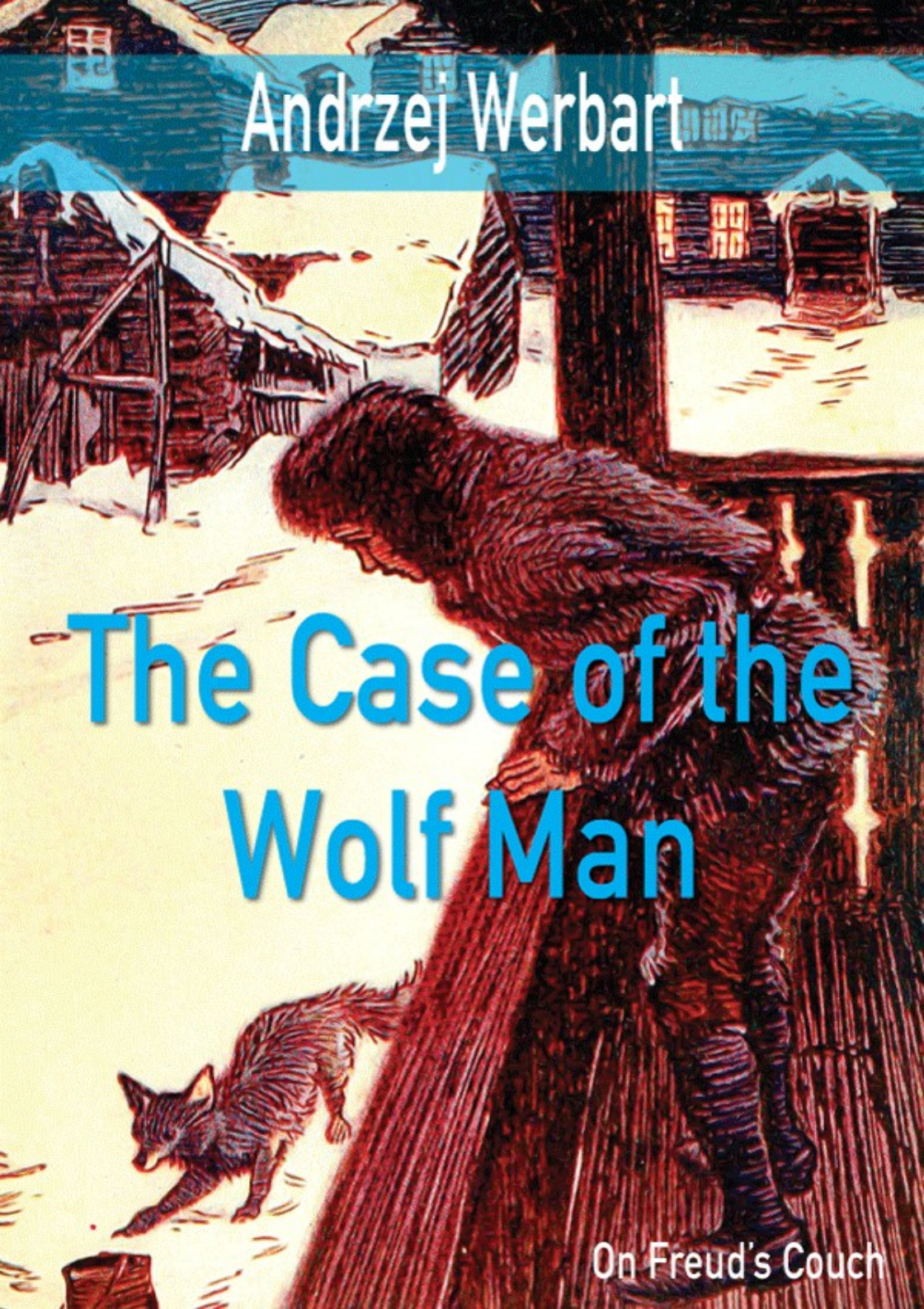
Andrzej Werbart

The Case of the Wolf Man



On Freud's Couch

Where the Horsetails Grow as High as Palms: The Case of the Wolf Man

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Part I

"I am the Most Famous Case"

Ladies and gentlemen! Honored audience! We are gathered here tonight to study together what is the most famous and perhaps most instructive of Freud's cases in the history of psychoanalysis, the analysis of Sergej Konstantinovich Pankejev, who went down in history under the sobriquet "The Wolf Man." We have a difficult task before us. What has brought us together is our common interest in the case. I will, however, disappoint you and only partially satisfy your curiosity. Certainly in this case history we find some of the core ideas of psychoanalysis. But they are difficult notions, sometimes even obscure. Today, as in 1918, when Freud published his essay *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,* they stir up criticism and opposition. We will follow Freud's detective work.

At the resolution of a good detective story all the pieces of the puzzle should fall into place and all the questions should be answered. But a mystery tale that leaves no room for new questions and attempts at individual guesses is flat, thereby leaving us untouched. Freud's account of the Wolf Man case will hold us spellbound because of its elegance and its unpredictable twists and turns. Life goes on from the point at which every detective story ends. In the case of the Wolf Man the preliminary investigation lasts for his entire life on earth, and even afterwards. "I am the most famous case. So he must observe me to the very last moment," said the Wolf Man in one of the interviews with him in the 1970s (Obholzer 1982, p. 175).

Now this is more than a detective story; we will also get a glimpse into an archaeological excavation. The case of the Wolf Man has many strata: Freud's original account of his first and second analysis of

Pankejev; Freud's later commentaries; Brunswick's continuation of the analysis and her own account of it; Freud's and Brunswick's discussions together of the case, traces of which I believe I have found in a document written in 1940; the Wolf Man's accounts at various periods of time; and his own life as the embodiment of a myth of himself as Freud's most famous patient. The Wolf Man is surely the world's best documented analysand. We do not suffer from a lack of sources; if anything there is a superabundance of source materials, which taken together add up to an almost seventy year follow-up of the case. Several analysts went on treating or interviewing Pankejev up to his death in 1979: after two analyses with Freud he was twice in analysis with Brunswick. Muriel Gardiner (1971) maintained contact with him for a half century. The number of psychoanalytical articles on and references to the case is incalculable. The material unpublished to date is even more impressive. In 1955 the

psychoanalyst Frederick S. Weil did a Rorschach test, which according to the Wolf Man himself, confirmed the diagnosis of obsessional-compulsive neurosis (Gardiner 1971, p. 363, Obholzer 1982, p. 155). Kurt Eissler, during his tenure as director of The Freud Archives, made tape recorded interviews daily for one month every year for 15 years. Pankejev himself supplied several depositions and kept up an extensive correspondence with a number of famous analysts. In a series of interviews, a young journalist, Karin Obholzer, got the Wolf Man practically to repudiate psychoanalysis. At the same time, perhaps unintentionally, she has documented how the Wolf Man's neurosis lasted his whole life, especially in his financial activities and in his relations to women and to authority. Finally, we have my own attempt to compile an intelligible and interesting selection out of these riches. These different layers lie on top of each other and form sediments that were laid down at different periods in

Pankejev's life, in Freud's development and that of psychoanalysis, in the dramatic course of events in world history. Every new stratum is a re-interpretation of the earlier ones. You can with reason object: Is it not the avowed specialty of psychoanalysis to study such deposits, to distinguish different strata from each other, to date them, to reconstruct the hidden course of events? Certainly this archaeological activity is the everyday occupation of the analyst in his dialogue with the analysand. When there is an attempt at popularization, however, the problem is that questions multiply and everything may get muddled. What if the explanation of the case was wrong? What if the crime was committed by someone else? Or if it was another crime that was committed? In the end we are forced into flagrant over-simplifications in order to preserve something of the original clarity of the case.

My intention is not to present a new discussion of the case, still one more re-interpretation, or to present sensational new revelations. Efforts of that kind have been made by many before me who were perhaps better suited to the task. But they have all come up against the same difficulty—even if both the analyst and the analysand were alive, the unique pair who once met in analysis no longer exist. The only thing I can do here is to give a general, if selective, orientation to the case. To tell the truth, it is exactly this limitation that makes it possible for us, so many of us, to gather in a group to look at the most intimate of secrets, the secrets of the psychoanalytical consulting room and the bedroom. We would never have come here today if we did not have the same latent desire to witness, without being involved, parents in an intensive, incomprehensible, seductive, frightening embrace—what Freud calls the primal scene. Neither would we have come here

today if we had not been able to sublimate this desire, move it to a higher level of human culture.

What I am interested in here is to provide through the "Case of the Wolf Man" an orientation to some of the pivotal themes of psychoanalysis as they were formulated by Freud: the importance of childhood sexuality; childhood neurosis as a first version of later neurosis in adult life; the primal scene and primal fantasies, that is, the inner, psychic consequences for the child of witnessing his parents' coitus or fantasizing it. The case also provided clinical confirmation of the ideas about our psychic bisexual nature formulated by Freud at an early stage in cooperation with his friend Fliess: primary feminine impulses played a determining part in the development of the Wolf Man's neurosis (Strachey, Editor's note, in Freud 17, p. 6). Moreover this case history is an application of Freud's basic ideas about the nature of psychic reality and of psychoanalytical

knowledge, together with the possibilities and limitations of the psychoanalytical cure. As time goes by, it turns into a starting point for further development. The case of the Wolf Man was perhaps the psychoanalytical treatment from which Freud learned most, especially from his mistakes, shortcomings, and doubts. To give one example: it is from his work with the Wolf Man that Freud (1914e) developed the idea of transference neurosis, the compulsion to repeat, and working through in his essay, "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through."

The Person, the Myth, and the Psychoanalytic Construction

The name "Wolf Man" has an archaic, almost mystic ring. It may make us think of the werewolf, of the idea that there is a wolf in every person, of the Latin proverb *homo homini lupus est*. But there was a simple reason why he got the name: his irrational

fear of wolves and his famous wolf dream. Nevertheless we can not overlook our associations to the name. They say something—about the primordial, secret, dangerous side of each and every one of us. In one of his last notes, July 12, 1938, Freud writes: "With neurotics it is as though we were in a prehistoric landscape—for instance in the Jurassic. The great saurians are still running about; the horsetails grow as high as palms" (1938b, p. 299). Let us now descend together to this landscape with Freud and the Wolf Man as guides. Is it at all possible for us to comprehend what we see there? What deeply buried emotions will we discover? What form of rationality do we have to have in order to understand, describe, explain what we will encounter?

Over the years a number of myths have grown up around the Wolf Man. Ernest Jones (1955, p. 308), Freud's official biographer, describes the Wolf

Man's meeting with his future analyst at the beginning of February 1910: "[H]e initiated the first hour of treatment with an offer to have rectal intercourse with Freud and then to defaecate on his head." In a footnote Jones refers to Freud's letter to his colleague Sándor Ferenczi dated February 13, 1910. Closer inspection of this letter proves that Jones's description was a distortion. Freud writes that the new patient "admitted the following transferences to me after the first session: Jewish swindler, he would like to use me from behind and shit on my head" (Gay 1988, p. 306, Freud and Ferenczi 1993, p. 138). Jones takes fantasy for reality, wish for action, anti-Semitism for psychopathology or perversion.

The Wolf Man is both a solid, named person, Sergej Konstantinovich Pankejev and a psychoanalytical construction from Freud's and Brunswick's case histories—and a myth. Pankejev

gradually became the bearer of a psychoanalytical myth, trying to live up to his role as Freud's most famous case. He even mixes the "case" up with himself as a living person. The last years of his life Pankejev was so identified with the Wolf Man that according to Obholzer, he answered the telephone with, "Wolf Man here." This confusion with the Wolf Man may be considered a sign of his resistance to analysis, a resistance that during the final phase of his life led him to repudiate psychoanalysis. The Wolf Man's life story is also a modern drama of an individual's fate in a Europe struck by a series of historic disasters and revolutionary changes, a drama of a person whose whole life was marked by stereotyped repetitions of early childhood experiences, what Freud called "life neurosis." It is also a drama of the transformation of psychoanalytical knowledge from sensational discoveries to mass media dilution and trivialization.

Here I will first of all talk about the Wolf Man, trying to keep separate this psychoanalytical construction or model—this "mystical person," a figure in the psychoanalytical narrative—and the living patient who was in analysis with Freud. The account of the Wolf Man may be seen as a substantiation, a version of another psychoanalytical story, that of the primal scene. In conclusion, I will call attention to the father's presence and the mother's absence in this account, that is, the sum of what we in psychoanalysis call the pre-oedipal problem. This problem is embodied in another version of the primal fantasy: to be absent at parents' coitus, to prevent their union, to keep them apart, and to fear castration not from the father's side but from the mother's.

Sergej Konstantinovich Pankejev

But let me begin with Sergej Konstantinovich Pankejev. He was born to one of the wealthiest

landowners in southern Russia on Christmas Eve, 1885, according to the old Russian Julian calendar, or January 6, 1887, according to our Gregorian calendar. During his first years the family commuted between their estate on the banks of the Dnieper and their summer residence in Tyerni a few miles from there. Sergej and his 2½ -year-old sister Anna were brought up by a series of nannies, governesses, tutors, and servants. His mother was a hypochondriacal, jealous, devout woman, clearly incapable of close contact with her children, but she did translations from English and painted. His father, a lawyer and a well known Western-oriented politician, a so-called *zapadnik* (as opposed to the Eastern-oriented, Slavophiles), active in the constitutional democratic party and publisher of a liberal monthly magazine *Southern News,* was manic-depressive and periodically spent several months at a time in various sanatoria. In his adult life, Pankejev took over his parents' artistic and

literary interests. The most important person of his childhood was his Nyanya,[1] the nanny, a farm girl from the days of serfdom. She had been married in her youth; her son had died in infancy, and all of her love for the dead son had been transferred to Sergej. His sister Anna, a precocious, gifted, lively girl, was to play an important role in his life.

Sergej came close to death from pneumonia at the age of 3 months, and contracted malaria when he was 1½ years old. A pivotal event in his childhood occurred when at the age of 3½, after his English governess, Miss Owen, arrived at the estate, he changed from a quiet, almost phlegmatic child into a nervous, irritable boy who had several serious tantrums. She was replaced by Fräulein Elizabeth, a Bulgarian, who used to read from the Brothers Grimm in the evenings. On the night before Christmas Eve, 1890, he dreamt the dream about wolves that gave him the name Wolf Man. When he

was 5 the family moved to Odessa, a multinational metropolis with a mixed population of Russians, Ukrainians, Greeks, Georgians, Armenians, and Jews. The new governess was French, Mademoiselle, who read to the children from French books.

Attention was called to Sergej's difficulties when he became depressed at the age of 18 after having had gonorrhea. During the next few years he traveled around in great luxury through the double monarchy Austria-Hungary and Kaiser Wilhelm II's Germany. He was often accompanied on these journeys by his personal physician and a servant. Traveling with his mother and sister, he first visited Berlin in the company of a young student of Swedish extraction, a certain Hasselblad. There he met Anton Hasselblad, a relative of the student's and a professor of psychiatry. Diagnosing puberty neurosis, Dr. Hasselblad recommended a trip abroad.

Sergej's condition improved during a sojourn in Italy. A relapse occurred in 1906 after his sister unexpectedly committed suicide by ingesting mercury during a trip to the Caucasus. Sergej, who had had "a very deep, personal, inner relationship [to Anna], and whom [he] had always considered as [his] only comrade," sank into a state of the deepest depression, which often increased to "the intensity of physical pain" (Gardiner 1971, p. 25). This was followed by a compulsive brooding over whether he should begin to study at the faculty of law as he had originally planned or change to the natural sciences. He finally realized that his plans were related to his dead sister who had been interested in science, and he moved to the home of an uncle in St. Petersburg and began to study law. His shyness, his difficulties in making contact with people, his lack of enterprise, and his depression became worse and worse: 'There was too crass a contrast between the pulsating life around me and the bottomless, unbridgeable gulf of

emptiness within myself' (Gardiner 1971, p. 43). On his father's advice he was examined by the distinguished neurologist, Professor Bechterev, who diagnosed neurasthenia and recommended hypnosis. During the first and only hypnotic seance they had together, Bechterev tried to suggest to Sergej that he persuade his father to give up his plans to build a hospital for mental disorders in Odessa to the memory of Anna and instead donate money to Bechterev's planned neurological institute in St. Petersburg.

During the next few years Sergej visited a succession of sanatoria for nervous disorders and was treated by the foremost specialists of the day, Theodor Ziehen in Berlin, Emil Kraepelin in Munich, and others. Kraepelin had previously treated his father and diagnosed both as manic-depressive and suffering from "sickness of the will."

At the treatment institute Neuwittelsbach near Munich where Sergej came at the Kraepelin's suggestion, he fell in love in 1908 with a nurse, Sister Therese (and I would like to emphasize *sister),* a divorced woman a few years older than he with a daughter named Else. What took place on this occasion was to be repeated during the rest of Pankejev's life. He felt sometimes repelled, sometimes attracted by the woman, and a series of dramatic farewells and reunions began. Both his family and his physicians were strongly opposed to this relation. Pankejev repeatedly traveled the route between Odessa and Germany, tried to free himself from Therese, and found he could not live without her. Pankejev's depression deepened after his father's death in 1908, which probably was caused by an overdose of the sleeping potion Veronal. That summer he began painting on his own; in his later years this was his favorite hobby.

He was also treated for a time in Odessa by Dr. Leonid Drosnes, who had read an article about Freud by Dr. Moshe Wulff and had become interested in psychoanalysis, but he also mixed Freud up with the prominent Swiss psychotherapist, Paul Dubois, who tried to cure "imaginary invalids" by efforts of will and re-education. Drosnes told Pankejev that there was a certain Professor Freud in Vienna who had invented a miraculous method called psychoanalysis (Obholzer 1982, p. 30): "[H]e believes that some childhood experience, a trauma, is the cause of an illness. And if one remembers this event, one gets one's health back. In five minutes." After an unsuccessful attempt to carry on psychoanalysis Drosnes suggested that together they should take a trip around the world. His next suggestion was that he, Pankejev, should consult Freud personally in Vienna or Dubois in Bern. In January 1910 a party consisting of Pankejev, Dr. Drosnes, and a young medical student, T., who came along to give

Pankejev enemas and act as the third man in a Russian card game, arrived in Vienna—on the way to Bern. Freud had had a previous contact with Wulff in Odessa, who had received his psychoanalytical training in Berlin and who knew the Pankejev family well, and also with Dr. Osipov in Moscow. The Russian Psychoanalytical Society was founded in 1911 by Drosnes, who brought the Wolf Man to Freud, Osipov, and Wirubov.

Freud made a strong impression on Pankejev. What decided him against traveling on to Dubois was the fact that Freud had a positive attitude toward his relationship with Therese, which he regarded as a "breakthrough to the woman." Furthermore he obviously succeeded in strengthening his patient's wounded self-esteem, appealing to his self-love. In *My Recollections of Sigmund Freud,* signed by the Wolf Man, we read the following:

> When I told Freud about my doubts and brooding as a child, his opinion was that "only a child can think so logically." And once, in this connection he spoke of a "thinker of the first rank," which filled me with no little pride, since in my childhood I had suffered from competition with my sister, who was two and one half years older than I and far ahead of me. [Gardiner 1971, p. 139]

At Pankejev's request, after several months of analysis, Freud gave him permission to visit Therese. But a couple of years passed until he tried to locate her. With the aid of a detective agency he found her in Munich, where she was the owner of a little boarding house she had bought for money he had sent her earlier. She was utterly worn out from her separation from him. Pankejev promised to marry her, and Therese accompanied him to Vienna. After more than 4 years in analysis with Freud, Pankejev left Vienna for Odessa a couple of weeks after June 28, 1914, the day the shot in Sarajevo killed the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, kindling the

spark that set off World War I. In spite of the outbreak of war, Therese managed to reach Odessa via Rumania and there the pair were married. For the next few years Pankejev tried to study law in Moscow, which at least from time to time freed Therese from the constant conflicts with her mother-in-law and the rest of the relatives.

The great historical events had little influence on Pankejev's life. The first World War had up to now taken place far from Odessa, but the fall of the Czar in March and the October Revolution in 1917 led to armed conflicts in the city. In the spring of 1918 German and Austrian troops marched into Odessa. Pankejev followed after his wife Therese who had gone to her seriously ill daughter in Munich. When he left the city Odessa was in the hands of the English and French. A few days after his departure the city was occupied by the Red Army. On the way to Munich he visited Freud in Vienna. Freud gave

him a signed copy of a volume of collected essays that included the newly published case history "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis." Freud recommended a short renewed analysis for "a piece of the transference which had not hitherto been overcome" (Freud 1918, p. 122). A few months later he began his second analysis with Freud. It lasted for 4 months, from November 1919 until February 1920. The symptom picture was dominated by a type of hysterical constipation from which he had previously suffered. The Wolf Man was now more or less destitute. "My reanalysis in 1919 took place not at my request, but at the wish of Professor Freud himself. When I explained to him that I could not pay for the treatment, he expressed his readiness to analyze me without remuneration," he writes in a 1970 letter in answer to Gardiner's questions (Gardiner 1971, p. 142n). This analysis was later followed by an analysis with Ruth Mack Brunswick, which, except for a few long intermissions, went on

from 1926 to 1938. In 1927, in Brunswick's waiting room, he met another of her analysands, Muriel Gardiner, who later became one of the Wolf Man's students of Russian language. She followed the trail of his fate in several publications, among them the book, *The Wolf-Man, by the Wolf-Man* (Gardiner 1971).

Pankejev could not return to the Soviet Union since he had missed his chance to save his fortune during the civil war. Destitute and stateless, he succeeded in finding employment in an insurance company, where he stayed up to his retirement in 1950 in an environment not too different from Kafka's. Once again the great events of world history seemed to pass him by. In connection with *Anschluss,* Hitler's march into Austria on March 11, 1938, by taking some risks, he saved tax documents of the *Psychoanalytischer Verlag* from falling into the hand of the Nazis (Obholzer 1982, p. 157). A

few days later his wife, Therese, committed suicide by turning on the gas jets, which he believed had to do with Hitler. Therese left a message for her husband, one line of which read, “Marry a decent woman and go to Sister” (Obholzer, p. 110). ‘The question kept hammering away in my mind: How could Therese do this to me?” the Wolf Man later recalled (Gardiner, p. 122).

Gardiner, an American citizen, helped him to get a Nansen passport for stateless people and a visa so that he could travel to Paris and London to seek help from his former analyst, Brunswick, then a refugee from Vienna on his way to the United States. This arrangement would not have been possible without assistance from Marie Bonaparte, the princess of Denmark and Greece. She was one of the people whose intervention saved Freud, some members of his immediate family, and a number of psychoanalysts of Jewish birth from the Holocaust.

Freud, who previously had not wanted to leave Vienna, gave in with the comment, “After the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by Titus, Rabbi Jochanan ben Sakkai asked for permission to open a school at Jabneh for the study of the Torah. We are going to do the same” (Jones 1957, p. 236). Freud died in London on September 23, 1939, after Max Schur had given him a morphine injection. Four of his siblings were gassed to death in concentration camps: his sisters Rosa, Marie, Adolfine, and Pauline, who did not receive permits to leave Austria. Pankejev’s own life story thus mingles with the winds of psychoanalysis and world history.

Pankejev visited Brunswick every day for a period of 6 weeks, first in Paris and later in London. Back in Vienna, he had arranged things so that his mother, who was living in Prague, could share an apartment with him and fill the void left by

Therese's death. They lived together for the years up to her death in 1953. He was very close to his mother, and in his letters to Gardiner (1971) he always spoke of "we," meaning by that his mother and himself (p. 335).

The Wolf Man told Gardiner that both Freud and others had been surprised that the change from living in unparalleled riches to enormous poverty had meant so little to him. He explained (p. 346): 'This was because it was simply something that happened to me.… I was not responsible for it. I did not have to worry whether I had done something wrong; I did not have to feel guilty. We Russians are like that." (He could just as well have said "we obsessionals.") In an addendum to the case history written in 1923, Freud (1918) makes this comment about the Wolf Man's state of mind after the analysis and World War I: "Since then the patient has felt normal and has behaved unexceptionably, in spite of

the war having robbed him of his home, his possessions, and all his family relationships. It may be that his very misery, by gratifying his sense of guilt, contributed to the consolidation of his recovery" (p. 122). This seems also to have been repeated during World War II. Gardiner (1971) observes that at the end of the war the Wolf Man was in relatively good physical health, and his mental state seemed to have been improved by the hardships of the war years, in spite of the fact that he and his mother almost died of hunger (p. 315).

During the Allied occupation of Vienna, in the summer of 1951, Pankejev managed to stray from the American sector into the Soviet sector and was arrested as he was painting a landscape (Gardiner 1971, p. 326, Obholzer 1982, pp. 160ff.). This parapraxis occurred on the anniversary of his sister's suicide (Mahony 1984, p. 17). He was suspected of being a spy and was interrogated. This triggered a

temporary paranoid reaction; he felt that he was under observation and was being shadowed, and against his better judgment he could not rid himself of an irrational idea that he was guilty of espionage. Painting was his favorite recreation and his greatest joy, though this did not at all mean that this pastime was free of conflict for him. For long periods he suffered from a contracture of his right hand that made it impossible for him to practice his art and avail himself of the only channel for sublimation that was accessible to him. For him painting seems to have been a sexualized occupation, that is, a way to continue observing his parents' union in the primal scene. In a letter to Gardiner (1971) he wrote, "Nothing…can be of greater value to a young person than a love of nature and understanding of natural science, particularly animals. Animals played a large part in my childhood also. In my case they were wolves" (p. 316).

Freud as Detective

The 23-year-old man who went down in history as the Wolf Man began his analysis with Freud in January 1910. It was initiated in a clinic in Vienna where the Wolf Man was at first staying. He was then, according to the oft-told version, so handicapped by his anxiety and his phobias, so unfit for life, that he even needed help to get dressed. In a letter to Ferenczi, Freud wrote, "As a consequence of your impressive exhortation to allow myself some rest, I have taken on a new patient from Odessa, a very rich Russian with compulsive feelings" (Freud and Ferenczi 1993, p. 133, Gay 1988, p. 304). The analysis then continued in Freud's consulting room at Berggasse 19, three work rooms crammed with antique figurines, objects from excavations, and archeological literature. Sometimes this address has been compared with another, a fictional address, 221B Baker Street. From a literary standpoint, Sherlock Holmes' accounts of the crimes he solved

is scarcely superior to Freud's case histories. For both of them it proves to be the seemingly insignificant things, details overlooked by others, which eventually betray an unexpected, hidden connection. In both cases the history develops along a spiral running from provisional hypotheses through false clues to new hypotheses, until all the details fall into place to form a whole. In 1952 the Wolf Man looks back on his time with Freud:

> Once we happened to speak of Conan Doyle and his creation, Sherlock Holmes. I had thought that Freud would have no use for this type of light reading matter, and was surprised to find that this was not at all the case and that Freud had read this author attentively. The fact that circumstantial evidence is useful in psychoanalysis when reconstructing a childhood history may explain Freud's interest in this type of literature. [Gardiner 1971, p. 146]

The Wolf Man, well acquainted with literature, further points out that Sherlock Holmes's spiritual

father was Edgar Allan Poe's Monsieur Dupin. He does not omit mention of Marie Bonaparte's psychoanalytical study of Poe, emphasizing that Dupin was endowed by his creator with an unerring "analytical gift" of "arriving at the most extraordinary conclusions by means of exact observation of human behavior and weighing all the circumstances" (1971, p. 146f).

Some Peculiarities of the Case

The first analysis with Freud lasted for 4 years and 4 months, which was a long time in those years. Probably the Wolf Man's analysis is the longest one Freud ever carried out. The case was reported by Freud in his essay "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," written in the autumn of 1914 from notes made during the course of the analysis and not published until 1918. Despite the patient's explicit request, Freud refrained from giving a complete report of the patient's illness in his adult years, his

treatment, and his recovery. His case history concerns an infantile neurosis that was not analyzed while it was actually in progress, but two decades later. One of the purposes of Freud's case history was to collect clinical arguments for his polemic with Jung and Adler, who denied the importance of child sexuality in the formation of neuroses. Another of his goals was related to psychoanalytical research: a study of a single case, done "in depth," could give us all information about the human psyche's driving forces—"if we were only in a position to make everything out," Freud declares (1918, p. 10). The reason that the Wolf Man's case was so interesting to psychoanalytical research was the same that caused Freud to wait 4 years to make his investigation public: "Many details, however, seemed to me myself to be so extraordinary and incredible that I felt some hesitation in asking other people to believe them" (1918, p. 12). Detective stories often begin this way. Toward the end of his account Freud

writes: ‘The description of such early phases and of such deep strata of mental life has been a task which has never before been attacked” (1918, p. 104).

Another peculiarity that distinguishes this analysis is that Freud made use of such an un-analytic intervention as to resort to “the heroic measure of fixing a time-limit” (1937a, p. 217), that is, setting a date for the termination of the treatment. If the psychoanalytical process is to develop and have an influence, the analyst needs to refrain from short-term therapeutic ambitions. But what should be done when the patient shows signs of what we today call a negative therapeutic reaction? For a long time the Wolf Man was entrenched behind an attitude of obliging apathy. Every time something was cleared up, the patient responded by a worsening of the symptoms that had just been clarified. Freud, who often compared psychoanalysis with a chess game, prepared his move carefully. He

waited until the Wolf Man's attachment to him was so strong that it could counterbalance his reluctance to take up an independent existence, and then he played the one factor against the other (1918, p. 11). He fixed the date for the end of the treatment for the summer holiday, 1914, regardless of how far the analysis had advanced by that time. When the patient finally realized that Freud was serious, he gave up his fixation to his illness. In a disproportionately short time the analysis provided all the material necessary to clear up his inhibitions and remove his symptoms. When the time came for "the heroic measure of fixing a time limit" to be put into effect, Freud considered the Wolf Man cured.

According to the Wolf Man, Freud told him that a present in connection with the last session might make feelings of gratitude less strong. The Wolf Man gave him an antique Egyptian statue of a princess. Freud also said that one can be well after

analysis, but that one must want to become well. “It’s like a ticket one buys. The ticket gives one the possibility to travel. But I am not obliged to travel. It depends on me, on my decision” (Obholzer 1982, pp. 42ff; the same description is given by the Wolf Man in Gardiner 1971, p. 148).

The First Presentation of the Case

The case history begins with the character change that began when the boy was 3½ years old, and his parents were away on a summer holiday. Up to then the Wolf Man had been a good-natured, accommodating, quiet child. It was often said of him that he should have been the girl and his elder sister the boy. When his parents returned to the estate they found him transformed: he had become discontented, irritable, and violent. At the slightest offence he could scream like a savage. He tormented both animals and humans, and was in general demanding and provocative. His frightening and

sexually exciting masturbation fantasies included punishments by blows on his penis. His mother ascribed the transformation to the influence of the new English governess, but according to Freud the aggressivity was a reaction to castration anxiety. It was actually a form of masochistic provocation aimed at evoking a punishment consisting of being beaten on his bottom. He longed to be beaten by his father and tried to bring on corporal punishment by screaming and exhibiting generally insufferable behavior.

A new change occurred with the wolf dream on the night before Christmas Eve, 1890, his fourth birthday. The sadism toward animals decreased, and he developed an animal phobia centering around wolves, but also small animals like butterflies, which he had formerly tortured. He was terrified and disgusted by beetles and caterpillars, even though he still tortured beetles and cut caterpillars into pieces.

If he saw a horse being beaten he began to scream, but on other occasions enjoyed beating horses himself.

The next phase in the boy's development started when he was 4½ years old, and both his mother and Nyanya began his religious education. His earlier animal phobia was now replaced by a compulsive piety. Before he went to bed he was compelled to say the "Our Father," make the Sign of the Cross, and kiss all the icons hanging in the room. The Wolf Man, born on Christmas Eve, identified with Jesus' suffering. He puzzled over whether Jesus had a bottom and had to defecate, who his father was, and how a father could let his son be crucified. He smuggled with compulsive ideas like "God-swine," "God-shit," and developed compulsive rituals during which he inhaled or exhaled deeply when he made the Sign of the Cross so as to take in or throw out the Holy Spirit. His Nyanya had earlier been

accustomed to saying that he was his father's boy and his sister his mother's little girl, which made him very happy. But gradually the boy noticed that his father favored his sister more and more. Fear of his father replaced his earlier feeling of being his father's chosen son.

Shortly before his fifth birthday the Wolf Man had a hallucinatory experience. When he told Freud about it, he was firmly convinced that he had already talked about it. He believed he had cut off his little finger with a pocket knife he had received as a present, and he saw it hanging on by only a strip of skin. When Freud (1918) describes this, he asks in parentheses: Was it the right hand or the left? (p. 85).

This period of compulsive piety came to an end upon the arrival of his first male tutor, Alexander Dick, of Dutch extraction, when he was between the ages of 8 and 10. Thanks to Alexander Dick's successor, the Austrian Herr Riedel, the Wolf Man

became interested in the military. Through his friendship with his new teachers and his newly awakened interest in the masculine world, he was able to find a channel for sublimating his previous conflictual love for his father. In his teens he liked big-bottomed servant girls. He also made an advance toward his sister, trying to put into action his fantasy of undressing her, but was rebuffed. From his fifteenth year he was able to hide his passive homosexual desires behind intensive sexual relations with servant girls and a better type of prostitutes.

When at 18 he was infected by gonorrhea, his castration anxiety was activated, and his repressed homosexuality returned, accompanied by a paralyzing passivity—and so his adult neurosis made its debut. In interviews with Obholzer (1982, pp. 28-29) the Wolf Man said that earlier in his life he had also had bad luck with his penis. When he was 8 years old, he was bitten by a tick, and his male

member reddened and swelled; a servant removed the tick “in some way.” At the age of 15 there were new problems with itching, reddening, and swelling. His father said it must be gonorrhea but it turned out to be a harmless infection.

After presenting the case to us, Freud (1918) formulates “the riddles for which the analysis had to find a solution. What was the origin of the sudden change in the boy’s character? What was the significance of his phobia and of his perversities? How did he arrive at his obsessive piety? And how are all these phenomena interrelated?” (p. 17). These questions will soon prove to be only preliminary. As with every preliminary investigation, new and unexpected questions turn up during the course of the task. The case we are to solve will be about something completely different than we thought. A masterful story teller, Freud can keep us in suspense

all way to the last footnote on the last page of the story.

The Preliminary Solution of the Riddle: Seduction and Its Immediate Sequels

The culprit in the case of the boy's transformation seemed to be the English governess, Miss Owen. High strung and quarrelsome, she drank and was involved in repeated conflicts with the boy's beloved Nyanya. But there was something that did not add up. A number of the patient's memories might be interpreted as signs that the governess had made castration threats to him, and that this had fateful consequences: his character change and abnormal development. It is not at all dangerous to give the patient constructions of this kind, even if they should prove to be inaccurate, Freud assures us. This first hypothetical interpretation resulted in a series of dreams, seemingly centering around the same theme, that is, aggressive acts against the

governess and his sister, and severe punishments for them. Was the construction correct? Repetitions of these dreams and their vague nature, which was not affected by the analysis as it continued, was according to Freud evidence that they were not genuine memories but rather pubertal fantasies of childhood, which now emerged in the form of dreams. But where then did these teen-age fantasies come from?

The explanation came when the patient began to remember how his sister, more than 2 years older than he, tried to seduce him. He was then 3 years and 3 months old. His first memory was fairly innocent. The children were on the toilet when his sister suggested, “Let’s show our bottoms.” Later another scene came to light with more details as to time and place. They were playing on the floor when she took hold of his penis and began playing with it. At the same time she told him that Nyanya did the

same thing with all kinds of people, for example, that she used to stand the gardener on his head and then take hold of his genitals. The scenes with his sister occurred repeatedly, and the credibility of these memories was confirmed by a cousin who was 10 years older. In these memories the boy was the one seduced. This laid the foundation for his predominant passive sexual goal: to have his penis touched. But in the boy's teen-age fantasies it was, on the contrary, he who was aggressive, trying to undress his sister and being punished for his advances. The fantasies had an important function, that is, to transform into its opposite the passive role he had really played with his sister. Here Freud (1918) takes a leap that is characteristic of his style, a jump from the most private to the general, from the intimate secrets of the individual to the political scene: 'These fantasies, therefore, corresponded exactly to the legends by means of which a nation

that has become great and proud tries to conceal the insignificance and failure of its beginnings" (p. 20).

Now we have come to the second hypothetical answer: It is not the English governess but the sister who has had been of crucial importance in the change in the boy's character. His sister was a boyish, headstrong, over-endowed girl who gradually developed signs of incipient schizophrenia and committed suicide when she was in her twenties. In the boy's mind, his sister, with her inconsiderate superiority, won the competition for his father's favor. From then on, all the women he fell in love with were both socially and intellectually inferior to him, often prostitutes. As the Wolf Man, toward the end of his life, told Obholzer, they had to be *not* sisters, and preferably should accept payment. The patient told Freud that he did not feel the least grief after his sister's suicide. A few months later, however, he journeyed to the same sections of the

Caucasus and burst into tears on Lermontov's grave (Halpert 1980). Lermontov, one of Russia's greatest poets (of Scottish descent, with the family name Leermond), was shot in a duel at the same age Anna was when she took her life.

After his seduction by his sister, the boy made an effort to seduce someone himself in order to satisfy his passive desire to be touched on the penis. His choice fell on his beloved Nyanya, who according to his sister's tales had done such incredible things with the gardener. He began playing with his penis in her presence but was rebuffed and heard that children who did this got wounds in that place. Shortly thereafter he stopped masturbating. His first advances to women ended with retreat and the threat of castration. The boy soon started the sexual inquiries that led Freud to call him "a thinker of the first rank." He watched his sister and her friend when they were urinating. He denied the

confirmation he received of the "wound" Nyanya had frightened him with and persuaded himself that he had seen the girls' "front bottom." The discovery, or rather the rediscovery, of sex differences aroused fears that there was a chance of losing his penis. He found new allusions to castration everywhere but he refused to believe in this possibility.

The change in his character may now be described as a retreat. The boy's sexual life, in which genital interests were beginning to be predominant, gave way to external obstacles and was thrown back to an earlier, anal-sadistic organization. This retained its dominant position for the rest of the Wolf Man's life, decades after the analysis with Freud. The boy enjoyed torturing both animals and humans, especially his Nyanya, previously so beloved. At the earlier stage he had tried to emulate his father, seeking sexual gratification with women. After Nyanya's castration threat his father become the

object of the boy's passive sexual desires and he identified with his mother. The passive attitude toward women was replaced by a passive attitude toward men. The boy's fits of rage after his parents' homecoming had a masochistic goal: he was trying to get his father to punish and beat him. His screaming fits were simply an effort at seduction. Here Freud (1918) cautions us, as parents and teachers, to bear this typical state of affairs in mind: naughty children hope to be punished so as to be released from their guilt feelings and at the same time satisfy their masochistic sexual desires (p. 28). The Wolf Man's struggle between hetero- and homosexual feelings, between identification with his father's masculinity and identification with the woman his father might love—all this was discernible in his obsessional neurosis and in his confusion about God.

The Wolf Man and the Primal Scene

Nevertheless, the case is far from solved. How did the boy's phobia come about between the time of his character change and the time of the obsessional neurosis? We find the answer in the dream the boy had on the night before Christmas Eve, his fourth birthday. The boy awoke from his dream full of anxiety. But the dream proves also to contain answers to questions we up to now could not even ask. Except for Freud's own so-called "Irma-dream," this is one of the most famous dreams in psychoanalysis:

> I dreamed that it was night and that I was lying in my bed. (My bed stood with its foot towards the window; in front of the window there was a row of old walnut trees. I know it was winter when I had the dream, and night-time.) Suddenly the window opened of its own accord, and I was terrified to see that some white wolves were sitting on the big walnut tree in front of the window. There were six or seven of them. The wolves were quite white, and looked more like foxes or sheep-dogs, for they had big tails like foxes and they had their ears pricked

> like dogs when they pay attention to something. In great terror, evidently of being eaten up by the wolves, I screamed and woke up. [p. 29]

One of the patient's reflections about the dream 20 years later involved his sister, who used to frighten him with an illustration from a story book. A threatening wolf is standing on his rear legs ready to eat up Little Red Riding Hood. Freud commented that the illustration can not possibly come from the story of "Little Red Riding Hood" but must come from another, that of 'The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats." The wolf only ate up six of the little goats, for the seventh hid in a clock case. From this comes the vagueness about whether there were six or seven wolves in the dream. The wolves in the tree reminded him of the tailor who pulled off the tail of a wolf. The tree was a Christmas tree and the wolves on both sides a double set of Christmas presents. But why are there only five wolves on the drawing he enclosed with his account? (See Figure 7-1.)

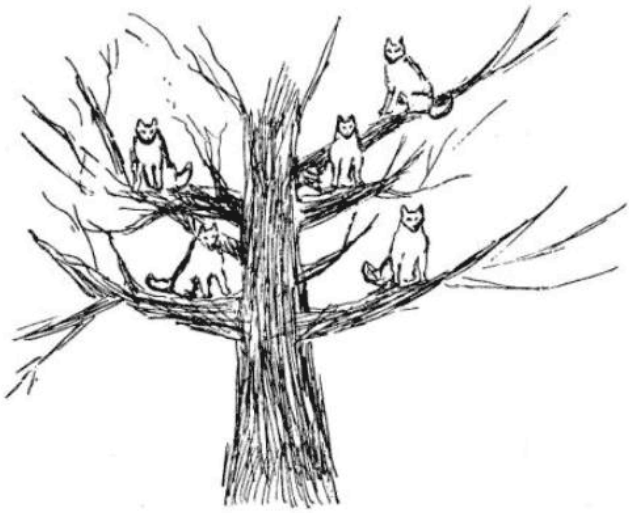

Figure 7—1.

What made the strongest impression on the patient was that the wolves were completely quiet and motionless, with their attention riveted on him. The dream left behind a lasting sense of reality. The sense of reality indicates that it refers to an occurrence that really took place and was not just imagined. We asked how the boy's anxiety and phobia came about, but we really got an answer to a question we had not at all asked. Up to this point

Freud is able to reconstruct the following fragment: "A *real occurrence— dating from a very early period—looking—immobility—sexual problems—castration—his father—something terrible"* (p. 34).

What remains is to fill in the gaps (*Lücken*) between these fragments. From the first to the last of his writings, Freud keeps coming back to this simple idea, which is unexpectedly profound: both our knowledge of the unconscious and our knowledge of the real are possible only through our hypothetical efforts to fill in the gaps in what is at hand and taken for granted. When detective Freud ties together all the clues and solves the case, he writes: "I have now reached the point at which I must abandon the support I have hitherto had from the course of the analysis. I am afraid it will also be the point at which the reader's belief will abandon me" (p. 36). I share this fear. It took Freud more than 4 years of analysis to arrive at the "translation" of the dream that I have

here reconstructed from his text. “It is always a strict law of dream interpretation that an explanation must be found for every detail,” Freud claims.

> I had been asleep. Suddenly I woke up of my own accord and opened my eyes. It was a warm summer day at five o’clock in the afternoon. With strained attention I saw my parents’ violent movements in intercourse. They were half undressed, in white underclothing, my mother on all fours and my father leaning over her from behind. I saw my father’s penis disappear, re-emerge and disappear again between my mother’s legs. It is only now that I understand both this cavity and the disappearance of the penis; as this confirms the results of my later sexual inquiries, I admit what I refused to believe in for such a long time: “Castration really exists.” Sometimes I still refuse to believe in it and then I conclude that my father was performing anal coitus. It was an act of violence but my mother’s face expressed enjoyment. I do not know who did what with whom, who castrated whom. But they did it three times. I became excited in a way I did not identify and was not able to deal with. This excitement felt strongest in the anus. At last I interrupted my parents’ union by

> emptying my bowels, which gave me a reason to scream. This "gift" to my parents two and a half years before I dreamed the dream is associated with my actual wish that night, "the night before Christmas," to receive a double set of presents when I woke up. Under the decorated Christmas tree I hoped to find both birthday gifts and Christmas presents. It is also the child I would like to give my father.

Monumental detective work resulted in the reconstruction[2] not only of the primal scene but also of all the details around it. The boy was then 1½ years old and suffering from malaria. The attacks usually came on at five o'clock in the afternoon, the time of day when the depressions in his later life usually culminated. The patient also drew five wolves on his picture of the dream, although he mentioned that there were six or seven. He had slept in his crib in his parents' room and awakened, probably because of his rising temperature. It was a warm summer day and his parents were half undressed, explaining the white color in the dream.

The boy was a witness to a coitus from the rear repeated three times in half an hour. Three times was the patient's own spontaneous association. The father's upright and the mother's bent over, animal-like position reminded him of the picture from the story book of a wolf standing upright that his sister used to frighten him with. The wolf he feared was undoubtedly his father.

Among the desires that gave rise to the dream, the most powerful was that of a woman anally accepting proof of his father's love. This desire was so strong that it re-awakened a repressed memory of having witnessed his parents' coitus 2½ years previously, and in the dream this in its turn made the boy understand the price of being sexually gratified by his father. The result was anxiety and terror at the prospect of the fulfillment of this wish. This led to the fear of being eaten up by the wolf. It is possible even earlier to find clues in the boy's refusal to eat

and in his cannibalistic fantasies. In the patient's lifelong constipation, the anus remained the overcharged source of forbidden and frightening homosexual enjoyment. All of his life the required condition for intercourse was that the woman took the same position as the mother in the primal scene. The boy's animal fantasies were his way of dealing with the threat of castration from his father, which accompanied his now advanced passive homosexual tendency. "It is only at this point, I think, that we can regard the anxiety dream of this four-year-old boy as being exhaustively explained" (p. 42). But he adds later: The exposure to the primal scene subjected the boy to a massive overstimulation and he answered by emptying his bowels and screaming. In this action he unites two opposing tendencies: he is castrated, and he gives his father a child. Not a single detail in the dream and not a single detail in the reconstruction may be left to chance. In our hidden psychic lives there are no coincidences.

In an addendum to his discussion of the case, written before publication and 4 years after the original paper, and in a footnote, Freud also tests (pp. 60, 62) alternative reconstructions of the primal scene. He experiments with placing it earlier, to the age of 6 months, or later, just before the boy's fourth birthday. We get no definite answer and have to be satisfied with the formula X+6, but probably one and a half. The discussion of the question of whether the primal scene was at all a real occurrence or only a later fantasy is concluded with the provisional judgment *non liquet* (it is not clear). But it does not affect the outcome. The primal scene activated by the dream acted as a new seduction, a new trauma.

Infantile Obsessional Neurosis

The focal point of the case history is the infantile neurosis, the boy's obsessional neurosis after the period of his animal phobia, which lasted from 4½ until he was in his tenth year. Except for compulsive

acts consisting of praying, kissing pictures of saints, saying certain words, and so on, the infantile neurosis was characterized by "the little critic's objections and doubts" (p. 62). He brooded over God the Father's responsibility for all the evils and torments of the world; he wondered if Jesus also had a bottom and had to defecate. The boy's breathing ceremonies had to do not only with "spiration" but were also a reminder of his parents' intense breathing in the primal scene (in Russian *dyshat* means breathe and *dusha* soul, spirit). His earlier masturbation fantasies of punishments remained, and he fantasized compulsively about the seduction by his sister. The intensive ambivalence toward his father that the boy evidenced in his obsessional neurosis is an underlying factor in all religions, Freud (1918, p. 65) states in a fresh leap from individual disturbance to the cultural heritage of mankind.

The crystallization of the obsessional neurosis did not result in the disappearance of all the other tendencies. Sadistic, masochistic, and phobic tendencies continued to exist side by side with the new compulsive ones. The picture becomes more and more complicated. The dream and the revival of the primal scene might have changed his masochistic attitude to his father to manifest homosexuality. But the dream did not bring about this advance and ended in anxiety—a clear sign of a failure of the boy's effort to find a solution to the conflict. The threat of castration and his wounded masculinity, that is, the narcissistic factor, prevented homosexual development, and he regressed still farther back, to the oral phase, with the fear of being eaten by the wolf as a consequence.

The obsessional neurotic symptoms disappeared when he was 10 years old. Under the influence of the new Austrian tutor he became enamored of the

military life and daydreamed of uniforms, weapons, and horses. He was temporarily free from his passive attitude, and his development up to the time of the gonorrhea was rather normal. Throughout his life he retained a predilection for what was German and represented his father. But the infantile neurosis left serious, lasting traces. The "thinker of the first rank" and the "gifted critic" never found his way back to his previous acumen and thirst for knowledge. All through life his intellectual activity was restricted because of the curtailment of his sexual inquiries and homosexual tendencies, both of which contributed to the obsessional neurosis. The anal fixation remained, showing up in the adult patient's ambivalent relationship to money and in his chronic bowel problems and constipation. In the wolf dream the boy identified with his mother through the anus, and he developed the "anal theory" of coitus peculiar to all children. Emptying his bowels was to him both castration and childbirth, an act in which he both lost

his penis and gave his father a child. Even if this seems like a contradiction of our everyday common sense, we must not forget that there are no logical inconsistencies in the unconscious. Nevertheless, the unconscious is not chaos but is guided by specific indispensabilities and is very rigorously structured. It was just this conformity to the law of the unconscious that made Freud include the "final squeeze" in his construction of the boy's primal scene.

The Last Piece of the Puzzle—the *Grusha* Episode

It was not until the final phase of the analysis that the memory turned up that was the last piece of the puzzle and that led to what Freud himself called the "solution" of the case. Even at the very beginning of his analysis the patient told of how as a boy he hunted butterflies with large wings (*Schwalbenschwanz*, swallow-tail). When the

butterfly landed on a flower, the boy was frightened and ran screaming from the place. In Russian a butterfly is *babushka,* and the same word usually means granny. Much later he associated the opening and closing of a butterfly's wings with a woman spreading her legs so that they form a Roman numeral five, V. (Do you remember the five wolves on the drawing and Freud's reconstruction of the primal scene—five o'clock?) One day he began to remember that he must have had a nanny before Nyanya's time, and he believed that she had the same name as his mother. On a later occasion the word *pear* occurred to him, *grusha* in Russian, with the same yellow stripes as on the wings of a butterfly. This was also the nanny's name. It can be worth remembering that in the Wolf Man Freud had an analysand whose native tongue was not German. Just as in *The Interpretation of Dreams,* the linguistic connections are an important part of

Freud's detective work, as here: butterfly—babushka —granny—pear—*Grusha*.

The association to a Roman numeral five was explained when a new memory fragment emerged: Grusha on all fours on the floor with a pail beside her. This led to a reconstruction of an episode from the time when he was 2½, a reconstruction that this time could be confirmed by the patient. When from the rear the boy saw Grusha scrubbing the floor, he became so sexually excited that he urinated on the floor and she had, "no doubt jokingly," told him that boys who wet themselves get their penises cut off. Now we have the missing link between the primal scene and the Wolf Man's love for girls of humble origin and for intercourse from the rear. Grusha was a mother to him, and her position on the floor reminded him of his mother's position during the copulation scene. His urinating was a seduction effort, and Grusha replied with a threat of castration,

as if she unconsciously understood what he meant. In the scene with Grusha, the boy was imitating his father, giving proof of an active masculine tendency. This is the active position from which the boy retired after the seduction by his sister and after the scene with Nyanya.

The last piece of the puzzle also includes a solution of an another riddle: The Wolf Man's real identity. He dreamed about a man who pulled the wings off an *Espe,* he told Freud, explaining that he meant an insect with yellow stripes that stings. That must be an allusion to the yellow-striped pear, *Grusha,* he thought. *Wespe,* wasp in German, Freud guessed, meaning that the Wolf Man, like many others, was using his language difficulties to hide his symptomatic acts. "But *Espe,* why, that's myself, S. P.," answered the Wolf Man (Sergej Pankejev). *"Espe* was, of course, a mutilated *Wespe*," declared Freud (p. 94).

The Solution of the Case

The case history bears the tide "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis." Freud leaves nothing to chance in this tide. The focus is on infantile neurosis. The solution of the case illustrates Freud's main thesis in this essay: "I am ready to assert that every neurosis in an adult is built upon a neurosis which has occurred in his childhood but has not invariably been severe enough to strike the eye and be recognized as such" (1918, p. 99). The analysis is not over nor the case solved until all the pieces have fallen into place and every detail has an explanation. But the connections are so complicated and the interacting factors so numerous and difficult to access that we always have to be satisfied with fragmentary information. This explains the limitation in the title: "*From* the History…" Behind the preposition "from," the earliest phases and the deepest strata of the patient's mental life are concealed. Infantile obsessional neurosis had an

even earlier forerunner in the cannabalistic, oral phase, that is, in the boy's antipathy for sex expressed in his refusal to eat during the period when he ate only sweets. Even this early, in connection with the analysis of the wolf dream, Freud (p. 32) established that the father used "affectionate abuse," probably of the oft recurring type like "I'll gobble you up." The adult patient repeated this actively in the transference. He threatened his analyst with ill-treatment, which Freud (pp. 106-107) interpreted as "an expression of affection," that is, as a declaration of love. In this connection Freud notes typical traces of this early oral sexuality in our language usage—for example, we say that someone is "appetizing" or "sweet."

We now have a clear picture of the Wolf Man's childhood disturbance, from his refusal to eat through his wolf phobia to the compulsive piety with its complicated structure, including a predominant

masochistic, repressed homosexual tendency. But why did his adult neurosis make its debut in connection with a gonorrhea infection when the patient was 18 years old? Here we have to take into consideration the contribution of his wounded self-love, of narcissism. In the final stages of the analysis the patient said that he—like Napoleon, but also Freud—had been born with a caul, that is, parts of the fetus membrane covered his skull. He had as a result always thought of himself as a child of fortune whom no ill could befall. This conviction collapsed with the gonorrhea, with which he was infected by a prostitute named Matrona, a name with a clear motherly ring to it (p. 118): "He broke down after an organic affection of the genitals had revived his fear of castration, shattered his narcissism, and compelled him to abandon his hope of being personally favoured by destiny. He fell ill, therefore, as the result of a *narcissistic* 'frustration.'"

An associative detour through the caul, the fetus membrane, which bursts; the fantasy of returning to the womb and rebirth through the anus; and more: child, excrement, constipation, and enemas lead Freud (pp. 100-101) to a translation of the patient's own ideas about what might make him healthy: "[O]nly on condition that he took the woman's place and substituted himself for his mother, and thus let himself be sexually satisfied by his father and bore him a child—only on that condition would his illness leave him.… The primal scene had become transformed into the necessary condition for his recovery." The solution of the case brings us back to the Wolf Man's opening move during the first analysis session, when he fantasized taking Freud from behind and defecating on his head. In a modern translation, Freud's line of reasoning might sound like this: In order to surmount his obsessional neurosis, depression, passivity, and masochism, the Wolf Man symbolically has to take in his father's

penis and the strength it can provide without fearing homosexuality and castration. Further, he has to accept his parents' union in the primal scene without trying to keep them apart and without feeling outraged by being left out.

This is what the Wolf Man refused to do with Freud. The result of his obstinate refusal has become a life neurosis. Through the whole of his adult life this man continued to battle the same childhood conflicts, developing new variants of old symptoms, even though they were no longer as invalidizing: constipation, demand for financial help from psychoanalysts/father representatives, charges against women for taking away his money, intensive ambivalence in all his relationships.

In his later work Freud returns innumerable times to the case of the Wolf Man, searching out gaps in the material, convinced as usual that it is only through gaps in what is already known that we

can reach new knowledge. In "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" Freud discusses (1937a) the possibilities of shortening the psychoanalytical treatment and describes how he resorted to "the heroic measure of fixing a time limit" with his Russian patient. His success seemed to be beyond question:

> His resistances shrank up, and in these last months of his treatment he was able to reproduce all the memories and to discover all the connections which seemed necessary for understanding his early neurosis and mastering his present one. When he left me in the midsummer of 1914, with as little suspicion as the rest of us of what lay so shortly ahead, I believed that his cure was radical and permanent. [p. 217]

This was not the case, however, and Freud had reason to revise his judgment of the case repeatedly. Freud's own verdict on the fixed term's "heroic measure" was hard (1937a, p. 218). "But it cannot guarantee to accomplish the task completely. On the

contrary, we may be sure that, while part of the material will become accessible under the pressure of the threat, another part will be kept back and thus become buried, as it were, and lost to our therapeutic efforts." When Freud wrote this his second analysis with the Wolf Man was behind him, carried out for a 4-month period in the winter of 1919-1920 for a "a part of the transference which had not been resolved." He also was well acquainted with the two analyses his patient had undergone with his patient and pupil, Ruth Mack Brunswick.

Part II

Some Main Themes in Psychoanalysis

Carl Gustav Jung and Alfred Adler had criticized Freud's view of the significance of infantile sexuality. According to Jung, the child has no sexuality, and alleged infantile sexuality is a product of *Zurückphantasieren,* a later fantasy projected backwards in time. Adler's point of view was that the child's early instinctive impulses are not sexual but are of an aggressive and egoistic nature. Freud denied neither the effects of retroactive fantasizing nor the role of hate in the experiences of the child, but he regarded these new interpretations of psychoanalysis as simplified versions that took a single aspect into consideration at the expense of all the others, which is "the easiest method of repelling the revolutionary and inconvenient advances of

psycho-analysis." Over the years Freud's warning is rather more than less up to date:

> From a highly composite combination one part of the operative factors is singled out and proclaimed as the truth; and in its favour the other part, together with the whole combination, is then contradicted. If we look a little closer, to see which group of factors it is that has been given the preference, we shall find that it is the one that contains material already known from other sources or what can be most easily related to that material…. What is left over, however, and rejected as false, is precisely what is new in psycho-analysis and peculiar to it. [Freud 1918, p. 53]

Freud wrote of the case of the Wolf Man in order to gather clinical evidence in this controversy. His main point is that a neurosis in an adult always has its roots in early experiences of childhood, regardless of whether it deals with actual events or with fantasies, with constitutional factors, or environmental influences, and regardless of what distortions and

revisions of these infantile experiences have occurred later in life.

The Infantile Neurosis and the Phylogenetic Inheritance

The study of the Wolf Man illustrates the connection between early traumatic experiences, the later advanced infantile neurosis, and its new version in adult years. Typical are two periods when there are no visible signs of disturbance, which is preserved in a state of "deep-freeze": one between the first reaction to trauma and the development of the infantile neurosis, and one between the infantile neurosis and the adult neurosis. Periods of visible illness, both in childhood and later, may be regarded as failed efforts at self-cure, as the ego's attempt to assimilate the parts of the ego which were split off under the influence of the trauma (Freud 1939, pp. 77ff.).

In his later addendum to the case history, Freud reverts to his own public lectures, especially lecture XXIII. This lecture, which was held sometime in the winter of 1916-1917, deals with symptom formation and is based mainly on the case of the Wolf Man. This is a perfect example of the uninterrupted dialogue Freud carried on with himself through his writings, both those already completed and those planned. Even the composition of the original case history builds on references to earlier and later passages, Chinese boxes within each other (or perhaps rather the Russian *babushka)* where ever-deeper strata are revealed. All the inconsistencies and contradictions in Freud's writing, ferreted out with a detective's precision by Mahony (1984), really amount only to a picture of the complicated, often contradictory connections that in the unconscious link various fantasies from different epochs with each other. The various stratifications form a clear pattern of separate layers broken now

and then by ruptures where old and new are mixed together.

Now it is time to ask the eternal question: Are neuroses the inevitable consequence of a certain predisposition, or are they evoked by injurious traumatic experiences? I am sure that you yourselves can guess Freud's (1916-1917) answer in Lecture xxii: "This dilemma seems to me no more sensible on the whole than another that I might put to you: Does a baby come about through being begotten by its father or conceived by its mother? Both determinants are equally indispensable, as you will justly reply" (p. 347). The predisposing factors and the early experiences form what Freud calls "complemental series."

In the following lecture Freud (pp. 362-363) makes clear that the origin of neurosis can be found in the interplay among three factors, that is, prehistoric experience, early fixations in childhood,

and traumatic experiences and frustrations. The case of the Wolf Man may be regarded as an orchestration with variations on these simple musical themes. The Wolf Man's libido is not only bound to his early sexual childhood experiences but also to prehistoric experiences that he shares with the whole human family. Freud, a great admirer of Darwin and his doctrine of the struggle for existence as the motor in evolution, here proves to be a follower of Lamarck's hypothesis of heredity, that acquired characteristics can be inherited. Even as early as Freud's time lamarckism was regarded as unscientific. In its studies of evolution in viruses, the microbiology of today reverts to Freud's complemental series, the two complementary development mechanisms: selection of the strongest individuals and the ability to transfer to the next generations characteristics that have arisen as the result of spontaneous mutations in DNA.

Why did Freud need this theory? His idea was that the development of the individual occurs against a phylogenetic background and is "at bottom heritages, abbreviated recapitulations of the development which all mankind has passed through from its primaeval days over long periods of time" (p. 354). The psychic content of primal fantasies may be inherited. Freud needed this theory of evolution to answer another pivotal question: Is it actual events or is it the child's fantasies that lead to the formation of symptoms and neurosis? If you now forget or put between parentheses everything you know about the rather recent modern debate about incest and about Freud's "betrayal of the truth," you can surely reconstruct for yourselves Freud's (p. 367) answer: "But neither of these things is the case: the position can be shown to be that the childhood experiences constructed or remembered in analysis are sometimes indisputably false and sometimes equally certainly correct, and in most case

compounded of truth and falsehood." Even though it "will be a long time before he [the patient] can take in our proposal," the solution is (p. 368) "that we should equate phantasy and reality and not bother to begin with whether the childhood experiences under examination are the one or the other."

In the origin of neurosis, fantasies can play the same role in causing illness as real trauma: 'The phantasies possess *psychical* as contrasted with *material* reality, and we gradually learn to understand that *in the world of neuroses it is psychical reality which is the decisive kind*' (p. 368). Now not all fantasies are alike. What Freud is talking about is primal fantasies.

The Primal Scene and Primal Fantasies

Freud's first formulation of the primal scene comes in the case of Katharina in *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer and Freud 1895, pp. 125-134), in

the correspondence with his friend Wilhelm Fliess (Masson 1985, pp. 238-242), in "The Interpretation of Dreams" (Freud 1900) and in the case of Dora (Freud 1905b), and then plays a leading role in the reconstruction of the Wolf Man's infantile neurosis.

Freud's detailed reconstruction of the primal scene in the Wolf Man is the most famous reconstruction in psychoanalysis. However, Freud described not only his finding but also his doubts and his uncertainty about several formulations. The reconstruction did not lead to the elimination of the Wolf Man's forgetfulness of his childhood, but it did include such details as the seasons, the weather, the time, his parents' clothes, the position of the copulation, the child's state. In his reconstruction of this event, which had occurred when the Wolf Man was 18 months old, Freud's starting point was the nightmare about the wolves when he was 4, as it was told by the Wolf Man when he was 23 years old.

Freud tried to place the primal scene even earlier, to the age of 6 months, but rejected this dating as impossible. He gave consideration to whether it might not be a matter of universal phylogenetically inherited memories, which thus would not require the concrete experience of really witnessing his parents' coitus. He defended the legitimacy of the idea of primal fantasies founded on inherited memories at the same time as he, despite all his doubts, rejected primal fantasies as sufficient explanation for all the data he had gathered. He discussed the possibility that it concerned a case of retroactive trauma, so that the child understood the primal scene afterwards, in connection with the wolf dream he had the night before Christmas Eve and his fourth birthday, and that the experience only acquired its traumatic consequences later on. In addition, he called attention to the role later fantasies may have played for the consequences of the primal scene for the Wolf Man. Both retrospective

fantasizing and later impressions, for instance of copulating animals, may have contributed to the sexualization of the original event and to the concrete content of the child's ideas about what really happened.

Freud (1914a, p. 207) gave the first written report of the Wolf Man in an essay about a moment that often recurs in an analysis where a patient for the first time remembers something and says at the same time: "*Now I feel as though I had known it all the time*. With this the work of the analysis has been completed." Freud had never received this confirmation from the Wolf Man and on that account the analytical assignment was never finished. Freud was so worried about the significance the primal scene had in the case history that he waited 4 years to publish the case. In a letter to Ferenczi, Freud wrote on November 9, 1914 that after finishing the case history he "was plunged into grave doubt." This

hitherto unpublished letter is quoted by Grubich-Simitis (1993, pp. 208- 209). And in a footnote Freud (1918) explained: "I admit that this is the most delicate question in the whole domain of psycho-analysis. ... no doubt has troubled me more; no other uncertainty has been more decisive in holding me back from publishing my conclusions" (p. 103).

Freud's own doubts about the credibility of the scene circled around three objections: that such a little child could perceive and remember such a complicated process in his unconscious; that it could be possible for him, afterwards, at the age of 4, to make the earlier impression intelligible; and finally that psychoanalysis could bring the details of the scene into consciousness. He maintained that his doubts were founded on "a low estimate of the importance of early infantile impressions and an unwillingness to ascribe such enduring effects to them" (1918, p. 49) and he appealed to us, his

readers, to concur only in a *provisional* belief in the reality of the scene. Even if he was completely convinced of the reality of the primal scene in the Wolf Man's childhood, he stated in one passage that in his case it did not matter whether the primal scene was a fantasy or a concrete event.

In his work with other analysands Freud was later able to get the confirmation of the reconstruction of the primal scene which the Wolf Man had denied him. Princess Marie Bonaparte, who in 1938 made it possible for the Wolf Man to meet his second analyst and who saved his first analyst's life, began her analysis with Freud in 1925. After only a short period of time Freud declared that Marie must have been exposed to the primal scene. The five notebooks of diaries she brought to Vienna in January 1926 helped Freud to fill in the reconstruction with new, surprising details. The actors could only be Marie's nanny Nounou and the

stable boy Pascal; the scenes occurred repeatedly over a rather long period and included various forms of sexual activity. Freud further postulated that the little girl was drugged with opiates during these meetings. Back in Paris after 5 months of analysis, Marie Bonaparte looked up the stable boy Pascal, then 82 years old, who after a great deal of resistance confessed that he had had a secret love relation with the pretty nanny. The liaison began when Marie was 6 months old and lasted until she was 3½. At the start they paid no attention to the child's presence; later they drugged her with syrup containing opiates.[3] Freud himself never referred to this case or used it as an argument.

Let me finally summarize Freud's observations: Even a single exposure to parents' coitus can be traumatic when the intensive sexual excitement in the child changes to anxiety. The overstimulation in this primal scene, the "too much" in the experience,

becomes in the wolf dream "completely still." In the actual situation the bewildered child wonders, "Who is doing what, why, and with whom?" The little child misunderstands sex differences, sexual relationships, conception, excitation, and violence, and in different versions these distortions may last until the end of life. Even a child who has never been exposed to the primal scene develops fantasies of his parents' copulation. These fantasies belong to the phylogenetic heritage of mankind, and in the psychic world work the same way as actual observations. Not only does the primal scene stir up anxiety but it also rouses the child's curiosity about questions of birth, pregnancy, the origins of both child and parents. This curiosity may last throughout life, transformed to the desire to explore the world, and it can stimulate the child's emotional development and intellectual activity. If it is frustrated it can lead to restraints on the ego function. As a boy, the Wolf Man tried to solve the

riddle of the Sphinx, the mystery of sexuality, with his sister. In a letter to Gardiner (1971, p. 345), dated July 6, 1963, he says: "I remember very well how in my childhood I racked my brains over the problems of how children come into the world. My sister and I talked about it a great deal and even made a pact that whoever would be first to learn the solution of this riddle would immediately tell the other." It goes without saying that it was Anna who first hit on the solution, and it is equally obvious that she refused to share the secret with her little brother.

There are some primal types of events that almost always recur in childhood histories of neurotics: "observation of parental intercourse, seduction by an adult and threat of being castrated" (Freud 1916-1917, p. 369, cf. Freud 1918, p. 97). The repertoire of the unconscious is extremely limited and monotonous. Freud (1916—1917, p. 369) continues: "It would be a mistake to suppose

that they are never characterized by material reality; on the contrary, this is often established incontestably....” But at the same time these phenomena belong to our phylogenetic heritage: “In them the individual reaches beyond his own experience into primaeval experience at points where his own experience has been too rudimentary. …[C]hildren in their fantasies are simply filling in the gaps in individual truth with prehistoric truth” (Freud 1916-1917, p. 371, cf. 1918, p. 97). The child appropriates experience inherited from his parents when his own experience is insufficient. Observe here that it is just through gaps in individual knowledge or experience that knowledge about the unconscious and our archaic inheritance can be reached. For Freud psychoanalysis is an archeology of the soul and must search out suitable burial places, gaps, and holes in the present in order to reveal, reconstruct, or perhaps construct the hidden past. Yet a too exact and detailed memory of the

primal scene indicates that it is about later fantasies, which have arisen during the years of puberty.

Regardless of the question of its material reality in each separate case, the primal scene can also be regarded as a primal fantasy, relatively independent of the circumstances that give it its specific form in every person, and in that way a psychic happening resembling the Oedipus complex. Freud's fundamental idea is that the psyche is structured from primal fantasies, that is, that they become psychic structures or schedules that later determine the design of other unconscious and preconscious fantasies, ideas, and ways of relating to others. Primal fantasies of seduction in childhood, the threat of castration, and the witnessing of parents' sexual union are thus not only traumatic but also have the function of organizers.

In recent times it has been pointed out by André Green (1983) and others that the essential aspect of

the primal scene is not that one has witnessed it, but on the contrary that it took place in one's absence. In analysis fantasies often come up about the forbidden place where the analyst is sitting—the place one is not allowed to look at—fantasies about spying on the analyst's sexual activities. In the imaginary worlds of both the mother and the child, the father is present from the start, that is, *between* the mother and the child. In the fancied vision of a hypothetical primal scene, the father and mother are united and the child does not participate; he is outside. Being excluded from the parents' union is the narcissistic component in the primal scene; it is a necessary phase in the child's relations to his first love objects, the mother and the father.

Afterwardness:[4] Nachträglichkeit

There is a hidden theoretical concept in Freud's writings, a concept that is never included in the usual conceptual apparatus and that has not received

any real definition, but it occupied Freud from the pre-analytic period up until his final work. It is also a concept that was of vital importance for his understanding of the case of the Wolf Man.

Our experiences, impressions, and memory traces are revised on later occasions in order to fit in with later experiences and insights. At least three occurrences are required if what we have been present at is to be apprehended and receive a psychic meaning. Without this, early sexual traumas have no psychic content (Masson 1985, pp. 207ff.) and are rather holes in the psychic reality. It is only afterwards that a psychic conflict can arise out of the original trauma. Neurosis is a sign of an area where this process has come to a standstill. Why at least three occurrences, and as Freud writes in 1896, probably more? In order to understand our situation today we must associate what is current with the past we remember and the earlier past from which we do

not have accessible memories. In the case of the Wolf Man we can understand the neurosis of his adult years from his infantile neurosis, and that in its turn from an earlier experience of the primal scene, which did not take on its special meaning until afterward in a nightmare. Freud (1918) explains in a footnote the principle of Nachträglichkeit, "afterwardness," this way: "At the age of one and a half the child receives an impression to which he is unable to react adequately; he is only able to understand it and to be moved by it when the impression is revived in him at the age of four; and only twenty years later, during the analysis, is he able to grasp with his conscious mental processes what was then going on in him" (p. 45).

In other words, the understanding of current and earlier experiences requires reconstruction work. But is it reconstruction or construction? Discovery or invention? Are we finding the truth or building up

new myths? What about archeology? Reconstructions of Troy, of Knossos, or of Swedish Birka—are these our myths about the people of the past or do they give us the true picture of their dwelling places? As in every detective story, we are always dealing with circumstantial evidence. Sometimes the clues are sufficient for a conviction bordering on certainty; sometimes the reconstruction proves to be false; sometimes several items are questionable. The important point is that we have no other possibility. It is on this treacherous sea that it is necessary for us to sail.

In this context Freud (1920) calls attention to the asymmetry of time. In a case history on female homosexuality, he points out how easy it is for us to understand afterwards a patient's development from his current condition if we only follow the line of the analysis, and how impossible it is to determine in advance which of the interacting factors will be

crucial for future development. Adherents of preventive measures meet in Freud a humble skeptic.

Construction and Reconstruction

Ladies and gentlemen! Let us take still another detour. Even if it is beginning to be tiresome we have no other alternative but to move back and forth this way, exposing ourselves, too, to consequences of afterwardness. In other words, what are we doing when we try to find at least two previous registrations besides the one now current? What is conviction and what is spurious faith? What is the search for truth and what is myth building? In his interviews with Obholzer (1982) the Wolf Man has pointed out that there are two Russian words for truth: *pravda*, in the everyday and more concrete sense, and *istina*, for the truth that lies behind appearances in a more profound sense (p. 7). The Wolf Man's primal scene in Freud's history is not

pravda, not a recollection that might emerge after a period of analysis aimed at uncovering, but *istina*, a construction: "All that I mean to say is this: scenes, like this one in my present patient's case … are as a rule not reproduced as recollections, but have to be divined—constructed—gradually and laboriously from an aggregate of indications" (Freud 1918, p. 51). In Freud's writings from different periods two metaphors for this painstaking work recur. The first deals with the diggings of the archeologist and the other, seemingly its opposite, with the detective's filling in of gaps.

Two years before his death, Freud published an essay on *Constructions in Analysis*. Freud, who was especially interested in archeology and was an enthusiastic collector of antique objects, here compares the reconstructions of the psychoanalyst and the archeologist from preserved and distorted traces of the past. Common to them both are a

multitude of difficulties and sources of error. The analyst, however, works under better conditions (Freud 1937b): "All of the essentials are preserved; even things that seem completely forgotten are present somehow and somewhere, and have merely been buried and made inaccessible to the subject. Indeed, it may, as we know, be doubted whether any psychical structure can really be the victim of total destruction. It depends only upon analytic technique whether we shall succeed in bringing what is concealed completely to light" (p. 260).

But you might justifiably ask, Why this digging? Why reconstruct out of the ruins of the past? Ever since his work with hysterical patients, Freud had been convinced that the neurotic "suffers from reminiscences." It is only when we can integrate original traumatic experiences into our psychic reality, only when afterwards they get a psychic sense, that we can free ourselves from the tyranny of

the repetition compulsion. In his first public lecture in the United States in September 1909, Freud (1910a) speaks of the gaps that are the excavation sites of the psychoanalyst: "Wherever there is a symptom there is also an amnesia, a gap in the memory, and filling up this gap implies the removal of the conditions which led to the production of the symptom" (p. 20). A great many of what we call interpretations are really the fragments of completed constructions that are reported to the analysand. An occasional mistake in this work is as inevitable as it is harmless, Freud maintains. When there is an appropriate opportunity, when we can make a better construction, we have to confess the mistake to the patient and correct it. Neither a *yes* nor a *no* on the part of the analysand can help us to decide the correctness of the construction: a *no* can be an expression of resistance, a *yes* of a hypocritically agreeable attitude. The only confirmation we can expect is that at best the analysand responds with

new material that is in accord with the construction or can contribute to the gap being filled in more completely. According to Freud, the risk that by doing this we influence our patients by suggestion is considerably exaggerated.

Now you are surely asking by what right I, following in Freud's footsteps, compare reconstructions and constructions, the excavation of the hidden with a new story that fills in gaps in the earlier versions? Is a new myth as therapeutically effective as the truth? When for various reasons we do not succeed in getting the patient to recall what he has repressed, we can still achieve for him a sure conviction of the truth of the construction, and therapeutically this accomplishes the same thing as the retrieval of memory, Freud declares (1937b). The delusions of the patient seem to be counterparts of the analyst's constructions. Madness is not only a method, as Shakespeare has Polonius express it in

Hamlet, but there is also a portion of *historic truth* in the psychotic's hallucinations. In the acknowledgment of the core of truth in the psychotic's delusions or the neurotic's anxiety state, we may find a common ground on which the therapeutic work can develop (1937b): "That work would consist in liberating the fragment of historical truth from its distortions and its attachments to the actual present day and in leading it back to the point in the past to which it belongs" (p. 268). This method of finding the historic truth behind all the distortions in the material reality we would call deconstruction today. For Freud it was the core of the concept "analysis." It was not only in the case of the Wolf Man that Freud used this procedure; he used it as well on historical figures, as in "the case of Leonardo da Vinci" or "the case of Moses."

In one of his last works, Freud writes that the constructions we present to our patients fill up the

gaps in their perceptions. This creates double inscriptions: our conscious reconstruction and the original unconscious state. As we continue, our effort is to get the two inscriptions to tally, that is, to make the unconscious conscious. Freud (1940, p. 162) continues: in men this can be achieved through speech. We live in the language that delimits and makes possible contact with the unsayable. The verbal narrative plays a pivotal role in the analytic cure.

Fact and Fiction in the Case of the Wolf Man

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe gave his book *From my Life* (1811— 1816) the famous subtitle *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Fiction and Truth). The case he describes is, as in all autobiographical literature, his own. The history of the Wolf Man culminates in the reconstruction of the primal scene, with all the details in the situation in which an 18-month-old boy witnesses his parents' coitus. This reconstruction,

however, never led to the patient's recollection of the scene. Is Freud's case history a scientific investigation in which hypotheses are formulated and put through an empirical testing, or are we dealing with a literary genre, a fiction, a story—*narrative*? The case of the Wolf Man makes acute a number of theoretical and philosophical questions that are crucial for psychoanalysis as a science, not only a therapy form. What is the nature of psychoanalytic facts? How does one make psychoanalytical observations? How are they used to build up a systematic body of knowledge? How can psychoanalysis be scientific? What is the object of study in psychoanalysis: Traumatic events in life or unconscious ideas, fantasies, and wishes? How does one move from clinical observation to theory formation? How can psychoanalytical hypotheses and theories be tested? What is the truth content in Freud's reconstruction or construction of the Wolf Man's primal scene? Is it fictional truth or historic

fact? Freud himself never had any doubts on this point: even if it dealt with unconscious fantasies that afterward reshaped early, incomprehensible childhood experiences, these experiences nevertheless had a real historic base, if not in the individual's history, then in mankind's.

Habermas (1968) and Ricoeur (1974), neither of them analysts, question the possibility of an objective observation in psychoanalysis because the observation is created in the unique dialogue. There are no facts, only various interpretations of the story that has been told. Schafer (1983), who concurs in this point of view, wonders: How can we then choose between better and worse narratives of the same history? Spence (1982, 1987) speaks of constructions of patterns, meaning that it is actual intentions and experiences that influence our perception of the past. As for Jung, for him there are no early experiences or ideas that prospectively

exercise influence on our present and future lives. Instead there are constantly new versions of old stories. In the name of consistency, the case of the Wolf Man becomes a beautiful, fascinating, coherent narrative created in the unique dialogue between Sigmund Freud and Sergej Konstantinovich Pankejev. Freud's own position here was, as it so often was, more complicated and ambiguous than this.

The first version of Freud's well-known work in the field of the history of religion, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) had the tide *The Man Moses, an Historical Novel*. Freud regarded this work as an historical construction built up from the hypothetical point of departure: "If Moses had been an Egyptian ..." It was not unusual for Freud to start from an uncertain, even questionable assumption, in order to follow its most extreme consequences. At the same time Freud was always on his guard against

philosophical speculation, metaphysical if you will, well aware of the attraction circumstantial speculation had for him. He wanted to think of himself as a scientist studying specific human phenomena, the unconscious, which he regarded as in itself a part of nature. Our ego is developmentally rooted in the body's ego, that is, in the experience of the body, and instinct has two sides, a biological base and an unconscious psychological meaning. Even Freud's obscure lamarckism and the theory of phylogenetically inherited primal fantasies have the same function; they form a link that ties together our biological and our psychical existence. The story of the primal scene is *not* a literary fiction. Regardless of the question of actual events or fantasies, the primal scene has a psychic meaning and it is a deep, archaic structure in the Wolf Man, in the unconscious of all of us, a structure that determines the formation of our later fantasies and experiences. The primal scene, castration, seduction in childhood,

and even the oedipal triangle are the archaic basic patterns that determine whether later trauma and experiences can take on a psychic meaning.

For Freud the analysis with the Wolf Man was an empirical test of this basic thesis on a concrete, individual case. Freud (1918) thought it was meaningless to carry on a discussion with those who thought of the result of psychoanalysis as a fabrication: "The whale and the polar bear, it has been said, cannot wage war on each other, for since each is confined to his own element they cannot meet" (p. 48). But the theoretical opposition as well, among people who take their stand on the ground of psychoanalysis and who think they are justified in drawing other conclusions from the same material, is as a rule unproductive. The realities of the particular case are the best test of the validity of a theory:

> No sooner has one begun to depart from the material on which one ought to be relying, than one runs the risk of becoming intoxicated with

> one's own assertions and, in the end, of supporting opinions which any observation would have contradicted. For this reason it seems to me to be incomparably more useful to combat dissentient interpretations by testing them upon particular cases and problems. [Freud 1918, p. 48]

No theory can be tested without observation. And without a theory no observation is possible; we do not even know what we should look for or how we should interpret what we find. There is theory at both ends, at the beginning and the end of our investigation. The situation of the psychoanalyst here is no different from that of the modern physicist. What we psychoanalysts can contribute to scientific theory, however, is our unique psychoanalytical perspective on man's quest for knowledge and our theory construction. The Wolf Man told how in his childhood he racked his brains over the problem of how children come into the world and how he made a pact with his sister that whoever would be first to learn the solution of this

riddle would immediately tell the other (Gardiner 1971). The Wolf Man's infantile theories of sexuality led Freud to call him "a thinker of the first rank." Psychoanalysis has revealed the close link between the sexual inquiries of a child and scientific theory formation. This inevitably applies also to psychoanalytical research. Like a child, the psychoanalyst believes that he is in possession of a fundamental, hidden secret. Like sexual theories developed by children, psychoanalytical theories take the risk of trying to find the "great solutions" (Pontalis 1981). When a fragment of knowledge is regarded as "the whole truth" the result is "pure poetry."

Part III

Back to the Case: The Analysis with Brunswick

Let us return to the case of the Wolf Man. At the time of the Wolf Man's second analysis with Freud in the winter of 1919-1920, when the Wolf Man lost his entire fortune, Freud organized a collection to raise funds for the benefit of his patient. This collection was repeated every year for a six-year period. The Wolf Man used the money to pay his wife's hospital bills and to send her to the country. His claims on Freud grew with each passing year; in all his financial affairs he behaved dishonestly. This constellation of demands for money, concealment of his assets, payment to a woman who made greater and greater demands, was to be repeated monotonously from the period after World War I until his death in 1979.

At the beginning of the 1920s the Wolf Man's character underwent a change, which, according to the account of his second analyst, Brunswick (1971), was reminiscent of the previous character alteration in his childhood. He became stingy and sadistic toward others and showed signs of a masochistic need for punishment. In the autumn of 1923 he became paranoid. A contributing factor was that he found out about Freud's life-threatening cancer of the gums, and he reacted strongly to Freud's altered appearance after the first mouth operation. When the Wolf Man's mother came to Vienna that same year he noticed a black wart on her nose. It was not long until he began to imagine how it would be if he got a similar one. Two weeks after his mother had left, he discovered a little pimple. This triggered a long chain of visits to doctors and treatment of experiments, of suspicion of doctors and charges of malpractice. Other links connect his symptoms with his sister's preoccupation with her red nose and with

gonorrhea and threat of castration. As a child, his sister imagined that she had a red nose, and brother and sister developed a secret language to communicate with each other about the state of her nose, using "red nose" spelled backward, *esonder* (Obholzer 1982, p. 80). The same doctor who treated him for gonorrhea had previously prescribed salves for sores on his nose.

In the autumn of 1926 the Wolf Man looked Freud up again, this time with blossoming paranoid symptoms. He was deeply depressed and repeated the complaint that was the kernel of his identification with his mother, "I can't go on living like this any more." Freud referred the Wolf Man to one of his students and analysands, Ruth Mack Brunswick. This cost-free analysis now proceeded under Freud's supervision from October 1926 until February 1927.

Brunswick (1971) was of the opinion that the forced termination of the analysis with Freud had left the Wolf Man with unanalyzed fantasies and feelings in relation to Freud. She modestly called her report of her first analysis with the Wolf Man "A Supplement to Freud's 'History of an Infantile Neurosis.'" There she denied that new memories or interpretations had occurred during her treatment. She had put the main stress on remnants of a passive homosexual father transference to Freud. The Wolf Man developed an advanced hypochondria, which Brunswick attributed to his identification with his mother. Brunswick got in touch with Dr. Wulff from Odessa, well acquainted with the Pankejev family and himself a psychoanalyst, whose views on animal phobias were cited by Freud (1913b, p. 128) in *Totem and Taboo*. Dr. Wulff explained the Wolf Man's situation (Brunswick 1971, p. 301): "He no longer plays the mother, he is the mother, down to the last detail." His persecutory ideas revolved

around grandiose thoughts of himself as Freud's closest collaborator and around a physician who had operated on a sebaceous gland in his nose. He considered his gifts from Freud as his right and as a sign of a father's love for his son. He was convinced that he had a special, close, friendly relationship with Freud, at the same time charging that it was Freud's fault that he had lost all his money because Freud advised him, in 1919, not to go back to Russia. Brunswick wrote that she had made "a concentrated attempt to undermine the patient's idea of himself as the favorite son" (p. 284). Her perseverance in the task of getting the Wolf Man to realize that he was not Freud's favorite patient must have had a special significance for the two of them, both Freud's analysands, and might have been interpreted by the Wolf Man as evidence that Freud favored his sister, as his father had done earlier.

After a period of murderous fantasies and death wishes against both of his analysts, reconciliation appeared in a new version of the wolf dream, this time no longer an anxiety dream. 'The sun shines through the trees … The patient regards particularly the branches of a certain tree, admiring the way in which they are intertwined. He cannot understand why he has not yet painted this landscape" (Brunswick 1971, p. 291). The Wolf Man now seems to be able to accept his parents' sexual embrace, overcome his fear of being castrated, and give up his grandiose ideas.

In a later comment Brunswick writes that after five months' analysis the Wolf Man "was well and relatively productive in a small bureaucratic capacity" (p. 263). Two years later, in 1929, he returned for a resumption of the analysis because of potency problems in a sudden, stormy love affair that was broken off and resumed several times. The

analysis, which with some interruptions lasted until 1938, produced new material on the complicated relationship between the Wolf Man and his pre-schizophrenic sister.

The Father's Presence and the Wolf Man's Paranoia

We all remember that when the Wolf Man left Vienna a few days after the shot in Sarajevo, Freud considered his cure "radical and permanent." In his further evaluation of the case he wrote in 1937 that time had forced him to qualify this judgment somewhat. Freud (1937a) described the patient's recurring attacks of illness as "pieces of the patient's childhood history," "residual portions of the transference," with a clear paranoid character, "pieces of the patient's childhood history which … now came away … like sutures after an operation, or small fragments of necrotic bone" (p. 218).

Sutures after an operation or fragments of necrotic bone … What did they consist of? In 1926 Otto Rank declared that the wolf dream was not a childhood dream but had emerged only in a later phase of the analysis with Freud and referred to six photographs of the members of the Psychoanalytic Committee that hung on the wall in Freud's consulting room. It later turned out that at the actual time there were only three there, of Ferenczi, Jones, and Rank himself (Jones 1957, p. 80). Not wanting to leave room for doubt on this point, Freud sent a letter in June 1926 to the Wolf Man with further questions about the wolf dream. The answer, dated June 6, 1926, was unequivocal. The Wolf Man was completely certain that he had had the dream as a little boy and that the memory of the dream had tormented him throughout his entire childhood. He added a couple of new recollections that dealt with castration, and ended his letter: "I should be very

glad if this information is of use to you" (Gardiner 1971, p. 277n.).

Eight days after his reply to Freud the Wolf Man falls into a state of "bottomless despair." In a letter to the Freud Archive in June 1957 the Wolf Man comments on his answer to Freud's question, posed exactly 31 years earlier, and he wonders: "Or, could the outbreak of my 'paranoia' have had any connection with Professor Freud's questions?" (Gardiner 1971, p. 278). There is a certain mixture of respect and indirect accusation in this wording, which roused my curiosity. From Max Schur, Freud's family doctor and analyst colleague, comes one more puzzle piece, illustrating how real events might afterwards have activated not only the Wolf Man's willingness to please but also his concealed aggressivity against Freud. Schur (according to Mack 1969, p. 219) established that the Wolf Man's psychotic illusions about the sore on his nose began

when Freud had undergone another operation for cancer of the gums, an operation that started an endless series of surgical procedures and new gum prostheses. At that time, in addition, the Wolf Man's wife, Therese, with whom he had an extremely ambivalent relationship, was going through a period of hypochondriacal experiences.

Is it possible for us to find a forerunner of the Wolf Man's paranoia in his childhood symptoms? Let us return to the period when he was between 3½ and 4 years of age, that is, the character alteration period up to the anxiety dream—in other words the period Freud describes as a regression to anal sadism and as a precursor of the obsessional neurosis. It is the Wolf Man's homosexual and masochistic desires toward his father that seem to be significant for the paranoia that the Wolf Man developed in 1926 against Freud and other father figures, the dentists and skin specialists he so regularly visited.

Freud (1918) made this comment on the character change: “By bringing his naughtiness forward he was trying to force punishments and beatings out of his father, and in that way to obtain from him the masochistic sexual satisfaction that he desired” (p. 28). Can you see parallels to the Wolf Man’s analysis with Freud? Naughtiness has become “the treatment inhibiting itself ... as a result of its—partial—success” (1937a, p. 217), what we today call negative therapeutic reaction. His father’s punishment and the masochistic sexual satisfaction he wanted from him has become “the heroic measure of fixing a time-limit.” Throughout his life the Wolf Man recreated this pattern, the groundwork for which was laid at the age of 3½.

After the wolf dream, the boy’s fear of being eaten up by wolves expressed both his feminine desires toward his father and his castration anxiety. Brunswick’s analysis of the Wolf Man focused on

hypochondriacal delusions about a scratch on his nose as an expression of castration anxiety. It is the combination of homosexual desires and intense castration anxiety that is the link to the Wolf Man's subsequent paranoia. The Wolf Man told Freud about this wish fantasy of his father, with the change from passive to active desires, at his first visit to Berggasse 19 at the beginning of February 1910 when he confessed to Freud that he would like to penetrate him, the Jewish swindler, from behind and defecate on his head. Bound up with this matter is the fact that at that time the Wolf Man was suffering from chronic constipation. Freud had observed the Wolf Man's emotional ambivalence toward his father and the significance that the gratification of passive masochistic desires had had in the analysis of the Wolf Man and in his life.

I would like to maintain that "residual portions of the transference," "sutures after an operation,"

and “fragments of necrotic bone” referred to the Wolf Man’s passive, masochistic wish to please Freud, and his concealed hostility. The “heroic measure of fixing a time-limit” may have been interpreted by the Wolf Man as a sadistic action on Freud’s part, which gratified the Wolf Man’s desire to be beaten. As “Freud’s most famous case” the Wolf Man could in later life live out his compulsive thoughts from his childhood neurosis about Jesus, God’s castrated son. When in 1926 Freud asked his former patient in a letter about the details and the time of the wolf dream, the Wolf Man adopted a submissive attitude, doing everything he could to confirm Freud’s reconstruction. Later he suspected himself that the letter had something to do with his paranoia. When his repression no longer sufficed, the Wolf Man divided up his ego into two parts, which simultaneously took contradictory attitudes toward Freud. One part eagerly and uncritically confirmed Freud’s previous reconstruction; the other

felt itself persecuted by him. In interviews with Obholzer (1982, pp. 31ff.), the Wolf Man initially told of his uncritical attitude to Freud, whom he declared a genius:

> Well, actually, I worshiped him. That's because of Father. Father disappointed me because he preferred Sister. So the relationship to Father wasn't good. Homosexual or not, I was very attached to Father and would have liked him to spend time with me and to introduce me to management. And then my father died and I had no father at all and came to Freud. And Freud said, 'You were lucky that your father died, otherwise you would never have become well."

And he continues telling of his blasphemous thoughts and how he insulted God. He thinks he has adopted psychoanalysis as a religion. On one occasion he says: 'The neurotic doesn't kill the other person but becomes ill and cannot bear it" (p. 141). In Obholzer, the Wolf Man finds another person he

wants to please, and his unrestrained repudiation of psychoanalysis and Freud becomes evident.

Pankejev's Later Destiny

Let us now leave the Wolf Man's intense, contradictory feelings toward his father and direct our attention to his relations to women. After his wife's death his affairs with women followed the pattern established during his childhood by the influence of his sister and by his attraction to servant and farm girls on the estate. From the final phase of World War I all the way to his old age, Pankejev had an extremely ambivalent relationship with a woman named Luise. In the middle of the 1950s he described in his letters his constant swings between intense self-accusations and indignation at her behavior. He gave assurances (Gardiner 1983) that "this woman would have been a completely unsuitable 'life companion' for me, and I never had the intention of marrying her, as I told her over and

over again." On a sudden impulse, however, Pankejev promised to marry her, only to withdraw his promise two days later. Weighed down by guilt feelings, he pledged himself as compensation to support Luise for life with a third of his income, which he then constantly complained about.

The interviews with Obholzer during the 1970s revolved around his relation to Luise, whom he called a "psychopath," an impossible, quarrelsome woman, and his relationship to her, which he called a sick, mad affair, a disaster. According to him Luise threatened to go to the police and to publicize his unjust treatment of her on television. They continued to meet as usual every Sunday, and Pankejev gave her more and more money, becoming more and more angry at her and at himself. He wanted to break off the relationship, asked several of his friends for advice, but everything seemed equally hopeless to him. At last he considered jumping out of the

window or emigrating to America to find a refuge. In Luise the Wolf Man found an ideal life partner, one who constantly rearoused his guilt feelings and with whom he could maintain the most stable of all relationship types, that characterized by both hate and love, by a constant struggle back and forth to free himself from her and bind her to him, by constant quarrels about money and charges of injustices.

The Wolf Man's housekeeper, Fräulein Tini, called "Gaby" in "Memoirs of the Wolf Man" (Gardiner 1971), one of the few persons with whom he had been able to maintain a non-ambivalent relationship, and who had even taken care of his sick mother, died in the autumn of 1972. This triggered one of the deepest depressions of the Wolf Man's life. During the 1970s the Wolf Man took daily doses of various kinds of psychopharmacological

drugs, prescribed by Dr. Wilhelm Solms, his psychiatrist of many years.

Sergej Konstantinovich Pankejev died in Vienna May 7, 1979, at the age of 92. He spent the 2 last years of his life at the Municipal Psychiatric Hospital in Vienna, where he was placed after a heart attack on the advice of Dr. Solms. There, the Wolf Man was able to make a quick recovery from his confusion after the heart attack, but his senility symptoms increased. Psychoanalysts from the United States paid for a private-duty nurse, Sister Anni, for whom he felt great affection, and who obviously represented both his biological sister Anna and his Nyanya. He died in Sister Anni's arms with the words "Don't leave me" on his lips (Gardiner 1983).

The Absence of the Mother in the Narratives of Freud and Brunswick

I acquired my knowledge of the mother's importance in the case of the Wolf Man (among others) from a patient who made frequent journeys eastward to Pankejev territory in search of his mother from the time before her repeated death—repeated in the inner sense. This patient traveled in the opposite direction from the Wolf Man, who had sought his West-friendly, West-oriented father, a *zapadnik*, in the West. My patient read *The Wolf Man* (Gardiner 1971) during these trips, at the same time that I was writing the first version of this text. What had caught his attention and what he often wanted to talk to me about was the fact that the Wolf Man moved in with his aged mother after Therese's suicide in 1938.

Several modern analysts have observed the almost total absence of the mother in Freud's case history, despite innumerable references to Nyanya's importance as a mother substitute, despite all the

castration threats the Wolf Man was subjected to from maternal figures, and despite a detailed discussion of the oral, cannibalistic phase in his instinct development. Freud focused on the father's importance and invoked the phylogenetic heritage to explain that it is the paternal castrator who is concealed behind every threat on the part of the woman. Even though he considered the possibility of castration on the mother's part (1918, p. 86), he rejected it, holding fast to the idea that there is always a father behind the mother. The last time Freud reverted to the Wolf Man was in the *Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence*, published posthumously (1938a). He writes here of a traumatic event, the discovery and denial of the mother as castrated, of castration anxiety, of fetishism, and of regression to the oral phase and fear of being eaten by the father. The Wolf Man's pathology takes on a new dimension here: it concerns the splitting of the ego as defence. In "A Rereading of the Wolf Man,"

Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel (1985, pp. 44-54) wonders: Why is passivity and submission in relation to his father so attractive to him, and at the same time so dangerous? According to her the only explanation is that behind the picture of the father an earlier image of the threatening, persecuting, archaic mother can be glimpsed.

Perhaps this idea was not all as unfamiliar to Freud as is generally assumed. There is a document of special interest in this connection, a product of an intimate collaboration between the Wolf Man's two analysts, begun in 1930, and not published by Brunswick until 10 years later, *The Preoedipal Phase of the Libido Development*. The working material consisted of transcriptions of joint clinical discussions with Freud's comments, ideas, and suggestions in the margins. In this paper from 1940 an archaic, pregenital mother emerges to stand beside the father. The point of departure is the boy's

early, preoedipal identification with his mother and the choice of his father as love object, which is a still greater threat to his ownership of his penis. There are three solutions available to the boy. When his love for the father is so strong that it becomes intolerable, the result may be paranoid psychosis. When love for the mother takes the upper hand in the form of a passive, preoedipal attachment, the man may develop an extremely ambivalent relationship to all mother figures later in life. The third outcome is "a neurosis . . . which is characterized all through life by pendulum-like swings from one parent to the other," swings between "the paranoid sphere of the father" and the attractive, frightening attachment to the mother (Brunswick 1948, pp. 252-253).

The Wolf Man is not mentioned anywhere in this paper, but we may be sure that both Freud and Brunswick thought about their analyses and

explanation models and talked about the Wolf Man. My thesis is that the case they discussed together in the '30s was a case they shared.[5] Both the Wolf Man's passive desires toward the father/Freud and his ambivalent relation with Therese, who was later replaced by his mother, and after the mother's death by Luise, become comprehensible. When Brunswick began working with the Wolf Man under Freud's supervision at the same time as she was in analysis with Freud, this theoretical perspective had not yet been developed. Freud seems to have anticipated this (preoedipal) problem of the archaic mother and father imagos. Toward the end of his life he even suggested a preliminary wording, although he never followed this train of thought to its conclusion. It is this dawning understanding, still not completely articulated and in conflict with previously established knowledge, that I here take as my point of departure.

All his life the Wolf Man was trapped in an archaic universe where the psychic reality is structured in a special way, as it is described by Kolev (1990, 1991). On the one hand we have the passive homosexual love of the father and the risk of paranoid psychosis, on the other hand a passive and preoedipal mother fixation with intense ambivalence. And between them he swings from one parent to the other. The result was the splitting of the ego in defence, described by Freud (1938a) in his final reference to the case of the Wolf Man. The swings between the archaic imagos of his father and his mother and the splitting of the mother imago may be detected in the Wolf Man's relations to the men and women he met in his life. They were also given a spatial representation (Kolev 1990, 1991)[6] in the Wolf Man's frequent trips between Germany, Austria, and Russia up until the time of his second analysis with Freud. The Wolf Man moved himself away from the preoedipal mother's Odessa to the

fatherly authorities in the West; this is also connected to his father's political orientation (*zapadnik*: West-oriented). The Wolf Man went back to Russia a few days before the outbreak of World War I. He turned up again at Freud's consulting room immediately after the publication of the case in 1918. During the resumption of the analysis in 1919 he asked Freud for advice about whether he should go back to Odessa, and Freud advised against it. The Wolf Man never forgave Freud this departure from analytical neutrality and accused him of preventing him from rescuing his fortune in the East.

The Wolf Man's travels back and forth to Therese were repeated in an extreme and enormously intense form in his more than 30- year love-hate relationship with Luise. We may assume that both these relationships were a repetition of and an attempt to master an earlier relationship with his archaic mother. Only his father could save him from

this mother imago, longed for and hated, but in that direction other dangers lurked, as we know from Freud's and Brunswick's analyses. The Wolf Man's life-long staging of this whole complex dilemma is a prelude, a preparation for memories— memories that were never worked through as just memories, but that are discernible in the Wolf Man's interviews with Obholzer. In his own account, the sister complex occupied the place the father complex had in Freud's and Brunswick's case histories. What he could not forgive his mother was that she forbade him to keep company with women of the same age and class as he. In interviews with Obholzer (1982, p. 84) he remembers that he thought: "if you completely exclude me from better women, I'll look for servant girls." In his world of relationships, the Wolf Man enacted an inner prehistoric drama where both the actors, the mother and child, cling tightly to each other and the castration threat comes from the woman and not from the man. For a period at the

close of the ’40s or the beginning of the ’50s, the Wolf Man (pp. 192- 193) had “a hypochondriacal idée fixe” that there was something wrong with his *right* hand. He could neither have anything to do with women nor could he paint; it was “the same thing as with my nose, a torment.” And here we have to stop; our attempt at further interpretation and speculation would require an ongoing dialogue with the patient.

A New Case, a New Crime: The Hidden Significance of the Sister

Abraham and Torok (1986) have done a radical rewriting of the narrative of the Wolf Man; they have put together a new construction, an alternative to Freud’s original one. In the Wolf Man’s language they find clues leading to a crypt where a completely different crime and a completely different case has lain buried during the time between the wolf dream and the analysis with Freud. The patient Freud

analyzed was not at all the very rich, obsessionally neurotic Russian Freud thought he had on his couch. Their point of departure is the Wolf Man's interest in philology and multilingualism. When the Wolf Man was 3½ he had an English governess, Miss Owen, who read stories to him in English. His mother had from time to time done literary translations from English to Russian. It therefore seems surprising that this linguistically gifted patient did not know English in his adulthood. During subsequent periods the Wolf Man had French and German teachers. Abraham and Torok's argument is based on the discovery of the significance of the Wolf Man's forgotten language, English, of which both his mother and his teacher from the period of his character change had a good command. It took Freud 17 years to discover the Wolf Man's secret, forgotten language. He writes as follows about a patient, perhaps the Wolf Man, in his essay *Fetishism* (1927b):

> The most extraordinary case seems to me to be one in which a young man had exalted a certain sort of "shine on the nose" into a fetishistic precondition. The surprising explanation of this was that the patient had been brought up in an English nursery but had later come to Germany, where he forgot his mother-tongue almost completely. The fetish, which originated from his earliest childhood, had to be understood in English, not German. The "shine on the nose" [in German *Glanz auf der Nase*]—was in reality a *"glance* at the nose." The nose was thus the fetish, which, incidentally, he endowed at will with the luminous shine which was not perceptible to others, [p. 152]

In Freud's wording, fetishism referred to the double act of confession and of denial of the mother's lack of a penis. Abraham and Torok rephrase it so that the penis the mother does not have is the father's, and she does not have it because the father has deprived her of it by pointing it somewhere else, in this case at the daughter. The authors go through an arduous procedure, zigzagging through the Wolf Man's tri-lingual world, "translating" key words in his

narrative to one of the three languages, Russian, English, and German, using phonetic similarities. The Wolf Man's magic and simultaneously forbidden word is *Tierka* (*siestorka*, little sister), concealed, translated to other languages on the same principles of similarity as the construction of a rebus, a puzzle made up of words and pictures. After his sister's suicide in 1906 he followed an inexplicable urge and took a trip in 1907 to the Caucasus mountains. He visited the place where the Russian poet Lermontov was killed in a duel when he was only 28 years old. He climbed up to the mouth of the river Tierek and sketched (*tieret*) a landscape of this river with the majestic mountain Kazbek in the background. After his retirement, landscape painting and still life (*nature morte*) were the Wolf Man's greatest interests. Before this he had married a nurse (sister) Therese, pronounced *tieretsia* in Russian (rub, palpate one's self, masturbate), whom he called Terka (pronounced

Tierka in Russian). This magic word was the crypt where the Wolf Man hid and stored the incorporated dead sister. In like manner, it may be inferred from the deciphering that the six wolves (*shiestorka*) of the dream mean sister (*siestorka*). All the material they interpret converges in a central, coded sentence: *My little sister, come and rub my penis*. The result of this fresh research is a new case and a new crime, not just a new perpetrator.

The detective couple Abraham and Torok consistently avoid the name Wolf Man, writing instead about Stanko (from Konstantinovich). The new solution of the case is that Stanko was a witness to repeated, criminal, incestuous acts on the part of his father (Konstantin) against his sister Tierka (Anna). Stanko confided in his English nanny. At the same time as he was forbidden to know what he knew, he was the object of the fear of both his parents that he would expose the crime. His

character change now appears in a new light. Abraham and Torok go so far as to construct a dialogue from the German dream text, using a mixture of Russian and English, between the mother and the English nanny. The hidden content of the wolf dream shows that the mother denied that what Stanko was saying had really happened, declaring it to be only the boy's nightmare. By finally himself confirming his mother's lie, Stanko turned into a false witness. When she succeeded in seducing him, Sister Tierka repeated with her younger brother what she herself had done with her father. She gave Stanko both tacit information about what had happened and a tacit prohibition against understanding it.

After her suicide his sister survived in a crypt in the Wolf Man's psychic inner space (the authors call this *endocryptic identification*). By incorporating his sister and creating this topographical arrangement,

the brother could keep her both hidden and "living dead" in his inner psychic space. It was not the Wolf Man, not Sergej, who was in analysis with Freud, but his dead sister Anna, or rather Tierka, ill and prepsychotic, just before she committed suicide. Freud's role in his relation to the Wolf Man was that of the seductive father's toward his favorite daughter, Anna. It was a coincidence that the Wolf Man's sister had the same first name as Freud's eldest sister and as his famous and beloved daughter.

It is not possible here to take a position on what is justifiable in this magnificent construction. Abraham and Torok themselves emphasize that their reconstruction has an entirely fictitious character and that its object is not real people but a "mythical person." The new detective couple unquestionably succeed in creating a fresh, convincing story, showing the sister's pivotal role in the Wolf Man's inner world. Their research was done before

Obholzer had published her interviews with the patient. In the Wolf Man's own narratives in these interviews, it is not the father complex but the sister complex that has ruined his life and left its mark on his relations with women. He always chose women who were *not* sisters, preferably prostitutes. In addition he identified by his nose with his sister's pre-schizophrenic worry about a red nose. In the name of consistency, even the Wolf Man's constipation might be interpreted as an anal holding on to his dead sister who "really should have been a man" (*Memoirs of the Wolf Man*, in Gardiner 1971, Obholzer 1982, p. 79) and whom he had reason to hate because of all the attention she received in the family.

The Trivialization of the Case

The Wolf Man has often been praised for his friendly assistance with documentation and follow-up. As early as his first analysis with Freud in 1910

—1914, he saw himself as "the younger comrade of an experienced explorer setting out to study a new, recently discovered land" (Gardiner 1971, p. 140). Yet at the same time he was isolated behind the passive, accommodating attitude that concealed his resistance and hostility. The Wolf Man's cooperation was not guided, either then or later, by the non-neurotic, more adult and conflict-free part of the ego. On the contrary, his contribution from the start was drawn into the basic conflicts around his own grandiose image of himself, around his submissiveness and concealed hostility, around his manipulative capacity to play people against each other. The Wolf Man himself actively contributed to the trivialization of his own case.

In a 1970 letter, cited by Gardiner (1983), the Wolf Man offers a motivation for why he is not in a position to write an article about what "Professor Freud 'has done for me, what it has made possible,

and what it was unable to achieve.' …[F]or me, the most important thing, when I came to Professor Freud, was that he agreed to my going back to Therese." After all the fame that came to him with the publication of Gardiner's book, this kindly "younger comrade" turned more and more into an enemy of psychoanalysis.

Karin Obholzer (1982), a young Austrian journalist, found herself by chance with the German translation of Gardiner's (1971) book *The Wolf Man* in her hands. She decided to find this man. She managed to ascertain his identity by leafing through the telephone catalogue (he was listed in the book as Sergej P.). Obholzer became fascinated by this aristocratic 86-year-old Russian immigrant's story and realized that she had made a journalistic scoop, scored a direct hit. When she met him, the Wolf Man still had the same problems with women and money he had had in his youth. Obholzer attempted to win

the Wolf Man's confidence by playing the role of his elder sister, Anna, and to her surprise the Wolf Man himself told her that he identified her with his sister, even though he also saw in Obholzer still another in the long series of analysts. She continued to interview him up to his death.

Pankejev used the interviews to clarify some of the information that had appeared in publications on the case. He brushed aside the idea that he had ever lived at Freud's expense and he got entangled in nebulous aspects of the financial contributions he had received. He regarded Freud's reconstruction of the primal scene as a pure product of the imagination, rejected all talk of his father complex and his passive homosexual love for his father, and talked instead about his life-long sister complex. The statement that he could not even dress himself he considered absolute nonsense as he did Brunswick's diagnosis of paranoia, which upset and outraged

him. He declared that he never paid any attention to what Brunswick said and that he took no notice of such things as unsolved remnants of transference to Freud, identification with women, Brunswick's interpretation of dreams, or her attempt to associate his regular visits to street-walkers with his nose problem. He perceived Brunswick as, like his mother, hostile to his wife, Therese, and put it down to jealousy because Freud considered Therese so beautiful. His whole description of Brunswick exudes profound contempt for her, showing what an outrage it had been for him to be shuffled off by Freud to his female analysand and pupil. From having been the uncritical admirer of psychoanalysis, the Wolf Man toward the close of his life became the enemy of psychoanalysis. The Wolf Man ended his analyses with Freud and Brunswick with a kind of obsequious adaptation, without ever opposing them, without criticizing the

analysis, and without becoming his own analyst (Rangell 1993).

Reading the Wolf Man's interviews with Obholzer is a depressing experience. This undeniably cultivated and intelligent man tosses out cliches about psychoanalysis, piling them one upon the other. Pankejev lived as a pale copy of the famous case, adapting himself constantly to the expectations of others. His passive-masochistic attitude remained unchanged throughout his entire life. As years went by, his narratives became more and more tiresome, full of repetitions, platitudes, and intractable opinions. In his last years there is only one phrase left: I am Freud's most famous case (and nothing else, and that is why I hate psychoanalysis). Pankejev gets a self-tormentor's grandiose satisfaction out of saying to Obholzer—who really wanted to hear it: Look, I am the Exhibit A of psychoanalysis! Look at what bad shape I'm in! I am

the most famous case—and nothing has helped me! This, despite the evident, if limited success, of the psychoanalytic treatment.

It is surprising to discover time after time how Freud's interpretations, made 50 or 60 years earlier, which we recognize from the case history, remain with the Wolf Man in a rigid, frozen form. He fantasizes, for example, about writing a short story about a man who is drawn into a passive sexual role in relation to two "Annas," a sister and a servant (Obholzer 1982, p. 232): "a person is driven on the wrong sexual path and creates an ideal for himself according to which there must be a component of sadism on the part of the woman." His nomination of Freud to genius category takes place side by side with his almost total disparagement of Freud's contributions. He utters a stream of critical remarks about psychoanalysis and is indignant about false theories about something the analysts call

"transference. " As everyone knows, there is no progress in psychoanalysis; it is just the same thing the whole time. Freud might be able to cure people by his constructions but psychoanalysis is nothing more than the doubtful art of suggestion (1982, pp. 135ff.).

Even the reading of the psychoanalytical literature about the case is far from satisfactory. Despite the fact that at least a few worthwhile articles or chapters in books have been written, they are for the most part pale shadows of Freud's case history, and in addition often characterized by a biased perspective and the preoccupations of whatever debate is current. The puzzling, the tentative, the humble, and self-critical—the wealth of differing factors—is lost. The extensive follow-up material has not muffled the speculations around the case. If anything it has rather added to a superabundance of simplified, one-sided re-

interpretations. Maybe the worst enemy of psychoanalysis is this trivialization in the presence of an indulgent and uncritical audience.

What Can We Learn Today from the Case of the Wolf Man?

It is plainly evident from both the content and style of this case history that gross simplifications and one-sided ideas were alien to Freud. No matter how fascinated he himself is by his discoveries of the childhood neurosis or the reconstruction of the primal scene in the case of the Wolf Man, he never forgets how enormously complicated people's inner life is. He is not content to allow one factor to explain the process of illness causation, but instead he discusses a series of contributing and counteracting, internal and external factors, alternative events, or consequences. His case history shows concretely that psychoanalytical work consists of investigating extremely complex

connections. Beyond questions we can answer—and we can do that only hypothetically—there are unanswered questions, and beyond our area of knowledge there are existential questions about which artists and philosophers know more than we analysts do.

The history of psychoanalysis might be written against the background of the way the case of the Wolf Man has been referred to, commented on, and interpreted down through the years. The diagnostic perspective of the patient has changed. Freud saw his patients as neurotic; today we often tend to call neurosis health, and the Wolf Man would be described as psychotic, borderline psychotic, or narcissistic. Freud's attention was directed to the Wolf Man's regression in relation to his father and to the anal phase of development. The predominant tendency today is to look for ever-earlier causes of illness with preferential attention given to the more

serious pathologies and ever-earlier conflicts, interpreted in terms of the early, preoedipal mother. The crucial significance of the relation between the mother and the infant is emphasized all too often at the expense of the whole dynamic constellation among the archaic imagos of the father and mother. Our direction has shifted to some extent from attempts to uncover the content of unconscious fantasies and unconscious conflicts to working with resistance, transference, and the stable structure of defence that together form a person's character. It was resignation in the face of the Wolf Man's character that made Freud resort to the "the heroic measure of fixing a time-limit."

In conclusion a few words about the impossibility of the complete, finalized cure. In a letter dated November 4, 1970 (cited by Gardiner 1983), Anna Freud wrote about the uncertainty surrounding analytical success that characterizes

every treatment. Discussions of cases always make the failures more obvious than the successes. And she continues: “There was a recent discussion in the Society here about the technical advances in psychoanalysis. Somebody said if the Wolf Man were in treatment now and his earliest mother-relationship had been analyzed (in the transference), he would have been cured completely with no obsessional or other residues left! I think that is one of the modern analytic delusions. I have never believed in analytic omnipotence.”

In our day we often hear that patients in psychoanalysis are so much more disturbed than they used to be before. This is another of the myths that both psychoanalysts and non-psychoanalysts have created but that have nothing to do with reality. Those of you who have read this book have surely noticed yourselves how much Freud’s cases differ from what we nowadays regard as typical neuroses.

It is our knowledge that has grown, not the patients who have become more ill (Rangell 1993). The case of the Wolf Man illustrates that we do not need a new theory for new patients, but more proficiency within the same area of knowledge. The road leading to greater knowledge does not go by way of repudiation of earlier insights; neither does it go by way of centering attention on one aspect of psychoanalytical theory, regarding that as an all-embracing explanation and rejecting all the other aspects. Unfortunately the history of psychoanalysis from Freud's day to our own times offers innumerable examples of this sort of pseudo-development. What we need instead is a continuing effort to counteract the trivialization, the over-simplification of earlier knowledge, that inevitably follows when earlier revolutionary insights begin to be thought of as every man's meat. If this publication and the history of the Wolf Man contribute to counteracting popularization in this

sense, then I—and I would like to believe all of us—will have accomplished what we hoped for. Freud's classic cases are not stuffed animals dusted off for the occasion or reptiles preserved in formaldehyde. Today, just as during the time when they were conceived, these case histories may help us to discover and orient ourselves in the prehistoric landscape of our unconscious, where "the great saurians are still running about" and "the horsetails grow as high as palms" (Freud 1938, p. 299). Even though we today may see and understand more than then, it is not likely that the repertoire of the unconscious has changed in the century that has passed since the not-completely-painless birth of the science of psychoanalysis.

Notes

1. *Nyanya* is actually not a real name but a Russian term for nanny. This is why I consistently use the phonetic spelling of the Russian word.

2. The concept "reconstruction" is used here throughout as Freud used it in 1918. The tension between elements of reconstruction and construction in the work of psychoanalysis is discussed later on.

3. The case of Marie Bonaparte was published by the patient herself in a bibliophile edition (Bonaparte 1950, p. 52), in an article about a 42-year-old analysand (Bonaparte 1945), and is also described in her biography by Celia Bertin (1983, pp. 160-161).

4. Following Laplanche's (1991, 1992) suggestion, I translate *Nacht-räglichkeit* as *afterwardness,* instead of Strachey's misleading and often criticized translation *deferred action*.

5. My thesis about the collaboration between Brunswick and Freud on the case of the Wolf Man was confirmed by Kurt Eissler (1993) in an article published after this paper was written. Gardiner gave Eissler access to Brunswick's handwritten notes from the beginning of the thirties, probably the basis for lectures about the Wolf Man in the framework of seminars on psychoses at the Vienna Psychoanalytical Institute. These notes testify to discussions with Freud and contain new material on Nyanya's "anal seduction" of the Wolf Man: when the boy was two and a half years old and constipated Nyanya put her finger into his anus to facilitate the emptying of his bowels. Eissler mentions, like Freud (1937a), Brunswick's planned second essay on the Wolf Man. He overlooks her 1940 article, however.

6. Kolev explains the spatial relations of the parents' imagos in the preoedipal and oedipal phases, describing the archaic space, containing also the right and left halves of the body, as two-dimensional. According to him, the preoedipal mother as a stable inner object always appears to be represented in the right half of the archaic space. In seriously disturbed or regressed patients, he describes a splitting of the mother imago to the right: there this imago is divided up into a hated and feared left image, and into an idealized and unreachable right image. The earlier father imago, "the sadistic father," like the boy's passive feminine striving toward the father, is represented to the left, counterbalancing the mother imago. This whole structure may be depicted by projection in the outer, geographic space—the patient's fantasized or staged topology.

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