any narcissistically informed sense of personal stability, body integrity, immortal individuality" (113). Seen in this way, the shifting presence and absence of the female body

accounts persuasively for the images of breakdown, fractured identity and thwarted understanding in The Waste Land.

The poem's female figures are caught in a complex web of representation: idealised, attractive, repulsive, they provoke desire as well as horror and violence. Women are perceived to acquiesce automatically and passively to masculine desire, and it is this mechanical indifference that comes to represent the entire field of social relations. The hyacinth girl figures variously as an abused, neurotic or terrifying female, a rotting corpse and a skeleton. Her perceived emptiness or "mystery" (the two terms synonymous with absence) encode a silence within the poem: the female ciphers death. Death is understood here not as an abstract philosophical concept, but as, in turn, an absence at the heart of the structuration of identity; a figure of repetition that haunts the text; an entombed memory never brought to light; and the counterpart of a "feminine" history that the text tries to repress.

The perception of the "Unreal City" resembles a recounted dream, comprising a helpless, obsessive gaze and a mixture of precise detail and bizarre logic. It confirms Mme Sosostris' predictions: "I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring." The identities and purpose of the "people" remain indistinct; they may be engaged in a fertility rite, part of a funeral cortege, circus performers or, as here, rush-hour commuters. Nevertheless, the transfixing vision (the phrase connoting mobility and stasis) depicts an alienating social world lacking emotion or energy:

Unreal City,  
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,  
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,  
I had not thought death had undone so many.



Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,  
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet,  
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,  
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours  
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine. (ll.60-68)

The city has become "death's dream kingdom": neither living nor dead, streaming relentlessly over the bridge like automatons, the commuters inhabit a mechanical urban wilderness. Human movement is regulated by the rigid monotony of the clock which, like all machines, carries death within its operations. Desire is posthumous, entombed: "undone" connotes both sexual violation and death. The "Sighs, short and infrequent" grimly parody sexual exertion. The "corpse" may signify a buried memory or buried desire, an encrypted body in the body of the text: this memory or body cannot be restored but cannot be erased, and figures as an absent presence. As with the ritual death of the fertility god, however, latent memory and desire stir again, rising like a crop in spring. The resurrection of the corpse corresponds to the return of the body in the text. The corpse resurfaces in the way that the body, the *corpus occultum*, turns up in language.

The sexual encounter between the clerk and the typist develops out of a dull but insistent ache of desire. A version from the manuscript makes a sexual undercurrent more explicit, conflating sexuality and dream: "...the human engine waits -/ Like a taxi throbbing waiting at a stand -/ To spring to pleasure through the horn or ivory gates".<sup>99</sup> The reference to "horn or ivory gates" moves this sexual image into the realm of dreams and the sphere of the unconscious. Even this classical allusion is ambiguous; dreams that come true pass through the gate of Horn, delusory dreams come through the ivory gate. This implies that the scene which follows is either a true or false "dream", challenging the

position of the omniscient observer who is caught ambiguously between desire and disgust. This ambiguity also constitutes that blurred boundary between the real and fantasy inhabited by the uncanny. The final version of the scene describes physical fatigue at the end of a working day, but does not imply to the same degree that the witnessed scene resembles a dream or phantasy. Significantly, however, the mechanical allusion is retained:

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back  
Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits  
Like a taxi throbbing waiting... (11,215-17)

This emphasises the monotony of office work, with the human being reduced to a repetitive machine, part of a highly technologised network of urban relations. It echoes the suggestive ballad earlier in the section, which imbricates the sounds of city life, popular culture and sexual desire:

But at my back from time to time I hear  
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring  
Sweeney to Mrs, Porter in the spring. (11,196-8)

The episode constitutes the text's recurrent "dream", with its overdetermined elements: the woman's passivity, mechanical "copulation" and lack of emotion. A voyeuristic gaze rests on the typist, noting the intimate details and disposition of her domestic life. There is a lack of physical detail; the prosaic diction dissipates any sexual excitement, merely lending the scene an ironic veneer of elegance and importance. The gaze averts at the moment of climax, shifting into parentheses and positing through Tiresias an historical perspective that keeps the physical actuality and detail of sex at a distance: a gap opens in the text at a crucial moment. Barely thinking, barely feeling,

the woman reacts automatically to male desire. The clerk's caresses are "unreproved if undesired", and sex is "a welcome of indifference":

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,  
Hardly aware of her departed lover;  
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass;  
'Well now that's done; and I'm glad it's over.'  
When lovely woman stoops to folly and  
Paces about her room again, alone,  
She smooths her hair with automatic hand,  
And puts a record on the gramophone. (ll.249-56)

Capable only of "half-formed thought" and automatic actions, the woman resembles an automaton more than a sentient human being. It is left to a machine - a gramophone, literally sound-writing - to produce a meaningful utterance. Sex, language, thought and feeling - indeed the whole range of cultural relations - is mechanised.

The passage attempts to perform a neat ideological manoeuvre. By describing the clerk as "one of the low on whom assurance sits/ As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire" (ll.233-4), the unseen narrator is accorded a privileged position from which to watch unfolding events. Like the self-made businessman, the clerk does not know his place, which is presumably as an intellectual and social inferior. The devalued nature of their sexual relations is equated with their social status. Down to the way in which it dwells with fascinated disgust on the drying laundry, the text presents a stereotypically sordid working-class world. David Trotter argues that this passage takes part in a contemporary debate about sexuality and contraception. The "enlightened" classes were perceived to practice contraception, while the lower class were believed to breed recklessly. Thus the socially efficient upper classes decreased, while the undesirable masses multiplied indiscriminately. In The Waste Land sexuality and reproduction are seen to be constituted

differently for various social groups, "a truly formidable schematism".<sup>(100)</sup> Eliot juxtaposes neurotic and frustrated bourgeois existence with the sexual "freedom" of the working classes, exposing a gulf in attitudes and behaviour that "followed the line of a real social fissure which was asserting itself in terms of sexual conduct".<sup>(101)</sup>

The fragmented dialogue in the pub "confirms" the cultural ubiquity of meaningless sexual intercourse: "He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,/ And if you don't give it to him, there's others will, I said" (ll.148-9). Social existence is presented as vacuous, coarse and animalistic and sexual intercourse as a degrading, unfulfilling physical function. The women refer to sterilization (ll.159-61), the medical equivalent of a modern society depicted as barren of value. The literary tone may be ironic - "good night, sweet ladies" (l.172) - but the allusion to mad Ophelia does nothing to dispel the implications of the women's conversation. The shadows of madness and death gather with the appearance of each female figure. In an urban environment sexual relations are hampered, degraded, disgusting: women are seen as threatening, often repulsive. In the dehumanizing, manufactured city, transcendent, wholesome romantic love proves impossible, a scenario to which Eliot's comments on Baudelaire attest:

Baudelaire has perceived that what distinguishes the relations of man and woman from the copulation of beasts is the knowledge of Good and Evil...Having an imperfect, vague romantic conception of Good, he was at least able to understand that the sexual act as evil is more dignified, less boring, than as the natural, 'Life-giving', cheery automatism of the modern world.<sup>(102)</sup>

The modern world is perceived to lack a true conception of Good: Eliot's argument, like the scene in the pub, links an aetiology of sexual and personal relations with a social aetiology. The staccato chatter of the

woman in 'A Game of Chess' and the women who Prufrock overhears "come and go/ Talking of Michelangelo" recalls the clatter of machinery. This speech is as deathly in the text's terms as the conversation in the pub, or the popular song about Mrs Porter. The shadow of technology looms over human behaviour. The discourse of these women from different social strata is symptomatic of the "cheery automatism" exemplified by the sexual encounter between the clerk and the typist.

The perceived deathliness of this automatism may be given clearest expression in the closing section of the poem, which has often been read as representing cultural disintegration, textual incoherence or a fit of madness. The "fragments I have shored against my ruin" may well bear out all of these interpretations, yet the final section can also be taken as extending the machinic trope that has been traced thus far. The images of physical and mental breakdown in the closing section evoke Lacan's *corps morcelé*, where the ego's unifying *Gestalt* is threatened by anxieties about the body's fragmentation. Just as social and textual relations are portrayed as fracturing, so bodily integrity is shattered, reduced to a unrelated sum of parts, like a dysfunctional machine. For Lacan, the classic drive components operate with reference to an image of bodily totality, and therefore Lacan ascribes priority to the scopic drive. A stable gaze guards against a return to the body-in-pieces of prematurity. The specular image functions by "framing the dream of wholeness and fleeing from the threat of fragmentation".<sup>(103)</sup> Yet the male gaze has been consistently thwarted and dispersed in the text, its narcissistic mirror-image refracted and even fissured; the scopophilic eye can no longer centre the text. The return to the infantile *corps morcelé* is concomitant with the death drive's disruption of the ego's

imaginary *Gestalt*. The apparently inhuman mechanization of the field of sexual and social relations offers only the recurrent, deathly image of the uncanny lifelike automaton which institutes a compulsive, destructive otherness in the poem. The scattering of mind and body recalls the closing lines of 'Gerontion'. Once again the text ends with a draughty "ruin" offering only limited tenancy to the "masterful" ego.

The next chapter will examine other dissolutions in texts where the motif of the sea produces a complex network of meanings: as a site of origins, of sexual difference and of cultural authority. The sea will also be seen to act as a site that both offers and disperses images of narcissistic and bodily unity, elusive dreams of "wholeness".

## Footnotes

1. Selected Essays, p.21.
2. The New Poetic (London: Hutchinson, 1964), p.127.
3. The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (London: Faber, 1964), p.154.
4. Selected Essays, p.20. (Further references given in main text.)
5. Easthope, PAP, p.173.
6. New Bearings in English Poetry (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950), p.84.
7. 'The Spider and the Weevil: self and writing in Eliot's early poetry' in Machin and Norris eds., p.385.
8. Stead, p.157.
9. The Invisible Poet: T.S. Eliot (London: Methuen, 1965), p.112.
10. Ellmann, p.387.
11. 'Eliot: An American use of symbolism', in Eliot in Perspective: A Symposium, ed. Graham Martin (London: Macmillan, 1970), p.85.
12. Ellmann, p.387.
13. The Achievement of T.S. Eliot (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p.59, 63.
14. Wright, p.111.
15. Pearson, p.92.
16. Women in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot (London: Macmillan, 1984), p.144.
17. Kenner, p.111.
18. Inviolable Voice: History and Twentieth Century Poetry (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1982), p.88.
19. The Making of the Reader: Language and Subjectivity in Modern American, English and Irish Poetry (London: Macmillan, 1984), p.34.
20. Yeats, Eliot, Pound and the Politics of Poetry (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p.219.
21. Ellmann, p.387.
22. On Poetry and Poets (London: Faber, 1971), p.16.
23. Pearson, p.88.
24. Ellmann, p.385.
25. 'To Sleep', in The Collected Poems, p.340. Keats's image of sealing the "casket" of the soul evokes Abraham and Torok's remarks on how the "covert presence" of the analysand's secret weighs "heavily on the therapy. The crypt is there with its fine lock, but where is the key to open it?": see 'The Topography of Reality', p.65.
26. Easthope, PAP, p.170.
27. Barbara Everett, 'Eliot in and out of The Waste Land', in *Critical Quarterly*, Vol.17, 1 (Spring 1975), p.15.
28. Hough, p.52.
29. 'The defeatism of The Waste Land' in *Critical Quarterly* Vol.2, 3 (Autumn 1960), p.241.
30. 'T.S. Eliot's Metamorphoses: Ovid and The Waste Land' in Ovid Renewed, ed., Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.246.
31. The Liberal Imagination, p.48.
32. Cairns Craig, pp.69-70.
33. Literary Theory: An Introduction, p.182.
34. Matthiessen, p.21.
35. Stead, p.151.
36. The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism p.144.

37. Everett, p.14.
38. Hough, p.25.
39. Cairns Craig, p.232.
40. Leavis, p.95.
41. Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p.308.
42. T.S. Eliot: A Virgilian Poet (London: Macmillan, 1989), p.39.
43. Eliot, *The Dial*, Nov 1923.
44. 'The Phantoms of Drood and Rebecca: The Uncanny Reencountered through Abraham and Torok's "cryptonomy" in *Poetics Today*, Vol.13, 2, (1992), p.285.
45. *ibid.*, p.291.
46. Rand, p.60.
47. 'Notes on the Phantom', p.287. Eliot's poetry is full of haunted memory, secrets and "fancies". 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night' offers a clear example of this:
- The memory throws up high and dry  
A crowd of twisted things;  
A twisted branch upon the beach  
Eaten smooth, and polished  
As if the world gave up  
The secret of its skeleton,  
Stiff and white. (ECP 26-7)
- The twisted, labrythine vaults of the memory give up its "secret" in the skeletal form of a previously hidden corpse, perhaps an elaborate metaphor for the crypt and the phantom. The motif of a buried body re-emerges most strikingly in The Waste Land. Here it is sufficient to note that it is the memory of the "world" which renders up its secrets.
48. Rand, p.61.
49. *ibid.*, p.61.
50. Lloyd-Smith, p.306.
51. The Ear of the Other, p.59.
52. A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p.169. (Further references given in main text.)
53. Abraham, 'Notes on the Phantom', pp.287-92.
54. Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration (London: Routledge, 1989), p.118.
55. The Origins of Modernism: Eliot, Pound Yeats and the Rhetorics of Renewal (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1994), p.141.
56. Pinkney, p.100.
57. Easthope, PAP, p.177.
58. Koestenbaum, p.135.
59. *ibid.*, pp.127-8.
60. Lloyd-Smith, p.289.
61. Jameson, p.288.
62. Matthiessen, p.43.
63. Hough, p.70.
64. *ibid.*, p.45.
65. Reading The Waste Land: Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), p.64.
66. Leavis, p.91. (Further references given in main text.) Walter Sokel also evokes the contrast between the "immemorial" life of the soil and the Machine Age, myth and historical change: "Eliot..looks at the



- cultural-social reality of Western man in his period of decline and contemplates the constancies and contrasts, the eternal pattern of myth and the sterilized vulgarity of the technological era side by side": in The Writer in Extremis, (California: Stanford University Press, 1968), p.114.
67. David Craig argues that the poem privileges a private, elitist view of the past, "an absurdly partial outlook on culture - groundlessly idealizing about the old and warped in its revulsion from the modern" (p.244). Craig offers a revisionist analysis of the organic myth, pointing out that the "immemorial" rural lifestyle esteemed by Leavis offered little variation of occupation and yielded a meagre income. Country life remained stable because it was hierarchical and firmly controlled: "When 'axioms' are mentioned, we must remember that they reflected fixed habits which held human possibilities in rigid bounds" (p.248). Large-scale urbanization was only a relatively recent phenomenon: the drift to cities and towns had begun in the Middle Ages. Industrial technology and organisation could at times release innovative and positive talents. In Das Kapital, Marx regards a blend of agricultural and industrial development as necessary for a healthy, integrated and varied society.)
68. Reeves, p.114.
69. After Strange Gods (London: Faber, 1934), p.20.
70. Criticism and Ideology, p.148.
71. Eliot, Selected Essays, p.15.
72. Eliot, For Lancelot Andrewes (London: Faber, 1970), p.344.
73. On Poetry and Poets, p.98.
74. 'Fiction and its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* ("The Uncanny")', trans. Robert Denomé, in *New Literary History*, Vol.7 (1976), p.540.
75. Kenner, p.132.
76. This is an effect that, according to Julia Kristeva, characterizes psychotic behaviour in art. For Kristeva, psychosis represents one of the abysses that threaten twentieth-century literature: "As to psychosis, symbolic legality is wiped out in favour of arbitrariness of an instinctual drive without meaning and communication; panicking at the loss of all reference, the subject goes through fantasies of omnipotence or identification with a totalitarian leader". From Desire in Language (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p.139.
77. Koestenbaum, p.136.
78. Psychoanalysis and Fiction: An Exploration of Literary and Psychoanalytic Borders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.121.
79. Mick Burton, 'The Imperfect Librarian: Text and Discourse in The Waste Land and Four Quartets', in Murray ed., p.59.
80. Tony Pinkney reads the passage in object-relational terms, with the "mountains" representing childhood memories of the maternal breast and freedom referring to the early undifferentiated state (pp.102-3).
81. The text depicts a blighted, destitute, "unmanned" society. David Trotter notes that the desert aridity and Old Testament tone recalls images of Judaea in contemporaneous literature, which partake of the myth of the sterile Jew; the nomadic Jewish peoples, seen as rootless, could originate no culture, faith or imagination. The barren landscape of Judaea was also held to encourage matriarchy and barbarous sexual customs (pp.46-7).

82. Leavis, p.101. See also David Craig and Stan Smith, The Origins of Modernism, pp.144-6.
83. Cleanth Brooks, Modern Poetry and the Tradition (London: Poetry London, 1948), p.156.
84. Rosemary Jackson argues that as a response to spiritual emptiness, the "atheistic" texts of Sade and Lautreamont are drawn to close up a God-shaped hole, to reinstitute transcendental unity under a secular guise, exhibiting the desire for absolute knowledge and the identification with a divine, transcendent Other. This identification looks to a beyond of the pleasure principle; the desire for the non-relationship of zero "is analogous to a mystical quest for union with an absolute 'Other'. But whereas a religious subject has faith that a sense of unbeing, a dissolution of the ego, will lead to ultimate unity with a divine beloved, a sceptical atheistic subject has no such faith. In the place of transcendent ideals, there is discovered a zero point, a space of non-being, an absence" (p.78). While The Waste Land clearly retains a lingering spiritual investment, it is situated within the nexus of knowledge, desire and absence elucidated by Jackson. The text glances nostalgically at a lost Eden, a transcendental unity that would eliminate all tension and ideological contradictions. Instead it finds "Nothing again nothing".
85. Wayne Koestenbaum suggests that "marble" and "odours" imply that the woman, rather than performing her figurative "toilet", is seated on a lavatory, and thus female supremacy is undermined in a most scatological manner (p.132).
86. On the rat phantasy, see Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, The Politics and Poetics of Transgression (London: Methuen, 1986). Stallybrass and White analyse the ways in which the rat articulated "new thresholds of shame, embarrassment and disgust" in the nineteenth century, an articulation that contributed to remapping the body (p.148). More specifically on the rat phantasy in The Waste Land, see Easthope. Equated with dirt, sex and death, the rat can symbolize castration, genital or anal penetration: see Easthope, PAP p.177.
87. Bronfen, p.314.
88. Kenner, p.162.
89. Pinkney, pp.80-1.
90. The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the original drafts including the annotations of Ezra Pound, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber, 1971), p.59.
91. Stan Smith, The Origins of Modernism, p.136.
92. *ibid.*, p.137.
93. Koestenbaum, p.131.
94. Matthiessen, p.150.
95. Easthope, PAP, p.72.
96. *ibid.*, p.176.
97. Cited in The Norton Anthology of English Literature Vol II, ed. M.H. Abrams et al (London: Norton, 1986), p.2192n.
98. Bronfen, p.113. (Further references given in main text.) Freud cites the comments of Jentsch on the uncanny in literary practice: "In telling a story, one of the most successful devices for easily creating uncanny effects is to leave the reader in uncertainty whether a particular figure in the story is a human being or an automaton, and to do it in such a way that his attention is not focused directly upon his

uncertainty, so that he may not be led to go into the matter and clear it up immediately" (AL 347-8).

99. The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript, p.31.

100. Trotter, p.44.

101. *ibid.*, p.42.

102. Selected Essays, pp.428-9.

103. Boothby, pp.225-6. Pinkney reads the poem within a Kleinian framework: "The Waste Land constitutes a regression - with a vengeance - to the paranoid-schizoid" (p.95). Within this schematic, a different significance is attributed to scattered bodily parts. In the paranoid-schizoid position, the "bad" breast is both shattered and invested by the infant's oral, genital and anal sadistic phantasies. The breast, hands, eyes, penis, faeces and bodily organs operate only as part-objects. The death instinct is thus implicated in the relation to the maternal breast: for Pinkney, this explains the half-suppressed murderous impulses towards female figures representative of the mother. He argues that the "occluded presence of a murderous narrative" forms a central feature of Eliot's early poetry (p.45).

## VI

### THAT OCEANIC FEELING: REFLECTIONS ON THE SEA

Commenting on the *restance* at work in Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Derrida conceives of the notion of "drift" in the text in distinctly maritime terms:

*Drifting* designates too continuous a movement; or rather too undifferentiated, too homogenous a movement that appears to travel away without saccade from a supposed origin, from a shore, a border, a coast with an invisible outline. Now the shore is divided in its very outline, and there are effects of anchoring, collapses of the coastline, strategies of approach and overflow, strictures of attachment or of mooring, places of reversion, strangulation or *double bind*.<sup>(1)</sup>

Derrida makes a connection between the sea, origins and borders in the course of engaging with an essay in which Freud confronts questions of origins and their relation to strange, unsettling and contradictory currents. The drift of Beyond the Pleasure Principle will return in this chapter, alongside Freud's associated work on narcissism and cultural pathology. The chapter considers the portrayal of the sea in work by Alfred Lord Tennyson, Matthew Arnold and Derek Walcott, assessing the ways in which the poems drift to a form of sleep, a sleep that is a drift from origins. The poems are structured across invisible or collapsing coastlines, sites where clear boundaries are breached and rendered indistinct. In the poems under discussion, the offer of self-present, ordinary plenitude ebbs and flows, and dreams of transcendence transform into anxieties of loss, engulfment or dissolution. The sea is figured as a contradictory and shifting dream-space, a site of wish-fulfillment and anxiety. Offering both a reflective and refractive

surface for the narcissistic gaze, the image of the sea simultaneously confirms and unseats the authority and coherence of the subject. Just as divisions between land and ocean are represented as being traversed, so the sea overflows clear demarcations between self and other. In these poems, the sea is a dream-site across which track the recurrent concerns of this study: desire, death, origins, bodies and history.

### The Oceanic Feeling

The symbolism of water and the ocean in dreams has long attracted the attention of psychoanalysis.<sup>(2)</sup> Saturated with therapeutic discourse and "theological survivals"<sup>(3)</sup>, various kinds of psychoanalytic dream-interpretation have perhaps been beguiled by the figuratively "healing" or "redemptive" associations of water. Traditionally, literary criticism has also tended to invest representations of the sea in literature with religious significance: the sea is taken to symbolize timelessness, immutability and immanence, and is also associated with ideas of baptism and immersion, unity and dispersal, completion and obliteration. W.Y. Tindall typifies this approach:

The notion and permanence of the sea, its depth and vast extent make it an image of refuge, danger, mystery, infinity, of all that is alien and welcoming. The sea is our origin and our end, and, whether in poem, dream, or myth, voyaging on it has always seemed our necessity; for life is a voyage and we embark in ships of society or self.<sup>(4)</sup>

Tindall attributes variable symbolic value to the sea, before harbouring in the humanist cliché of the "sea of Life". Psychoanalytic criticism, particularly from a Jungian or archetypal perspective, often reads the sea in art as a metaphor of amniotic fluid, evoking a pre-

natal state. Maud Bodkin, for example, adduces a rebirth archetype that links dream and poetry that is characterised by a sense of sinking down towards quiescence, as in the womb.<sup>65</sup> For Freud, however, this return to a first sleep is marked by ambivalence; in 'The Uncanny' he stresses that the phantasy of intra-uterine existence returns us to the most *unheimlich* place of all (AL 367).

Significantly, however, Tindall and Bodkin raise questions of origins, instability and states of "otherness". The sea is a matter of beginnings and ends, danger and safety, "discovery" and loss. Freud's work on the "oceanic feeling" rehearses this oscillation between finding and losing the "self". In the opening section of Civilization and its Discontents, Freud considers the idea of an oceanic feeling which lies at the roots of the "religious attitude", a notion that causes Freud "no small difficulty" (CSR 252). From the outset the discussion is beset by problems of separation and definition. Freud tentatively links this oceanic feeling, a quasi-religious notion of a "sensation of 'eternity', a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded" (CSR 251), with a primary narcissism fundamental to the constitution of the subject. The oceanic feeling "might seek something like the restoration of limitless narcissism" and thus the religious attitude may be traceable back to a feeling of infantile helplessness. From the oceanic feeling of infantile narcissism derives a sense of the ineffable that is mapped onto religious belief in adult life. Nonetheless, Freud contends that the connection between this primary narcissism and religion comes at a later date in the subject's development. The ecstatic sense of "oneness with the universe"

sounds like a first attempt at a religious consolation, as though it were another way of disclaiming the danger which

the ego recognizes as threatening it from the external world, (CSR 260)

Freud makes clear, however, that disentangling and analysing intangible and ineffable quantities such as "feelings" frustrates any "scientific" discussion. Yet the difficulties of categorising feelings, or distinguishing between stages of psychic development, are structurally embedded in the section, since the development of ego-feeling is an ongoing process of separating inside from outside, pleasure from unpleasure, ego from world. The drift away from primary narcissism means a constant renegotiation of boundaries. Initially the infant does not distinguish between internal and external sensations, yet gradually learns to separate the ego and the external world as sources of excitation. A "further incentive" to disengage the ego from the external world and its "general mass of sensations" is prompted by the realisation that some sources of pleasure exist outside the infant's body (CSR 254). Only by a lengthy "rectification" through experience does the ego detach itself from the external world and learn to separate itself from unpleasurable excitations. Originally the ego "includes everything" and

[o]ur present ego-feeling is, therefore, only a shrunken residue of a much more inclusive - indeed, an all-embracing - feeling which corresponded to a more intimate bond between the ego and the world about it, (CSR 255)

Ideational contents appropriate to this primary ego-feeling "would be "precisely those of limitlessness and of a bond with the universe" (CSR 255). In Lacanian terms, this "limitlessness" harks back to the "immersion of the human infant in the chaos of prematurity".<sup>(6)</sup> The development of the ego - its maturing - is a process involving separation and detachment, isolation and bonding, a complex memory or

dream of origins. In Tennyson and Arnold's oceanic settings, the "religious attitude" and a desire for wholeness are effects of these conflicting trajectories and tendencies.

**"The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea"**

The sea is a resonant motif in Victorian literature and culture. Britain's sea-power guaranteed trade expansion and military domination, yet while the sea represented both the material locus and symbolic analogue of Imperial control, the sea was also literally and figuratively eroding the integrity and authority of Empire at its centre, the island of Britain itself. Long before Darwin began to trace the evolutionary development of the human species back to the ocean, Thomas Lyell's examination of Britain's changing geological state, its crumbling coastlines and long-term subsidence, began to undermine confidence in the stability and assurance of Britain as a geographical and cultural space. For Lyell, the sea is a subversive and corrosive element. Susan Gliserman cites some of his descriptions of the wilful destructiveness and antagonism of rivers and oceans in his Principles of Geology. The ocean "makes reprisals..scours out the channels..devours rich alluvial plains" and "commits ravages": the coast is "devoured by the merciless ocean", and "cliffs of great height are consumed every year".<sup>67</sup> Land does not stay stable: nature's laws are not immutable. The natural world is subject to endless process, change and ordered disorder, as Thomas Huxley stresses: "the most obvious attribute of the cosmos is its impermanence. It assumes the aspect not so much of a



permanent entity as of a changeful process..Process, not matter, is the final reality".<sup>89</sup>

Representations of the sea produce aporias in Victorian texts, radically challenging cultural, epistemological and ontological certainties. In the poems under discussion, the sea acts as a mirror in which the gaze seeks narcissistic solace or confirmation, but instead this mirror produces an unsettling moment of *méconnaissance*, where the subject sees itself as "other", drifting out beyond safe boundaries. This estrangement suggests an analogy with the dream-space, where the "I" that looks is "estranged" from the other that "I" am. The poems offer symbolic geographies, with abraded coastlines and uncertain margins between land and water. The way in which representations of the sea break down clear oppositions in the poetry makes another connection with the dream-work: the poems operate across and erode distinctions between the familiar and alien, order and disorder, permanence and flux, creation and destruction. The sea figures a *mise-en-scène* of phantasy where identity - both individual and cultural - is in dissolution. Antony Easthope terms this scenario a Darwinian phantasy, "the imbrication of ideological reference to the universe, faith and doubt with pathological forms of phantasy".<sup>90</sup> In this phantasy, the masculine ego is in crisis, "threatened when the subject, faced particularly with the other-directed materiality of nature, can no longer find support for itself in a reflecting object".<sup>10</sup> This analysis can be extended by asserting that the sea refuses a stable subject/object relationship; it is nature "in process", moving onto the subject's ground, encroaching on coastlines and spilling over boundaries. This disruptive process will be

traced in two poems by Tennyson, 'Crossing the Bar' and Section CXXIII of In Memoriam.

### A Moving Tide

#### 'Crossing the Bar'

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep  
Too full for sound and foam  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home,

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.<sup>(11)</sup>

The entrancing, lulling rhythms, stoic resignation at human mortality and the hypnotic lure of the tide would appear to situate Tennyson's poem within Tindall's symbolic mapping of sea-literature. Its elaborate gesture of "farewell" is a rhetorical "signing-off": Christopher Ricks notes that Tennyson left instructions that the poem be placed "at the end of all editions of my poems".<sup>(12)</sup> The poem's "religious attitude" is partially submerged but discernible, and its strategy clearly evokes the notion of life as a voyage, yet any eternal verities that it offers are simultaneously undercut. The title recalls Lacan's bar between signifier and signified, a bar that the seeming transparency of the language - its straightforward rhyme scheme, consistent rhythmical pattern and clarity of statement - attempts to efface. Geoffrey Hartmann's comment on 'The

Lady of Shallott' is also pertinent here: "Tennyson's poetic dream-work seems at first no work at all. It is so easy, so unlaboured - deceptively "idle".<sup>(13)</sup> Oscillating between wake and sleep, declaration and qualification, overt statement and ambiguous suggestion, the poem offers both a plenitude and a lack of meanings, shifting between a "personal" meditative tone and a more general focus: its language is at once specific and abstract. Not dissimilarly to Frost's 'After Apple-Picking', the poem is saturated with hints and allusions, rendering meaning ambiguous and elusive. As Alan Sinfield argues, this strategy gives the illusion that the arbitrariness of language is controlled:

The elaborate diction, the obtrusive syntax and the intense effects of sound and rhythm all act in the same direction. They offer not an enhanced transparency in the relationship between sign and referent, but an unattributed density *in the sign itself*. Tennyson creates, as it were, a plenitude of the sign. Language cannot be brought closer to the world, but it can be made more full and substantial in itself. In Tennyson's writing any particular word has, or appears to have, many reasons for being appropriate.<sup>(14)</sup>

Easthope reads the disjunction in Victorian poetry between "explicit assertion and its subtextual implication"<sup>(15)</sup> in terms of rationalisation and disavowal. Rationalisation is compared to secondary revision in the dream-work, in that both processes turn latent ideas and images into more plausible, consistent and acceptable forms. Thus there is a split in Victorian poetry between "'manifest' and 'latent' levels of discourse" (166). Easthope argues that Victorian poetic language allows literary texts to move along a "continuum from one point, that of day-dream, towards (though never reaching) another, that of the night-dream" (143). The poem's setting at "Twilight" figuratively parallels this transition from day- to night-dream. As night approaches, a tentative wish modulates into anxiety and indeterminacy; the pleasure of

"egoistic day-dreams" (AL 141) draws to the threshold of dream-work, where pleasure becomes ambivalent and the ego lacks coherence and authority. "Twilight" also suggests the blurring or dilution of boundaries. The poem is organised by a series of differences that are constantly shifting: land and sea, distance and proximity, connection and separation, certainty and doubt. As was argued earlier, the distinction between "creative" day-dreaming and night-dreams, or "manifest" and "latent" levels, proves similarly inexplicit.

The transition or negotiation between day- and night-dream returns to the original sense of metaphor as *bearing across*. The work of metaphor represents an attempt to cross the bar of signification, to access a transcendental signified. The language of poetry runs aground on that bar or foreshore between signifier and signified, stalled by an inability to get "beyond" or to achieve completion. Impelled by the ceaseless movements and currents of difference, poetry drifts in endless search of a resting point. The language of desire in dreams - the mechanisms of condensation and displacement - simultaneously anchors the chain of signification and frustrates interpretation: *points de capiton* constitute merely temporary anchorage. The dream reveals the work of desire, not desire *itself*. 'Crossing the Bar' can be read in terms of dreams not simply because it expresses desire or resists interpretation, but because it is transformed and disfigured by what it articulates. The speaker scans the horizon for a transcendental signified, but the sea is resolutely extradiscursive, its "unplumb'd" limits beyond articulation: what the "boundless deep" contains or promises is uncertain. The qualified anticipation that "The flood may bear me far" suggests both immersion in the undifferentiated flux of prematurity (and the

*jouissance* of the death drive) and an anxiety of engulfment. Transcendent meaning lies beyond the "bourne of Time and Place", but paradoxically Faith and the immortality of the subject will be affirmed or achieved only through its dissolution.

Although the poem appears to affirm a religious certainty in an afterlife, it enacts a hypnopoetics that does not dissolve the bar between the human subject and Truth or Eternity, but induces a disruptive hesitancy or faltering. The sea may symbolize eternity or origins, but evolutionary theories challenge such a teleology, and in their wake the subject is rendered contingent and finite. The text's move towards sleep is not easy or assured: its rest is disturbed, its destination or goal - quietude and stability - is beset by an unsettling drift. The poem is full of conditionals: "may" is repeated three times, and "hope" and "seems" imply doubt. The syntactical confusion of "But such a tide as moving seems asleep" provokes several questions: what is still and what is moving, and what is awake and what is asleep? The conditional "seems" merely exacerbates the uncertainty. The text enacts a circling pattern, impelled toward a future "at sea", and drawn back to land: "when" occurs four times, yet each time the protagonist returns to the shoreline. In the expressed hope of meeting "my Pilot" (an echo of 1 Corinthians xiii, 12) lies a residual memory of primary narcissism, in that the subject longs, impossibly, to be brought "face to face" with its own plenitude,, a plenitude offered and denied by the poem's language.<sup>(15)</sup> This projective meeting anticipates a form of arrival, and depends upon a call that is returned. The speaker, however, is still to "embark", and the only call is that of the "evening bell", echoing the warning bell in Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' which sounds "To toll me

back from thee to my sole self".<sup>17</sup> This deathly tolling emphasises a relationship both of difference and distance between the transcendent other and the isolated subject, whose desiring identification with that immaterial, immortal other merely emphasises the inadequation and frustrations of desire.

In Memoriam (CXXIII) more explicitly links sea and dreams, and in doing so, radically reconfigures the "bourne of Time and Place":

There rolls the deep where grew the tree,  
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!  
There where the long street roars hath been  
The stillness of the central sea,

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go,

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true;  
For though my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.<sup>18</sup>

Images of a turbulent and impermanent nature in this section are typical of the poem as a whole; the sections on evolution were written before the publication of Chambers's Vestiges of Creation (1844), but the constant interchanging of land and sea echoes Lyell. Just as objective reality is presented as unfixed and subject to violent transformation, so the poem's language struggles to impose any systematic understanding on both "external" and "internal" worlds. As Sinfield comments: "The structure and language of In Memoriam are the product of a desperate need for order in the absence of any clear and agreed means of establishing it".<sup>19</sup> Here the speaker can dream only in the "spirit", for in places the deep of the ocean has reclaimed the land and the land has replaced the sea. The hills are mere "shadows, and they flow/ From

form to form, and nothing stands". The solid lands melt "like mist", transmuted into floating signifiers in a radical sense. Against a vast geological timescale, the loss of the tree is partially compensated by the replacement of "the central sea" by "the long street". This relativism offers little consolation: the section mourns the inability to return to that ordinary "stillness of the central sea". The loss of the "tree" (the Cross) and the vanished stability of the "central sea" allude to the ebb and flow of Faith charted in Arnold's 'Dover Beach'; the images of "oceanic" blending and merging contrast with a mutable and alienating Nature that institutes lack and division.

For all its attempts to cross over into the realm of the ineffable, the poem remains avowedly in the realm of the secular and material. The section foregrounds differentiation and isolation: the "solid lands..shape themselves and go" while only "spirit" and dreams hold. Whilst desiring immersion in private dreams, the subject remains obliged to detach itself from an obliterating, engulfing sea as the only means to defend its status and integrity. It cannot "breathe adieu" to, cannot think the "thing" - the material world - farewell. The "thing" can also be framed by Lacan's rethinking of Freud's *das Ding* as the primordially lost object, an original source of pleasure and plenitude. The poem's closing line can thus be read as the inability or unwillingness to conceive of the end of desire, to think beyond the pleasure principle. Yet, as was seen in 'After Apple-Picking', this "beyond" is the very place where "spirit" dwells, a state of quietude and stability beyond the partial satisfactions and disruptive drives of the material and bodily world.

The text ascribes prophetic powers to dreams, foreseeing a future moment in which to "dream my dream and hold it true". Dreams appear to offer ontological and epistemological certainty; this accords with Isobel Armstrong's definition of Tennyson's poetic dreams as "a form of non-rational coherence and idealist experience".<sup>(20)</sup> In this futural poetics, revelation has already taken place: the dream/poem's projective orientation transcends or effaces the past and the present of its elaboration. Yet this dream cannot foresee truth or anticipate what will endure. The repetition of "dream" impossibly attempts to effect closure amid this melting, shifting landscape, a doubling that attests to an entropic trajectory. The text pulls in contrary directions, flowing from "form to form" (desire in the dreamwork is, after all, a question of form), desiring to return to origins and onward to an undefined future. The subject bids "adieu" to breath in a circuituous return to origins, only reaching beyond when no longer "itself". The tidal, self-cancelling patterns of the closing lines typify the poem's restless uncertainty. The phantasised return to primal origins or an anticipated spiritual transfiguration is concomitant with the subject's dissolution and dispersal.

Given this epistemological and ontological ungrounding, it is hardly surprising that the ground occupied by the speaker in the text is so materially unstable, a liminal dream-space where "nothing stands". Both 'Crossing the Bar' and Section CXXIII of In Memoriam chart transforming geographies. In this destabilizing exchange between land and sea, the securities of Faith dissolve and Nature, "red in tooth and claw", resists interpretive mastery and refuses abiding certainties. The subject's misrecognition of the ocean as a stable, unifying force is



exposed in this textual dream. The sea does not reflect back a narcissistic gaze or sustain this *méconnaissance*; rather, it diffuses the field of vision and blurs distinctions between pleasure and unpleasure. In this textual dream, the "I" comes to occupy a contingent space between "internal" and "external" reality, with "subjective" coherence challenged by bewildering and disruptive forces of change. Individual and social are indissociably interwoven: and, as in 'Crossing the Bar', even provisional distinctions between manifest and latent levels of meaning are difficult to sustain, since both poems destabilize the borders of inside and outside, public and private, conscious and unconscious.

#### The Sea of Faith

Two of Arnold's poems about oceans and shorelines, 'To Marguerite - Continued' and 'Dover Beach'<sup>(21)</sup>, bear out the effects of an estranging sea that offers and refuses a complex set of origins, challenging epistemological, political and sexual mastery. In these poems, the "Sea of Faith" - religious faith, faith in culture and in the masculine subject - is in retreat. In its wake, it leaves crumbling certainties, just as the sea erodes the geological foundations and symbolic integrity of England's coastline. Both poems raise problems of separating pleasure and unpleasure, inside and outside, a reminder of the constituent role that, according to Freud, primary narcissism plays in the oceanic feeling. The sea does not reflect back an ideal self-image for the masculine gaze. The poems fluctuate between representing the sea as timeless and as comfortingly dependable as the ebb and flow of the tide,

and portraying it as a turbulent, dark, unknown "continent". This deliberately echoes Freud's description of femininity as the dark continent: the margin ceaselessly crossed in these texts is, at least in part, that of sexual difference.<sup>(22)</sup>

As with 'Crossing the Bar', both poems are night scenes, full of "sounds", both in terms of geographical location and resonances. The night-time setting situates the texts in the realm of dream and fantasy, suggesting that transition from day-dream to night-dream previously marked out in the discussion of Tennyson. Stephen Prickett emphasises the distinction drawn in Victorian literature between imagination and fantasy. Imagination is the supreme gift of the poet, a reflection of the divine. Fantasy, on the other hand, constitutes a gift of dreams, "delightful, alluring, compulsive, disturbing" and "akin to madness": for Arnold, fantasy represents a vice.<sup>(23)</sup> The two poems can be read in terms of this duality between imagination and fantasy. In 'To Marguerite - Continued', the moon-lit "hollows" of the islands are "swept by balms of spring" and on "starry nights,/ The nightingales divinely sing". Their "lovely notes" pour across "the sounds and channels" but this divine singing evokes not only Keats's ethereal bird but also the buried trace of sexual violence and the silenced female voice that echoes in the poem's "farthest caverns". The violence in this instance is that of a God that cools desire and severs it from its object. In 'Dover Beach', the world "seems/ To lie before us like a land of dreams", but these dreams are not beguiling or consolatory. Rather than instances of wishfulfillment, they seem duplicitous and illusory, "really" offering "neither joy, nor love, nor light,/ Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain". Dover's "sweet night-air" is filled with "the grating roar

of pebbles" and the "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" of the Sea of Faith. This tranquil coastline becomes a "darkling plain" where "ignorant armies clash by night", and the calm seascape is "Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight".

In 'To Marguerite - Continued', the "endless bounds" of the islands appear to suggest the limitless oneness of the oceanic feeling, but the text foregrounds an infinity of divisions and separations. With "we mortal millions" scattered across "the shoreless watery wild", there is no end of boundaries and demarcations, in contrast to the fluid mobility of the ocean. The estranging flow of the sea mirrors the conflicting currents of the closing stanza:

Who order'd, that their longing's fire  
Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd?  
Who renders vain their deep desire? -  
A God, a God their severance ruled!  
And bade betwixt their shores to be  
The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.

The heavy caesurae and the "cool'd" fires of "vain" desire typify the irresolution and tension of these lines. A. Dwight Culler remarks that underneath the surface of these disconnected islands, they are connected by volcanic fire<sup>(24)</sup>, yet the unbounded depths of the salt waters nullify any geological unity. Another immutable power renders desire "vain", terminating the stanza's questions, but the identity of this "God" remains ambiguous. Bernard Richards locates this figure in Arnold's work as a form of superego: "Arnold's [God] is a combination of his own conscience and a penumbra of social duties and parental disapproval. The Father is present, but not God the Father as the orthodox might understand him".<sup>(25)</sup> This God or Father rules the "severance" between desire and fulfilment, individual and collective,

presiding over alienation, lack and absence. The severing intervention of God can be read as provoking an Oedipal anxiety of castration, instituting lack and inadequacy (although such a reading once more raises problems of pathologizing texts). A phallogocentric presence of denial and division punishes desire: in this isolating, "estranging" sea, "marges" will never meet again.

Yet, as Lacan stresses, it is inaccurate to regard the superego merely as a punitive or repressive agency, exacting retribution for the pleasure-seeking excesses of the ego. Lacan follows Freud in pointing out that the hostility of the superego is more systematically directed at the ego than the id. Contrary to popular conceptions of the superego as an angry, restrictive conscience, it is only through the agency of the superego "that it is possible to attain anything at all of the subject's relation to desire".<sup>(26)</sup> The superego can enable, even liberate desire, as Lacan argues: "The true function of the Father..is fundamentally to unite (and not to set in opposition) a desire and the Law" (E 321). The superego is thus representative of both the Imaginary and the Symbolic orders. Although the Symbolic order imposes the law of the signifier on narcissistic formations, it "grants access to desire" and is itself subject to the possibility of transformations. The symbolic suppresses narcissism but does not close off desire. For Lacan, "the superego is at one and the same time the law and its destruction".<sup>(27)</sup> So, the God in Arnold's poem, far from severing the subject from desire, can be seen as granting access to desire. The text's "vain" desire - its emptiness and frustration represented by the echoing caverns, ethereal birdsong and subjective isolation - founders on the lack at the heart of language, not because of the strictures of a

repressive Father. This transcendent God actually institutes the lack of closure that sustains desire, presiding passively over an irreducible severance between desire and satisfaction. The repetition of "God" suggests that the absent presence frustrating desire is Desire itself, that which figures, through repetition, as lack.

The littoral or "watery plain" that separates the Imaginary and Symbolic orders in the poem can be set alongside a God that is displaced as a nexus of authority, order and truth in the Victorian period. A range of discourses played out an abyssal trope, whereby God's divine plan of Creation was constantly readjusted to incorporate successive scientific discoveries about geological and natural history. These discoveries configured a God that permitted its own unseating, prefiguring the God-shaped hole of Modernism. God functions as a defining absence in 'To Marguerite - Continued'. There is a "longing like despair" for the sea's enclaspings flow; the nostalgia for wholeness and the merging of boundaries evokes an originary state when "we were/ Parts of a single continent". Thus the sea acts as an index of division and unity, of separation and binding, Symbolic and Imaginary orders. Ruth Pitman notes that in the poem the sea at once cherishes and destroys the land it enclasps: "The sea offers an embrace which may be deadly, may define bounds or eliminate them, dissolving the distinction between sea and land".<sup>(28)</sup> This dissolution of boundaries parallels the text's transactions between enclosure and dispersal, wholeness and differentiation. The scattered islands symbolize atomised human relations "in the sea of life enisled,/ With echoing straits between us thrown". This material estrangement is exemplified by the English

Channel, that protective and isolating boundary in 'Dover Beach' "originally" joined to mainland Europe.

Pitman observes that in 'Dover Beach' the cliffs represent a "supremely English place - a stronghold of patriotism, faith and tradition" (110). Dover's symbolic authority stands opposed to dark, unruly mainland Europe in the wake of the 1848 liberal revolutions. The poem's scenario echoes Thomas Arnold's letter in 1837 on Dover's symbolic significance and the quelling of pressure for radical political change in France and England: "The tide is turned, and will advance no higher till the next flood; let us only hope that its ebb will not be violent.." (cited by Pitman, 114). Yet after Lyell's mapping of Britain's subsiding and constantly transforming coastline, this familiar landmark is not impervious to historical change: Dover offers "visual evidence of erosion" (119). Mainland Europe is both assuring and threatening: a calm but estranging sea separates its landmass from Dover, and its "confused alarms" disturb the "tranquil" bay. In The Enchaf'd Flood, W.H. Auden discusses ways in which literature invests the sea with ideological significance, presenting it as typifying both order and anarchy:

The sea, in fact, is that state of barbaric vagueness and disorder out of which civilization has emerged and into which, unless saved by the efforts of god and men, it is always liable to relapse. It is so little of a friendly symbol that the first thing which the author of the Book of Revelation notices in his vision of the new heaven and earth at the end of time is that 'there was no more sea'.<sup>(29)</sup>

Arnold taps into these codings of the sea as primevally formative but also alien. The Channel encloses England, maintaining its cultural integrity, but it also produces division and instability. The text displays a profound ambivalence towards the continent and more

particularly to the estranging sea, drawn to a classical European past and the universalizing vision of a Sea of Faith folded around "earth's shore", while simultaneously tending towards introspection and "subjective" uncertainty. As Ruth Pitman argues, the speaker is "moved by the distant, encircling, guardian sea, and by its other aspect - the dangerous, encroaching 'corrosive tides' which threaten England's coast".<sup>(30)</sup>

Just as in The Waste Land, fragments of a classical past are used to shore up a disintegrating contemporary landscape. The text accesses Sophocles as an index of cultural continuity, a figure who understood "the turbid ebb and flow/ Of human misery". Yet the "thought" heard in the poem - the retreat of Faith - resounds in the present and arises out of a Northern sea, not the Aegean over which Sophocles presided paternally. As an exemplum of the coherence and permanency of Western civilization, Sophocles is figuratively close to Dover, yet also spatio-temporally "distant". Thus he represents a Father that is both present and absent. This oscillation between "here" and "elsewhere" typifies the text's *fort/da* scenario. As an exemplary space, Dover should reflect the subject's authority and confidence in nature. The Sea of Faith withdraws precisely as the real tide comes in: the tide of faith disconcertingly, and impossibly, does not flow back. Faith's ebb does violence to the text, depriving the subject of the illusion of plenitude and historical continuity. The text's ebb and flow between containment and exclusion, unity and disorder constitutes what Pitman evocatively calls "the sea's night-battle with the land".<sup>(31)</sup> Despite stark contrasts between light and dark, demarcations between inside and outside, land and sea are progressively blurred into a "long line of

spray" that lacks "certitude". As the littoral between security and instability, familiar and unknown, self and other, the shore can be read as constituting the margin between Imaginary and Symbolic, where narcissistic identification confronts the realm of language and the Law. The register of the Imaginary sustains a bipolar logic of agency and passivity, and in the text's night-battle, land and water act and are acted upon. The inability to distinguish between whole and partial, internal and external might seem to represent a return to the uncoordinated matrix of impulses that characterises prematurity, but the separations and invasions played out in the poem - thus brought into the realm of representation - foreground difference and lack. The phrase night-battle also suggests the work of desire in dream-work. Dreams are boundary phenomena in which similar crossings to those enacted in 'Dover Beach' take place: crossings between body and representation, coherence and fragmentation, stability and transformation, language and inarticulation.

Dover's landscape is in process, and in response to a changing field of vision, the speaker solicits a confirming look from the lover who is called to the window, hoping to find communication beyond language, "in a shared gesture, a glance of mutual understanding".<sup>(32)</sup> This shift in perspective is an attempt to institute a form of control over the heterogenous field of desire offered by "the land of dreams". The sea is scanned for a defining or constituting reflection, but it refuses strategies of visual mastery. The subject's imaginary function is dependent upon the proximity, unity and substance of the object, or its other; yet here the sea's tireless encroachment and withdrawal is destructive, and its "nature" defeats description. In both Tennyson and



Arnold, the sea does not function as a neutral reflective plane: rather, it refracts or even shatters the subject's gaze. It makes visible the illusory and alienating "virtual" unity of the mirror-image, installing difference between the subject and the "outside" world. Scrutinizing the ocean, the subject is forced to see not as it *would* see. Gazing on the sea in the search for meaning, the observer resembles the figure evoked in Arnold's letter to Clough, "one who looks upon water as the mediator between the inanimate and man".<sup>33</sup> The sea can be taken to mark the vanishing point between animate and inanimate, extradiscursive and discursive, *instinkt* and *treib*. As in 'Crossing the Bar', the sea remains an ineffable, inexpressible otherness. It excites a yearning in the subject but is beyond articulation, symbolizing the "somatic substratum" of organic force that exists prior to drive energy entering the realm of identification and representation. The endless motion of waves - "Begin, and cease, and then again begin" - evokes the subject's search for an elusive and frustrating original source of satisfaction. Inexhaustibly mobile, extra-human, massively silent, the sea's impact on the four poems discussed is analogous to Lacan's sense of the real, which he defines as the "impossible".<sup>34</sup> Above all, in these poems the sea is impossibly made to stand, in turn, for self-present meaning, eternity and desire.

Easthope and Norman Holland offer distinctive readings of 'Dover Beach' in terms of various categories of phantasy. Easthope reads the poem in terms of delusional jealousy and castration anxiety, particularly when that anxiety is projected back onto the feminine, hence the speaker's urgent demand for fidelity. The cliffs are phallically upright against the emasculating fluidity of the sea, but

the skirts of the surf are unfurled on the beach. The poem operates through a series of dualities and hinges on the littoral between land and sea, tide and foreshore: the "difference" at this margin represents "sexual difference".<sup>(35)</sup> When the (female) sea withdraws its protective girdle from the (male) land, masculine authority is exposed, thus re-instituting castration. This "novel affirmation of the feminine" ensures that sexual relations become "a nightmare to and fro".<sup>(36)</sup> Holland engages with the poem in terms of infantile sexuality within a classic Freudian symbology. The cliffs are breasts, and the sea and air stand for "nurturing fluids".<sup>(37)</sup> The "clash by night" is a sexual metaphor relating to a primal scene fantasy. In this fantasy, the infantile wish to "take in" from the nurturing maternal world is countered by the sound of the retreating sea, which is associated with the mother's withdrawal and her sexual involvement with the father:

That other, separate adult life has a naked, nighttime,  
rhythmic sound, It does not lie there like a land of  
dreams - rather, it is violent, passionate, brutal; the  
bright girdle is withdrawn and bodies clash by night. (122)

Holland offers a normative reading of the poem's formal unity and its attempt to "give us pleasure and create a satisfying, rounded experience" (123), but he links the text's ebb and flow to the "coming and going" of something that should be there. He contends that the sense of geological decay in the poem corresponds to the child's disillusion at the mother's withdrawal. Holland's notion of "coming and going" and Easthope's "to and fro" touch on the dynamic of withdrawal and restoration played out in the text.

Both of these approaches read the poem in terms of pathological structures or categories, and Easthope's is a persuasive interpretation.

Yet in these poems by Tennyson and Arnold, it is precisely the consequence of the land meeting the sea that the subject is radically dispersed, and the shifting shorelines render problematic any pathological reading of the "I" in the text. This dispersal of the subject connects these poetic texts and dream-texts, in that both are concerned with crossing and dissolving boundaries. In each poem the subject's authority and coherence dwindles: desire insists and dissipates in the text, drawing it towards quietude and nullity. The sea is both protective and disruptive, comforting and isolating, instigating the same tidal rhythms that are articulated in 'To Marguerite - Continued', and that are recurrent in the poetic dreams discussed so far. The sea grounds and ungrounds the knowable, constitutes the matter of the poetry and shapes its mode of articulation, forms both the frame and the substance of the poems. The sea represents the "manifest" content of these poems, yet in the way it frames each text, it functions analogously to the operation of desire in the dream-work. (Desire cannot be thought of as the *content* of the dream.) The sea is inscribed as a disruptive textual effect: it is the nodal point where the poems are lulled to a disturbed rest.

### Superimpositions

In proposing that the central component of the oceanic feeling in adult life is "the restoration of limitless narcissism", Freud emphasises that "we have a right to assume the survival of something that was originally there, alongside of what was later derived from it" (CSR 255). In tracing the residue of a desire to return to or reactivate

a previous or ordinary state, he is drawn to consider the question of psychic preservation and survival in terms of classical remains. This archaeological ground has already been (un)covered in Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's Gradiva, where Freud stresses the ability of dreams to preserve and restore; in phantasy, the subject can in effect cross time and space. The transformations of dream-work weave together old and new, original and derivative elements. As Jensen's story demonstrates, this duality produces uncanny effects: in drawing parallels between ego-feeling and the oceanic feeling, the all-embracing tendencies of primary ego-feeling persist as a counterpart (an echo of the uncanny double) to the demarcating, mature ego-feeling. Freud's return to the past, with its ghostly traces and survivals, can be seen to make a connection with Arnold's thought on past and present civilization in Culture and Anarchy.

Freud uses the analogy of Rome's historical development and transformation as a city to consider the problem "of preservation in the sphere of the mind". The "jumble of a great metropolis" - its ruins and restorations - is likened to a psychical entity

in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one, (CSR 257)

Freud stresses that no memory trace is destroyed; in mental life "everything is somehow preserved and that in suitable circumstances..it can once more be brought to light" (CSR 256). Modifications and qualifications are proposed, but Freud maintains "that it is the rule rather than the exception for the past to be preserved in mental life" (CSR 259). The analogy between the history of an ancient city and the development of "a mental organism" proves inadequate, but Freud's

digression is marked by a distinct reluctance to sacrifice the imaginative possibility of representing "historical sequence in spatial terms". Freud truncates the speculation by concluding that "[t]here is clearly no point in spinning our phantasy any further, for it leads to things that are unimaginable and even absurd" (CSR 258). Yet this "absurd" phantasy appears remarkably reminiscent of Freud's description of the process of condensation in dream-work, with its superimposition and transformation of elements. The preservation of psychical (and by implication cultural) traces through time is a meshing together of the "original" and derivative, an act of doubling that disorders space and time. Redeploying Freud's example of Rome's development, successive images of its urban expansion and architectural alterations and demolitions would condense pictorially upon one another, like a film sequence of dissolves and fades. Only here the "frame" would not merely depict a new *mise-en-scène*: the former scenes and images would also be traceable, absorbed but not obliterated by these superimpositions, enacting a pattern of constant re-framing. Such a sequence would render restoration in "original" form impossible, but each trace would be preserved and reinscribed in the "new" scene. (39)

Rome's changing forms preserved in this spatial phantasy offer a clear analogy with the mobile forms of desire that make up the dream-work. The mapping of Rome's ruins echoes other classical survivals and restorations - Pompeii, the Acropolis - in Freud's work. Ancient remains make spectral appearances in the present, surfacing like long-buried memories and primal psychic traces. This archaeological phantasy is expressed not only in psychosexual terms but also in the guise of a cultural "pathology", for which Freud professes his inadequacy in the

closing section. The spinner of this phantasy is a visitor "equipped with the most complete historical and topographical knowledge" (CSR 257), who can trace connections beneath an urban "jumble". Freud's speculative venture is implicitly concerned with commemoration and maintenance, with imposing order on centuries of change. Both Rome and the psyche have "copious" pasts that stand the test of time.

Freud's conception of historical and psychic preservation can be brought into conjunction with Arnold's notions of tradition and cultural continuity in Culture and Anarchy, a work that revolves around exemplary models drawn from antiquity and a return to origins that manifests features reminiscent of the oceanic feeling as outlined by Freud. Arnold figuratively excavates classical remains to reclaim an original source of authority (and, implicitly, pleasure) and thus projectively renew contemporary culture. The reference to Sophocles in 'Dover Beach' privileges a pre-Judaeo-Christian cultivated sensibility that sets in perspective the "turbid ebb and flow/ Of human misery". Arnold's strategy is related to the distinction he draws between Hellenic and Hebraic culture in Culture and Anarchy. As a mode of life, Hellenism is "invested with a kind of aerial ease, clearness and radiancy": its end is "sweetness and light".<sup>(33)</sup> In the "best art and poetry of the Greeks..religion and poetry are one", and since culture is the study of perfection, Greek civilization "did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, so present and paramount" (67). Sophocles combines art and spirituality, and may be taken as an exemplary representative of the Indo-European Hellenic culture that constitutes the real roots of Western civilization. The idealized radiancy of Hellenism, with its offer of unbounded plenitude

and narcissistic unity, represents an oceanic phantasy in that it links "originary" subjective pleasure with "mature" spirituality. (This oceanic feeling - the aspiration to return to a transcendent state of oneness, imbricated with a religious attitude exhibiting nostalgia for a moment when the Sea of Faith was at the "full" - is registered particularly in 'To Marguerite - Continued'.)

In contrast, Arnold contends that the predominance of Hebraistic tendencies has brought about "the beginnings of our confusion" and at the "bottom of our present state" lies "the disbelief in right reason as a lawful authority" (137-8). In Arnold's terms, the 1848 liberal European revolutions might be construed as manifestations of Hebraism, since they were prompted by material and political dissatisfactions and may be classified as a Hebraic striving against sin. The "present unsettled state" of England is a result of unrestrained personal liberty, "the notion of its being the prime right and happiness, for each of us, to affirm himself, and his ordinary self; to be doing, and to be doing freely and as he likes" (138). A lack of self-governance produces public confusion: anarchy in the private state threatens anarchy in the national state. Ironically, for all this unbridled self-assertion, Arnold claims that the subject is an "unhappy chained captive" under Hebraism. Hebraism valorizes sin as a "positive, active entity hostile to man", provoking "the difficulties of knowing oneself and conquering oneself which impede man's passage to perfection" (131). Under Hebraism the subject is divided, the opposite of the noble and divine nature of the classical self. The roots of cultural disorder derive from the subject's estrangement from itself. Political turmoil and fragmented subjectivity, the Hebraic legacy refused in Culture and

Anarchy, cannot be excluded in 'To Marguerite - Continued' and 'Dover Beach'. Though both poems attempt to sustain the idea of a coherent, autonomous and punctual subject, the rejected other returns to disturb the text's rest.

Thus the figure of Sophocles, standing in synecdochic relation to Greek culture, paternally presides (at a distance) over attempts to restore cultural and individual harmony in 'Dover Beach'. This exemplary figure perhaps recalls the child's need for the protective father that Freud situates at the root of religion. He argues that the origin of the religious attitude can be traced to the feeling of infantile helplessness: "[t]he derivation of religious needs from the infant's helplessness and the longing for the father aroused by it seems to me incontrovertible" (CSR 260). This paternal presence ousts the oceanic feeling as a central psychological component of religious belief. This is a highly significant usurpation, because in Lacanian terms the oceanic feeling derives from the Imaginary, while the father's protection lies in the realm of the Symbolic. This supplanting of narcissistic identification by paternal Law reflects back upon the oscillation between Imaginary and Symbolic registers in Tennyson's and Arnold's poems, particularly on the severing "God" of 'To Marguerite - Continued'. It also connects with Arnold's distinction between the harmonious Hellenic disposition and the divisive Hebraic Law, in that Hellenism manifests the ecstatic oneness of prematurity while Hebraism institutes difference within the subject.

So far the discussion has considered representations of the sea in a Victorian, Eurocentric setting, yet Arnold's distinctions between mature culture and immature anarchy can easily be traced in Imperialist



discourses, in the sense of a civilized paternalism watching custodially over an Edenic New World. The final section explores the interaction of paternal "influence" and narcissistic phantasy figured through images of the sea in Derek Walcott's 'A Latin Primer'.<sup>(40)</sup> Walcott's poetry is marked by the superimposed paternal shadows of colonialism and literary tradition, echoing the notion of superimposition discerned in Civilization and its Discontents. 'A Latin Primer', like Freud and Arnold, is also concerned with classical remains.

### The "swaying words of the sea"

Joseph Brodsky remarks that an "oceanic infinity" surrounds Derek Walcott's poetry, a comment typifying a critical orthodoxy responsive to the redemptive, celebratory and universalizing aspects of Walcott's work.<sup>(41)</sup> In many of Walcott's poems, seascapes are portrayed as consolatory and transformative, a highly traditional humanism articulated by Auden in The Enchaf'd Flood:

On the one hand, the poets long to immerse in the sea of Nature, to enjoy its endless mystery and novelty, on the other, they long to come to port in some transcendent eternal and unchanging reality from which the unexpected is excluded.<sup>(42)</sup>

A common feature of Walcott's poetry is to associate the ocean with the timeless transcendence of art. In The Schooner Flight the sea symbolizes aesthetic, racial and political liberation: "my common language go be the wind,/ my pages the sails of the schooner *Flight*".<sup>(43)</sup> Although literature strains to imitate the immutability of the ocean, Caribbean seascapes are also portrayed as geopolitical reservoirs of historical memory: they are reminders of waves of colonial arrivals, slave

caravels, and the scattered Caribbean islands. This "watery wild" is isolating and estranging, like Arnold's ocean in 'To Marguerite - Continued'. (Walcott takes Arnold's closing line as the epitaph to the final section of his long autobiographical poem Another Life.) Like Tennyson and Arnold, there is a discernible drift between blending and separation, unity and alienation in Walcott's work, and the sea represents complex and divided racial, historical and literary origins.

'A Latin Primer' deploys an elaborate trope centring on the etymology of the frigate bird as a means of reconciling "native metaphor" with European languages and cultural heritage. This linguistic and cultural superimposition rehearses the ambivalence surrounding the "sound colonial education" professed by Shabine in 'The Schooner Flight'<sup>44</sup>, a classical education that offers a link with Arnold. The imperial legacy bequeathed by "Love's basic Latin" is both refused and accepted, mirroring the text's *fort/da* oscillation between shore and sea, past and future. The poem opens with an "I" being born into the "shallows" of language, yet this figure uses the "horizon" of "distant literatures" to guide "my long walk// home". Immediately there is a paradoxical move away from and return to origins. The sea is "home", where the protagonist

..found my deepest wish  
in the swaying words of the sea,  
and the skeletal fish  
of that boy is ribbed in me..

The "skeletal fish" gestures towards an evolutionary motif of life emerging from the ocean that surfaces in many of Walcott's poems. The sea fulfils a "deepest wish" for this boy, precisely the residue of infantile narcissism offered and refused in Tennyson and Arnold,

representatives of "mature" culture. Yet this prelapsarian state cannot be reclaimed in the "bronze/ dusk of imperial palms". The "old words" of Latin "discipline" childhood pleasure and imaginative freedom; the imposition of this educational Law suggests the transition from the Imaginary to the Symbolic order. As "a master at my college", the "I" wavers hypocritically between this imperial discipline and sympathy for the schoolboys, whose "lithe black bodies, beached,/ would die in dialect". This leaves the protagonist "trying to find my voice" through "native" and inherited language.

The frigate bird appears spectrally at midday: for the ancient world, this was the hour of ghosts, and recalls Gradiva's noonday appearances in Pompeii. The bird raises its "emblem" over "a sea without seasons", and it becomes a figurative means of transcending the "questions" of an imperial dusk:

named with the common sense  
of fishermen; sea scissors,  
*Fregata magnificens*,

*ciseau-la-mer*, the patois  
for its cloud-cutting course;  
and that native metaphor  
made by the strokes of oars,

with one wing beat for scansion  
that slowly levelling V  
made one with my horizon  
as it sailed steadily

beyond the sheep-nibbled columns  
of fallen marble trees,  
or the roofless pillars once  
sacred to Hercules.

These closing stanzas enact a metaphorical fusion between the sea, art and the sacred to propose a transcendent, ahistorical state or place "beyond" racial and cultural differences. The "musing" protagonist's

vision triumphantly merges patois with ancient and modern European languages. Yet in the context of a colonial history of "fallen marble", Caribbean seascapes cannot function purely as "redemptive" sites. The frigate bird's flight emblematises the wake of a ship sailing either *towards* or *away from* European waters. Seen from the shore, its "slowly levelling V" converges on a vanishing point on the horizon, implying unity and harmony. Observed from the sea, however, it represents only an ever-widening wake: this "V", making "one with my horizon", is both narrowing and widening. As in Tennyson and Arnold, ordinary unity is offered and refused. The text drifts between shore and sea, stability and movement, blending and separation, a recurrent pattern of motion which, as Brodsky points out, moves ashore and back to the horizon.<sup>(45)</sup> This "swaying" once again alludes to the "oceanic" feeling, its contradictory and destabilizing currents. The textual superimposition of "native" and cultivated elements is a narcissistic phantasy of wholeness and self-identity yet, as has been shown throughout, in dreams, phantasy and poetry the subject is not "one", not itself. Enthralled by the metaphorical possibilities of the sea, the subject is taken "beyond" itself, but not beyond the problematic allegiance to different and divergent "worlds" that are readable both as public and private.

The texts discussed in this chapter are concerned with where "we" came from and where "we" want to go, questions that all too easily lapse into hazy liberal sentiments about "self-discovery". These questions gather a particular urgency after Darwin's speculations on human beginnings and ends, and Freud sees himself as the next participant in the process of decentring "man". Psychoanalysis demonstrates that dreams are not places of pleasurable or private escape, and the sea is a

metaphor for dream in the poetry of Tennyson, Arnold or Walcott only in its inability to satisfy "oceanic" desires for unity, plenitude and origins. As a cultural or poetic figure, it refuses the subject "the pure mirror of an unruffled surface" (E 15). On the contrary, encounters with the sea provoke strange dreams. A lack of anchorage and navigational certainty for the subject constitutes the legacy of sailing in the wake of Freud.

## Footnotes

1. The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond, trans. Alan Bass (London: University of Chicago Press 1987), p.261. I have preferred Alan Bass's translation over that of Ian McLeod in 'Speculations - on Freud', since Bass's rendering makes the passage's oceanic associations more explicit. The concern with a shore or border returns in 'Living On - Borderlines', where Derrida considers the problems of defining the edge or *bord* of a text that submerges or overruns any notion of a shoreline (Bloom ed., pp.81-3).

2. Freud maps images of water in the dream-work onto a symbolic geography of the body; the water-symbol in dreams is either of somatic derivation - pointing to a "urinary stimulus" - or is based upon "phantasies of intra-uterine existence" (TID 322, 524). From this "classic" position, many branches of psychoanalysis move on to treat the symbolism of water and the sea as both an object of analysis - a typical motif in dreams - and as a hermeneutic model. Charles Mauron's psychocriticism, for example, argues against symbol-fixing in psychoanalytic dream-theories and proposes three levels on which to interpret the water symbol, this interpretive model paralleling the tripartite structure of the psyche. According to Mauron, at the lowest level water symbolizes the animal unconscious; the middle level is that of creation and destruction, the "open seas" of ambivalence; the uppermost level is that of wisdom, the superior unconscious. See Linda Hutcheon, Formalism and the Freudian Aesthetic: the Example of Charles Mauron (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p.79.

In 'Dream, Imagination, Existence', Michel Foucault recounts Ludwig Binswanger's analysis of a dream where the patient is "the anguished personage, but is also the sea" (p.59). This might appear to privilege the dreamer as protean or transcendent, but Foucault emphasises that the subject of this dream is less an individual "I" who dreams - "a stroller who follows the endless shores of a beach" - than "the dream itself". As Simon During points out, in Foucault's reading "the 'first person' who dreams is not a socially constructed individual but (somehow) an expression of experience itself before the split into subjectivity and objectivity" (Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing [London: Routledge, 1992], p.30). Foucault's poetic reinscription of Binswanger's dream-interpretation bears out his assertion that "the dream, like every imaginary experience, is an anthropological index of transcendence" (p.49). Significantly, universality, wholeness or teleology in the dream is invoked at the expense of a punctual, integral self: "The three-fold movement of a sea, first agitated, then caught and as if fixed in a deathlike immobility, and finally, let loose in joyous freedom, is the very movement of an existence (*Existenz*) abandoned first to the chaos of subjectivity which knows only itself, a freedom of incoherence, fantasy, and disorder; then, of a freedom invested in an objectivity which binds it to the point of overcoming it and alienating it in the silence of things dead; and finally, of a freedom rediscovered as resurrection and deliverance..." (p.59). To a limited extent, the coming-to-being of this dream prefigures the currents of the poems under examination, at least in terms of disordered subjectivity and the (always-deferred) teleology of "resurrection and deliverance". The "silence of things dead", brought about by the alienating objectivity of "indifferent" nature, denotes the demise of the classical subject: in

the poems a final ecstatic freedom of full self-awareness remains unavailable and unattainable.

An oceanic perspective or register is evoked during certain moments in the institutionalisation of psychoanalysis. As Malcolm Bowie points out, Freud's followers are reported to have compared him to Columbus in his article 'On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement', and "without accepting or rejecting this comparison in his text, he borrows from the Parisian coat of arms a defiant seafarer's epigraph: *fluctuat nec mergitur* ('it is tossed about but does not sink')." (Freud, Proust and Lacan, p.30). Here Freud implicitly aligns himself with another epic voyager and empire builder, the discoverer of a New World.

3. Geoffrey Hartmann, Saving the Text, p.99.
4. The Literary Symbol (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), pp.150-1.
5. Bodkin, p.68.
6. Boothby, p.201.
7. 'Early Victorian Science Writers and Tennyson's In Memoriam: A Study in Cultural Exchange', Victorian Studies 18, 3-4 (March & June 1975), p303.
8. From Huxley's Evolution and Ethics, pp.44-50, cited in Tess Cosslett, The 'Scientific Movement' and Victorian Literature (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), p.58.
9. Easthope, PAP p.164. Eliot's comment in Essays Ancient and Modern (London: Faber, 1946) about a poet "accidentally" expressing the mood of a generation might be appropriate in relation to this representative "Darwinian" phantasy, particularly in the case of Tennyson (p.184).
10. *ibid.*, p.166.
11. The Poems of Tennyson, ed. Christopher Ricks (London: Longman, 1969), pp.1458-9.
12. *ibid.*, p.1458n.
13. 'Psychoanalysis: The French Connection', in Psychoanalysis and the Question of the Text, p.111.
14. Alfred Tennyson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p.86.
15. Easthope, PAP p.145. (Further references given in main text.)
16. In The Dream and The Underworld (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), James Hillmann comments that poetic sleep is a return to primary narcissism (p.119). On the relation between primary narcissism and the "sublimating" capacities of art, see Leo Bersani in The Culture of Redemption (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp.29-46. Bersani contends that first narcissistic love is masochistic, and "[t]he first psychic totality would thus be constituted by a desire to shatter totality" (p.38). This desire to be shattered out of all coherence may cast light on the emphasised separations and ambivalent currents of each of the poems under discussion in this chapter.
17. The Complete Poems, p.348.
18. Tennyson, Poems, p.973.
19. The Language of Tennyson's In Memoriam (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), p.39.
20. Language as Living Form in Nineteenth Century Poetry (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), p.194.
21. Arnold, The Complete Poems, eds. Miriam Allott and Robert H. Super (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp.61, 135-6.

22. W.H. Auden remarks that the sea often functions in literature as a place lacking the "ties" of home or sex, thus bringing national and sexual difference into play (The Enchaf'd Flood (London: Faber, 1951), p.65). See John Fletcher, 'Poetry, Gender and Primal Fantasy', in Formations of Fantasy, ed. Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), pp.136-40. Fletcher examines the "exotic overflow" in Emily Dickinson's 'I started Early - Took my Dog', where the dissolving margins between sea and shore enact shifts and ruptures in gender positions.
23. Victorian Fantasy (Brighton: Harvester, 1979), p.6.
24. Cited in Martin Bidney, '"A Dream" as Key to a Reverie Pattern in Matthew Arnold: Interactions of Water and Fire', *Victorian Poetry*, Vol 26 (Spring/Summer 1988), p.58n. Bidney offers a phenomenological reading of Arnold, via Bachelard's work on the primal elements of reverie, concentrating on "the ambivalences and dialectical interplay between Arnoldian fire and water images as they function at moments of intense experience" (p.45). In this recurrent pattern of reverie in Arnold's poetry, fire is as much home as the sea and "water and fire remain..interacting, duplicitous welcomers" (p.57).
25. Richards, p.123.
26. Boothby, p.174.
27. Boothby, p.174.
28. 'On Dover Beach', *Essays in Criticism*, Vol. XXIII, (April) 1973, p.117. (Further references given in main text.)
29. Auden, pp.18-19.
30. Pitman, p.129. Elliott L. Gilbert's 'The Female King: Tennyson's Arthurian Apocalypse', in Showlater ed., charts some of the influences exerted on Victorian poetry by political upheavals in Europe, particularly the shadow cast by the French Revolution (pp.168ff).
31. Pitman, p.124. The term "night-battle" comes from Newman's January 1839 sermon, the terms of which anticipate Arnold's critique of the turbulent individualism and subjective estrangement of contemporary society in Culture and Anarchy: "Controversy, at least in this age, does not lie between the hosts of heaven, Michael and his angels on the one side, and the powers of evil on the other; but it is a sort of night-battle, where each fights for himself, and friend and foe stand together" (University Sermons [London, 1843], p.193). Glossed by Allott and Super in Arnold's Complete Poems, p.530.
32. Ian Gregor, 'Eliot and Matthew Arnold', in Martin ed., p.271.
33. Cited in Norman N. Holland, The Dynamics of Literary Response (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.123.
34. Lacan's conception of the real is outlined by Richard Boothby: "Neither figured in the imaginary nor represented by the symbolic, the real is the always-still-outstanding, the radically excluded, the wholly uncognized..The real is sheer, wholly undifferentiated and unsymbolized force or impact..It inhabits the secret interior as well. The real is therefore also to be associated with the active yet ineffable stirrings of organic need, the unconsciousness of the body" (p.19).
35. Easthope, PAP p.164.
36. *ibid.*, p.165. It is possible to argue that, since the subject is radically ungrounded in this textual phantasy, the Law of the Father is neither acceded to nor recognised.
37. Holland, p.120. (Further references given in main text.)



38. This can be related to Lyotard's remarks on the symptomatic status of the work of art: "it is a set of traces referable in principle to a primal phantasy; it differs from one in that it bears these traces; exhibits them. Trace bearing trace, a representation which is itself representative". Lyotard's notion of "disseizure" also bears relevance to the work of framing in unconscious phantasy. In art disseizure is a space that phantasy encloses and upon which it is "reclosed". Phantasy constitutes both the frame and that which is framed, both form and content, originary and derivative: "the interior space, that which refuses all reception, which grips the primitive figure, escapes from it, turns around, returns to invest it and offers a stage for its operations". This pattern of return and repetition interweaves the inside and outside of phantasy with original and secondary elements and forms of phantasy. Lyotard draws an analogy between theatre and dream: "Theatre is the dream in that it fascinates and amounts to an hallucination giving rise to identification; and it is not the dream, it is the dream redoubled, the scene of the dream set on its own representation" (Driftworks, p.37).

39. Culture and Anarchy and Other Writings, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.130. Further references given in main text.)

40. Derek Walcott, The Arkansas Testament (London: Faber, 1988), pp.21-24.

41. 'The Sound of the Tide, in Less Than One (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p.166. The tendency to universalize Walcott's use of the sea can be gleaned from the title of J.A. Ramsaran's article, 'Derek Walcott: New World Mediterranean Poet' (World Literature Written in English, 21, 1 (Spring 1992). In The Government of the Tongue (London: Faber, 1989), writing that Walcott's verse sails "well rigged and richly cargoed (p.23), Seamus Heaney positions him within a European literary mainstream: "...when Walcott lets the sea-breeze freshen in his imagination, the result is a poetry as spacious and heart-lifting as the sea-weather at the opening of Joyce's Ulysses" (p.24).

42. Auden, p.75.

43. 'The Schooner Flight', in Collected Poems 1948-84 (New York: Noonday Press, 1986), p.347.

44. *ibid.*, p.346.

45. Brodsky, p.174.

## CONCLUSION: CROSSINGS

This study has addressed several recurrent and interlinked problems: the question of attributing desire and thinking about the unconscious of a text, and the associated difficulty of reading the shadowy mobility of desire in poetic texts. Dream-texts and poetic texts are linked by the ways in which they bring their "subject" into being through identification with an other. The subject is not constituted in advance of this identification: in both dreams and poems, subjects are truly made in an other's image. The discussion has also confronted the problematic and incommensurate relation between the psyche and the social. In the texts discussed, figures are situated at the borders between mind and matter, body and culture, and their dissolutions are both "subjective" and "cultural". The ciphered "secrets", intertextual connections and hauntings of these texts bear the marks of an "unconscious" that is not decidably individual or social.

The thesis implicitly advances a certain genealogy of later modernity, an historical conjuncture that predates and outlives Freud but that in part constitutes, and is constituted by, psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis comes to be institutionalised in a moment of conceptual transition, negotiating between a European Romantic tradition that exalts the autonomous self and the scientific and systematizing drift of the late nineteenth and twentieth century. Freud's theoretical elaborations of the subject inevitably bear the marks of this crossing. Psychoanalysis seeks the origins of the subject but in its search is subject to its origins. At its outset, psychoanalysis bears (and can never bury) its debt to a characteristic *fin-de-siècle* oscillation

between "official" branches of knowledge and practices and beliefs that hover on the edges of respectable science: telepathy, hypnosis and the occult. The Interpretation of Dreams self-consciously formalizes and rehabilitates superstition in the name of science. In Freud's work, the mechanistic and aesthetic, schematic and speculative, rational and mysterious play out a recurrent struggle that is actually a mutual contamination and affirmation.

The complex double movements enacted in the formative stages of psychoanalysis have influenced its notions of subjectivity and representation for a century. Fluctuating between designation and conjecture, observation and hypothesis, Freud both affirms and ungrounds the category of the modern subject. Psychoanalysis simultaneously articulates what is intimately, singularly human and confronts the impossibility of doing so. Operating at the borders of the knowable, the unconscious renders the subject in psychoanalysis (patient and analyst) ineluctably "other". When confronted with the question "who comes after the subject?", Maurice Blanchot considers a "who" that

does not find its proper site, does not let itself be assumed by Me; the 'it' that, without ceasing to be not personal, does not let itself be measured by the impersonal either, and keeps us at the edge of the unknown.<sup>(1)</sup>

A reading of poetry that goes "beyond" the subject need not suggest some historical dislocation or temporal progression that brings about the end of the subject; rather, in its relation to alterity the subject is always already beyond itself, since that beyond is the place of the unconscious. This recognition is a legacy of Freud, as Borch-Jacobsen proposes: "the Freudian subject is the other, it is *the same* as the other".<sup>(2)</sup>

This complex identification with alterity does not propose a subject devoid of agency, purely under the sway of a machinic psyche or the immanent rhythms and force of language. Literary texts, like dreams, are boundary phenomena, negotiating between body and society, private and public, and their reading provokes a "rivalry of interpretations" both within and between subjects.<sup>(3)</sup> Identificatory desire implicates the reader/interpreter who, drawn into or induced by that which s/he reads, necessarily reads "from", "in" and "through" otherness. The reading subject is suspended between waking and sleeping, succumbing to the lure of the text while trying to make sense of it, reading both inside and outside the text. Reading in the wake of Freud is reading strangeness; contemporary psychoanalytic criticism demonstrates that Freud's own interpretive strategies "are perplexed by a textuality into which analyst and analysand, dreamer and interpreter, are disconcertingly collapsed".<sup>(4)</sup>

By interarticulating poetry and the poetics of psychoanalysis, this study traces the "silent" writing and crossings of desire in a range of texts that all invite the classification "literary". In reading Freud's essays alongside poetic texts, one might propose a form of telepathic familiarity, with psychoanalysis at various points anticipating literature as its addressee and vice versa. This would bear out Shoshana Felman's contention that

„psychoanalysis can be intraliterary just as much as literature is intrapsychanalytic. The methodological stake is no longer that of the *application of psychoanalysis to* but, rather, of their *interimplication in each other*."<sup>(5)</sup>

Thus psychoanalysis and literature cross over inescapably and productively. In 'Speculations - on Freud', Derrida outlines his

approach to the elaborate "crossings" performed by Freud's speculative family venture in Beyond the Pleasure Principle: "I give this word 'crossing' all its genetic or genealogical chances. A certain writing will make its bed there".<sup>(6)</sup> Bed is a place to sleep and dream, but dream is a place of disturbed rest. Writing "in" psychoanalysis or literature makes its bed a "chancy", uncertain crossing, where genealogies or secure groundings are not constituted in advance. The place of poetic texts, and the place of dream-texts, lie at precisely such crossing-points.

## Footnotes

1. 'Who?', trans. Eduardo Cadava, in Who Comes After the Subject?, eds. E. Cadava, Peter Connor and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), p.59.
2. 'The Freudian Subject, from Politics to Ethics', trans. Richard Miller, in Cadava, Connor and Nancy eds., p.62.
3. Wright, p.26.
4. Elizabeth Freund, The Return of the Reader: Reader-Response Criticism (London: Methuen, 1987), p.132.
5. Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight: Psychoanalysis in Contemporary Culture (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1987), p.49. Felman argues that disagreements within Edgar Allan Poe's critical "heritage" over the "irresistibility" of his poetry exemplify a "poetic" reading effect in which the literary text becomes an object of desire, and to an extent produces its readers. ("Object" is interpretable as an other place or subject position since desire has been read throughout in terms of identification rather than acquisition.) Felman asserts that "poetry is both what most resists a psychoanalytical interpretation and what most depends on psychoanalytical effects" (p.51). She proposes that psychoanalysis might trace a poetic "unconscious" by conducting a "literary case history": this endeavour was attempted to an extent in Chapter Five in relation to The Waste Land.
6. 'Speculations on Freud', p.86.

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