Reassessing Freud's Case Histories

The Social Construction of Psychoanalysis

*Frank J. Sulloway**

IN PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS ON SIGMUND FREUD I have examined his attempts to develop a comprehensive theory of mind and behavior. My historical approach has emphasized the insufficiently appreciated continuity between Freud's earlier career as a biologist and neurophysiologist and his subsequent creation of psychoanalysis. In this connection I have argued that many of Freud's most essential psychoanalytic concepts were based upon erroneous and now outmoded assumptions from nineteenth-century biology. Psychoanalysis was never a "pure psychology," to use Ernest Jones's phrase, but rather a complex psychobiology in which the biological aspects became increasingly cryptic.[1] Cryptic or not, bad biology ultimately spawned bad psychology. Freud erected his psychoanalytic edifice on a kind of intellectual quicksand, a circumstance that consequently doomed many of his most important theoretical conclusions from the outset.

Stimulated partly by Adolf Grünbaum's trenchant critique of Freud's clinical arguments for psychoanalysis, as well as by an essay of Frederick Crews's that took me to task for being too kind to Freud, I have come to appreciate that my own previous historical assessment of Freud's scientific thinking is incomplete in at least one significant respect. For although I paid considerable attention to the origins of Freud's psychoanalytic methodology—particularly his method of free association—I did not devote sufficient attention to his application of his methods within a clinical context.[2] Psychoanalysis is not just a theoretical disci-

* Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Program in Science, Technology, and Society, Building E51-128, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

An earlier version of this essay was presented in a session on censorship in science at the History of Science Society annual meetings in Bloomington, Indiana, October 1986.

[1] Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend* (New York: Basic Books, 1979); Sulloway, "Freud and Biology: The Hidden Legacy," in *The Problematic Science: Psychology in Nineteenth-Century Thought,* ed. William R. Woodward and Mitchell G. Ash (New York: Praeger, 1982), pp. 198–227; and Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud,* 3 vols. (New York: Basic Books, 1953–1957), Vol. I, p. 395.

[2] Adolf Grünbaum, *The Foundations of Psychoanalysis: A Philosophical Critique* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: Univ. California Press, 1984); and Frederick Crews, "Beyond Sulloway's Freud: Psychoanalysis minus the Myth of the Hero," in *Skeptical Engagements* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 88–111. I am also indebted to the work of a number of historians and sociologists of science for their emphasis on the role of technological praxis in the transmission of scientific knowledge: for example, Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1979); Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and*

pline but also a practical and a clinical one; and the essence of this practical discipline lies in Freud's application of his controversial methods of psychological investigation to clinical material arising in the consulting room. There is a danger, then, in viewing the history of psychoanalysis too exclusively in terms of its theoretical constructs—from the top down as it were. The danger is to miss the highly influential role that pragmatic considerations of method or instrumentation can play in the development and dissemination of scientific knowledge.

Reassessing Freud's practical science has also convinced me that the intellectual quicksand upon which he built his theories and assembled his "empirical" observations is even more extensive, and hence more lethal to his enterprise, than I had previously concluded. His controversial clinical methods only served to magnify the conceptual problems already inherent in his dubious theoretical assumptions. In this essay I shall argue that the peculiar social organization that emerged within psychoanalysis during its first three decades was closely tied to Freud's concerted but unsuccessful efforts to circumvent these methodological shortcomings. Unfortunately, this social organization has perpetuated the very problems that it was initially intended to resolve.

The social construction of psychoanalysis therefore represents a mirror image, in the practical realm, of various theoretical difficulties that Freud was never able to surmount. At the same time, his problematic psychoanalytic method exerted a major impact, independently of his controversial theories, on the eventual privatization of psychoanalytic training and on the rigid restriction upon who could call themselves psychoanalysts. The training methods that Freud ultimately sanctioned were therefore highly influential in removing psychoanalysis from the mainstream of academic science and medicine. As a result, the discipline of psychoanalysis, which has always tapped considerable religious fervor among its adherents, has increasingly come to resemble a religion in its social organization.[3]

CENSORSHIP AND THE FREUD LEGEND

Freud was fond of pointing out that gaps of memory exhibit an analogy with repressive literary practices for limiting proscribed information and ideas. Already in 1897, when he was still formulating many of his most basic psychoanalytic concepts, Freud wrote to his friend Wilhelm Fliess: "Have you ever seen a foreign newspaper which passed Russian censorship at the frontier? Words, whole clauses and sentences are blacked out so that the rest becomes unintelligible. A *Russian censorship* of that kind comes about in psychoses and produces the apparently meaningless *deliria*." Freud later made use of this analogy in the *Interpretation of Dreams,* where the "censor" became his principal mechanism for disguising the meaning of dreams.[4] Along with the concepts of repression and

---

Engineers through Society (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987); Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985); and Timothy Lenoir, "Practice, Reason, Context: The Dialogue between Theory and Experiment," *Science in Context,* 1988, *2*:3–22.

[3] George Weisz, "Scientists and Sectarians: The Case of Psychoanalysis," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences,* 1975, *11*:350–364.

[4] Sigmund Freud, *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904,* trans. and ed. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1985),

resistance, at whose behest the dream censor acts, censorship was a mainstay of the conceptual triumvirate that Freud used to explain psychical distortions.

A supreme irony nevertheless lies in Freud's development of concepts like censorship and repression and his clinical attempts to overcome their supposedly pathogenic effects through psychotherapy. Freud's movement illustrates those exact same distorting propensities with a clarity and tendentiousness that are frankly extraordinary in the history of science. Beginning with Freud's highly polemical essay "On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement" (1914), the historical reconstructions offered of the development of their own field by analysts have been classic instances of the kinds of intellectual contortions that they would instantly proclaim as "neurotic" if they encountered them in anyone else.[5] This circumstance stems, in large part, from Freud's own ambivalence toward biography. On the one hand he could object that certain information about Dostoyevski's life had been withheld, commenting that "biographers and scientific research workers cannot feel grateful for this discretion." And yet, dependent as he was upon the intimate details of other people's emotional lives, he nevertheless felt the right to evade biographical scrutiny. Freud even termed biography a form of "degradation" and once remarked that "the public has no concern with my personality and can learn nothing from an account of it."[6]

Freud even destroyed personal documents in his zealous desire for self-concealment. At least twice, in 1885 and in 1907, he discarded old notebooks, manuscripts, diaries, and letters; and he actually vaunted the first of these two acts of historical annihilation to his fiancée. "I couldn't have matured or died," he wrote at the age of twenty-eight, "without worrying about who would get hold of those old papers. . . . As for the biographers, let them worry, we have no desire to make it too easy for them. Each one of them will be right in his opinion of 'The Development of the Hero,' and I am already looking forward to seeing them go astray."[7] To Freud, the destruction of history was an essential part of becoming and remaining a great hero in the eyes of posterity. He actively cultivated the "unknowable" about himself in order to set himself apart from the nonheroic component of humanity.

During the last two decades there has occurred a major reassessment of the Freud legend from outside the psychoanalytic camp.[8] At the center of this reassessment has been the reexamination of Freud's seventeen-year friendship, from

---

p. 289; and Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* 24 vols., trans. from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953–1974) (hereafter **Freud, *Standard Edition***), Vols. 4–5.

[5] Sigmund Freud, "On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement" (1914), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 14, pp. 3–66.

[6] Sigmund Freud, "Dostoevsky and Parricide" (1928), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 21, pp. 176–96, on p. 182; Freud, "Address Delivered in the Goethe House at Frankfurt" (1930), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 21, pp. 208–212, on p. 212; and Freud, "Letter to Fritz Wittels" (1924), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 19, pp. 286–288, on p. 286.

[7] Sigmund Freud, *Letters of Sigmund Freud,* ed. Ernest L. Freud, trans. Tania Stern and James Stern (New York: Basic Books, 1960), p. 141.

[8] See, e.g., Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970); Paul Roazen, *Freud and His Followers* (New York: Knopf, 1975); Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind* (cit. n. 1); Sulloway, "Freud and Biology" (cit. n. 1); Sulloway, "Grünbaum on Freud: Flawed Methodologist or Serendipitous Scientist?" *Free*

1887 to 1904, with the Berlin physician Wilhelm Fliess (see Figure 1).[9] Written during this crucial period, Freud's several hundred letters and drafts to Fliess reveal his many intellectual false starts, his far-reaching ambitions and sometimes tormenting self-doubts, his Napoleonic style of thinking and theorizing, and his strong likes and dislikes. Upon learning in 1936 that these letters had been acquired by one of his followers after their sale by Fliess's widow, Freud confessed: "Our correspondence was the most intimate you can imagine. It would have been highly embarrassing to have it fall into the hands of strangers. . . . I do not want any of them [the letters] to become known to so-called posterity."[10] He was subsequently unsuccessful in his efforts to acquire and destroy the letters, although he apparently did destroy Fliess's side of the correspondence.

Initially published in 1950 in a highly selected and bowdlerized version, the first edition of these letters is very much reminiscent of the blackened-out newspaper that Freud employed to illustrate his own concept of censorship.[11] In the preface to the 1950 edition, the editors solemnly maintained that everything of "scientific" importance had been made available from the correspondence. But publication of an unexpurgated edition of these letters, thirty-five years after the original truncated version, allows us to see how extensive the censorship really was. The very first letter omitted in 1950 suggests something of the nature of what was, and what was not, considered "scientific" by the psychoanalytically devout. "I have at this moment a lady in hypnosis lying in front of me," Freud blithely told Fliess in May 1888, "and therefore can go on writing in peace." The patient was not taken out of her hypnotic trance until Freud had finished his letter. And just what could have so troubled Anna Freud and the other two editors of the correspondence that they deleted just six words from an otherwise published paragraph of an 1898 letter? The line reads: "I sleep during my afternoon analyses."[12] Though these and other reinstated passages are often quite amusing, what really merits our attention are those aspects of the complete letters that shed new light upon Freud as a person, a physician, and a thinker.

Two aspects of the unexpurgated Fliess correspondence call into serious question Freud's scientific judgment as well as his originality. Freud was convinced that Fliess had made two major discoveries that had unlocked "the mysteries of the universe and of life" and that would eventually make his friend known as "the Kepler of biology."[13] The first of these two discoveries involved a suppos-

---

Inquiry, Fall 1985, pp. 23–27; Adolf Grünbaum, "Epistemological Liabilities of the Clinical Appraisal of Psychoanalytic Theory," *Nous*, 1979, *14*:307–385; Grünbaum, *Foundations of Psychoanalysis* (cit. n. 2); Frederick Crews, "Analysis Terminable," *Commentary*, July 1980, pp. 25–34, rpt. in *Skeptical Engagements* (cit. n. 2), pp. 18–42; Crews, "The Freudian Way of Knowledge," *New Criterion*, June 1984, pp. 7–25, rpt. in *Skeptical Engagements*, pp. 43–74; Crews, "The Future of an Illusion," *New Republic*, January 1985, pp. 28–33, rpt. in *Skeptical Engagements*, pp. 75–87; Crews, "Beyond Sulloway's Freud" (cit. n. 2); J. Allan Hobson, *The Dreaming Brain* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Robert R. Holt, *Freud Reappraised: A Fresh Look at Psychoanalytic Theory* (New York/London: Guilford, 1989); and Malcolm B. Macmillan, *Freud Evaluated: The Completed Arc* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1990).

[9] Here I draw upon Frank Sulloway, "Review of *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904*, by Sigmund Freud," *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, 14 Apr. 1985, p. 1.

[10] Freud, *Letters to Wilhelm Fliess* (cit. n. 4), p. 7.

[11] Sigmund Freud, *Aus den Anfängen der Psychoanalyse: Briefe an Wilhelm Fliess, Abhandlungen und Notizen aus den Jahren 1887–1902*, ed. Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud, and Ernst Kris (London: Imago, 1950).

[12] Freud, *Letters to Wilhelm Fliess*, pp. 21 (trance), 303 (sleep).

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 320, 323.

Figure 1. *Sigmund Freud and Wilhelm Fliess (right) in the summer of 1890. Courtesy of Sigmund Freud Copyrights, Ltd.*

edly pathological relationship between the nose and the female genitalia, which led Fliess to attempt to cure neurotic and various other medical complaints by cauterizing the turbinate bone of the nasal cavity. Freud even submitted himself and one of his patients to such a dubious operation. After operating on Freud's patient, Fliess unfortunately forgot to remove a half-meter strip of gauze from the nasal cavity. When the cavity became infected and the gauze was finally removed, the patient nearly died of a hemorrhage. Rather than admit that his friend had made a serious medical mistake, Freud attributed the patient's bleeding to her hysterical "longing" for love and attention.[14] Naturally this whole medical fiasco was censored from the first edition of the Fliess correspondence.

Closely associated with Fliess's medical notions about the nose and the female genitalia were his speculations about the role of vital periodicity in human life. Fliess believed that two cycles, a male twenty-three-day period and a female twenty-eight-day period, determined virtually all major stages of growth, reproduction, and disease. Although Fliess's theories of vital periodicity were part of a distinguished tradition of nineteenth-century scientific thought (Darwin, for example, had endorsed such ideas in the *Descent of Man*), Anna Freud and her coeditors of the Fliess correspondence were quite unaware of this intellectual context and clearly regarded Fliess's ideas as a branch of pseudoscience.[15] Hence the editors were also quite unsympathetic to Freud's repeated efforts to

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

[15] Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1871), Vol. I, p. 212n; see also Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind* (cit. n. 1), pp. 138–170.

relate his own developing ideas on infantile sexual development to Fliess's notions of vital periodicity.

By obscuring the ties between Fliess's theories and Freud's growing ideas on psychosexual development, the editors of the Fliess correspondence also obscured the fact that Fliess was a pioneer in the field of infantile sexuality. He was documenting periodic erections in his infant son a year before Freud supposedly "discovered" infantile sexuality during his famous self-analysis. In fact, many of the most basic elements of Freud's later theory of infantile sexuality owe a debt to Fliess's ideas and observations on this topic. Freud even wrote, for example, of their "amalgamated theories" and of joining their researches "to the point where our individual property is no longer recognizable."[16] For Freud's loyal followers, the discovery of his intimate intellectual collaboration with Wilhelm Fliess must have been about as welcome as if an ardent believer in a flat earth had turned out to be Albert Einstein's closest confidant during the development of relativity theory. Omission of the offending evidence from the first edition of the Fliess correspondence allowed the myth of Freud as an isolated scientific genius to live on undisturbed.

The kind of censorship previously exercised by Anna Freud and her two coeditors over the contents of the Fliess letters is by no means exceptional in the historiography of psychoanalysis. Four of the five other volumes of Freud's published letters also exhibit clear signs of censorship—the one exception being the *Freud/Jung Letters*.[17] Presiding over this denial of history has been the Sigmund Freud Archives. During the last forty years, the Freud Archives has collected numerous letters, reminiscences, and other documents pertaining to Freud only to seal many of them away until the twenty-second century. The whimsical nature of many of the dates chosen to release specific holdings is a marvel to contemplate.[18] Thus one letter from Freud's deceased eldest son is sealed away until 2013, while another must wait an additional nineteen years, until 2032, to be seen. A letter from Josef Breuer (one wonders what could be so special about it) must await the year 2102 to be examined, which will be 177 years after Breuer's death. This kind of seemingly paranoid secrecy reminds one of an experience Paul Roazen once had when he was trying to interview an elderly Viennese analyst. When Roazen asked the analyst, who had agreed to be interviewed, just *when* he had joined the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, the man replied that it was none of Roazen's business. Later the man blurted out defiantly, "You are not going to get our secrets!"[19]

One rather important question worth addressing at this point is whether these tendencies toward historical secrecy, censorship, and mythologizing really make any difference for the validity of Freudian theory. After all, legends and various distortions of history have arisen in connection with other famous figures in the history of science—notably, Galileo, Newton, Darwin, and Einstein. Yet the

[16] Freud, *Letters to Wilhelm Fliess*, pp. 215, 218.

[17] Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung, *The Freud/Jung Letters: The Correspondence between Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung*, ed. William McGuire, trans. Ralph Manheim and R. F. C. Hull (Bollingen Series, 94) (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974).

[18] Paul Roazen, "On Errors Regarding Freud," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 1982, *63*:260–261.

[19] Roazen, *Freud and His Followers* (cit. n. 8), p. xxxiii.

validity of their scientific discoveries has never really been challenged by the historian's revisionist efforts to separate fact from myth. Peter Medawar has even claimed that the typical scientific paper is a fraud, presenting an impelling logical reconstruction of research that belies the blind alleys, chaos, and serendipity that generally occur along the way.[20] So why should Freud's attempts to distort and rewrite history be seen as any different from those practiced by other famous scientists?

Psychoanalytic theory is perhaps unique in the history of science in that it contains within itself an elaborate historical account of its own intellectual origins. Freud has therefore become his own most famous "case history." In contrast, we do not demand that Darwin should have stumbled on the law of natural selection while his mind was subject to a kind of intellectual struggle for existence leading to a "natural selection" of ideas; nor do we insist that Einstein's insights should have been born out of an intellectual "relativity" embedded in his thought and understanding. Yet psychoanalysis demands that its founder's life and intellectual insights obey the same general laws that he was the first to glimpse. Indeed, the myth of Freud's self-analytic path to discovery epitomizes this requirement. Thus errors and methodological shortcomings entailed in psychoanalytically reconstructed history are potentially telling for psychoanalysis itself. Insofar as psychoanalysts have repeatedly censored and distorted the history of their own discipline, they may well be doing the same thing in reconstructing the case histories of their patients. For shortcomings in psychoanalytic theory and method must inevitably be reflected in its historical reconstructions.

FREUD'S CASE HISTORIES

Nothing illustrates this last assertion better than Freud's own case histories. Through their clinical-historical character, these case histories blend inextricably into the kind of psychoanalytically reconstructed history that helped to create the Freud legend. Freud published only six detailed case histories after he broke with Breuer and developed the "talking cure" into psychoanalysis proper. Examined critically, these six case histories are by no means compelling empirical demonstrations of the correctness of his psychoanalytic views. Indeed, some of the cases present such dubious evidence in favor of psychoanalytic theory that one may seriously wonder why Freud even bothered to publish them. As Seymour Fisher and Roger Greenberg have commented in connection with their own review of the case histories, "It is curious and striking that Freud chose to demonstrate the utility of psychoanalysis through descriptions of largely unsuccessful cases."[21]

[20] Peter Medawar, "Is the Scientific Paper a Fraud?" in *Experiment: A Series of Case Studies,* ed. David Edge (London: BBC, 1964), pp. 7–12.

[21] Seymour Fisher and Roger P. Greenberg, *The Scientific Credibility of Freud's Theories and Therapy* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), p. 285. Here I distinguish, as Freud did, his psychoanalytic from his prepsychoanalytic (pre-1900) case histories: see, e.g., Jones, *Life of Freud* (cit. n. 1), Vol. III, p. 462. I also do not consider here as "case histories" Freud's ventures into psychobiography, such as his study of Leonardo, although a critical analysis of this material would certainly supplement my basic arguments: see, e.g., David E. Stannard, *Shrinking History* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980); Alan C. Elms, "Freud as Leonardo: Why the First Psychobiography Went Wrong," *Journal of Personality,* 1988, *56*:19–40; and Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* (1910), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 11, pp. 59–137.

Brief Treatments

Two of the cases were incomplete and the therapy ineffective. Freud's first case history dealt with an eighteen-year-old hysterical patient named "Dora." Treatment lasted only three months, when the patient, fed up with Freud's badgering manner and insensitive insinuations, fled therapy.[22] Freud's much later case of a female homosexual also terminated after a short time and involved no therapeutic improvement or even real treatment.[23] A third case was not actually treated by Freud. He saw five-year-old "Little Hans" only once, the "analysis" having been conducted by the boy's father, who was a devout Freudian. Moreover, Little Hans, whose statements were repeatedly reinterpreted by his father and Freud to suit psychoanalytic theory, appears to have understood the straightforward traumatic source of his horse phobia, which followed his witnessing a carriage accident, better than either of his two would-be therapists.[24] Using considerable common sense, Little Hans tried his best to resist Freud's oedipal "reconstructions" and interpretations; but his father and Freud, working in concert, gradually wore him down in an effort to get the case history to come out in a psychoanalytically correct fashion. Freud's other three cases reveal even more severe shortcomings.

Schreber and His Father

The case of Daniel Paul Schreber involved a psychotic German magistrate whom Freud never met but analyzed from Schreber's published memoir about his illness.[25] The extensive shortcomings of Freud's analysis have been revealed by the diligent researches of several scholars.[26] Two aspects of the case have invited significant reevaluation by these scholars: Schreber's relationship with his father and Schreber's supposed homosexuality.

Schreber's father, Moritz, was an orthopedic physician who had written nu-

[22] Sigmund Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 7, pp. 3–122; and Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of a Moralist* (New York: Viking, 1959), p. 82.

[23] Sigmund Freud, "The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman" (1920), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 18, pp. 146–172.

[24] Sigmund Freud, "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy" (1909), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 10, pp. 3–147; and Hans Eysenck, *Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985), pp. 104–113. John Bowlby has provided another plausible reinterpretation of Little Hans's phobia in terms of anxious attachment arising from the mother's threats to abandon him. These threats, and Little Hans's associated fear of leaving his house, closely preceded his development of a horse phobia, which he thenceforth used as his principal excuse for not wanting to leave home. See Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss,* Vol. II: *Separation* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 283–287.

[25] Sigmund Freud, "Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)" (1911), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 12, pp. 3–79; and Daniel Paul Schreber, *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken* (Leipzig: Oswald Mutze, 1903), trans. as *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness,* trans. and ed. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter (London: W. Dawson, 1955; Cambridge, Mass./London: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988).

[26] See William G. Niederland, "The 'Miracled-up' World of Schreber's Childhood," *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child,* 1959, *14*:383–413; Niederland, "Schreber: Father and Son," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly,* 1959, *28*:151–169; Niederland, "Schreber's Father," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association,* 1960, *8*:492–499; Niederland, "Further Data and Memorabilia Pertaining to the Schreber Case," in *Freud and His Patients,* ed. Mark Kanzer and Jules Glenn (New York: Jason Aronson, 1980), pp. 295–305; Morton Schatzman, *Soul Murder: Persecution in the Family* (New York: Random House, 1973); Han Israëls, *Schreber: Father and Son* (Madison, Conn.: International Universities Press, 1989); and Zvi Lothane, "Schreber, Freud, Flechsig, and Weber Revisited: An Inquiry into Methods of Interpretation," *Psychoanalytic Review,* 1989, *76*:203–262.

merous works on the upbringing and education of children. Freud, who had already reached his theory of paranoia before encountering Schreber's memoir, made no effort to read the father's published works. Yet there are seeming links between the son's delusions (that his chest was being suffocated, that his head was being compressed, that his hair was being pulled) and various mechanical devices that the father recommended to insure proper posture in children. For example, Moritz Schreber advocated the use of a "straightener" in order to prevent children from leaning forward while reading or writing. This instrument consisted of a horizontal bar that attached to a desk in front of the child and that impacted on the chest at the level of the clavicle and shoulders (see Figure 2). Another of his devices was a "head-holder" that discouraged a drooping head by causing the child's hair to be pulled whenever the head was lowered. Whether Daniel Paul Schreber was ever subjected to any of these devices is unknown. But William Niederland and Morton Schatzman have both made a case that Schreber's symptoms, interpreted by Freud as stemming from repressed homosexuality, were linked to his father's methods of upbringing.

The father's role in his son's psychosis is still far from clear. Niederland and especially Schatzman may have gone too far in arguing that the father was a tyrant who actually drove his son insane. Han Israëls has claimed instead that Moritz Schreber was a loving father who was adored by his wife and children and whose views on child rearing and correct posture were hardly unusual for the times. If Moritz Schreber was strict about posture and maintained high social ideals for his children, he also advocated "a cheerful, talkative, laughing, singing, playful conduct towards the child" and stressed how important it was to praise the child. He particularly warned that "the child should not be made into a slave of another's will."[27] Niederland and Schatzman both omitted this evidence.

Whereas Niederland and Schatzman effectively distorted the record about Moritz Schreber as a father, Freud went even further by omitting considerable concrete evidence about the father's personality and educational beliefs. Had this omission been based on ignorance, it would be understandable. But in fact Freud had evidence that contradicted his assertions about the father. In a remarkable letter to Sándor Ferenczi, written while Freud was working on the case, he referred to the father as a "despot in his household." He had apparently obtained this information from Dr. Arnold Georg Stegmann, a psychoanalytic follower who was acquainted not only with the various psychiatrists who had treated Daniel Paul Schreber but also with relatives of the patient. Astonishingly, Freud suppressed this information in his published case history and instead referred to Moritz Schreber as "an excellent father."[28]

Why Freud suppressed information about the father becomes clear from Zvi Lothane's reappraisal of the evidence for Schreber as a homosexual. Freud was anxious to show that paranoia originated in repressed homosexuality, which in Schreber's instance was supposedly a repressed homosexual attachment to the

[27] Israëls, *Schreber,* p. 333; and Moritz Schreber, *Kallipädie; oder Erziehung zur Schönheit durch naturgetreue und gleichmässige Förderung normaler Körperbildung, lebenstüchtiger Gesundheit und geistiger Veredelung und insbesondere durch möglichste Benutzung specieller Erziehungsmittel: Für Ältern, Erzieher und Lehrer* (Leipzig: Friedrich Fleischer, 1858), pp. 65, 135; English trans. in Lothane, "Schreber," p. 213.

[28] Sigmund Freud to Sándor Ferenczi, 6 Oct. 1910, quoted in Lothane, "Schreber," p. 215; and Freud, "Psycho-Analytic Notes on a Case of Paranoia" (cit. n. 25), p. 78.

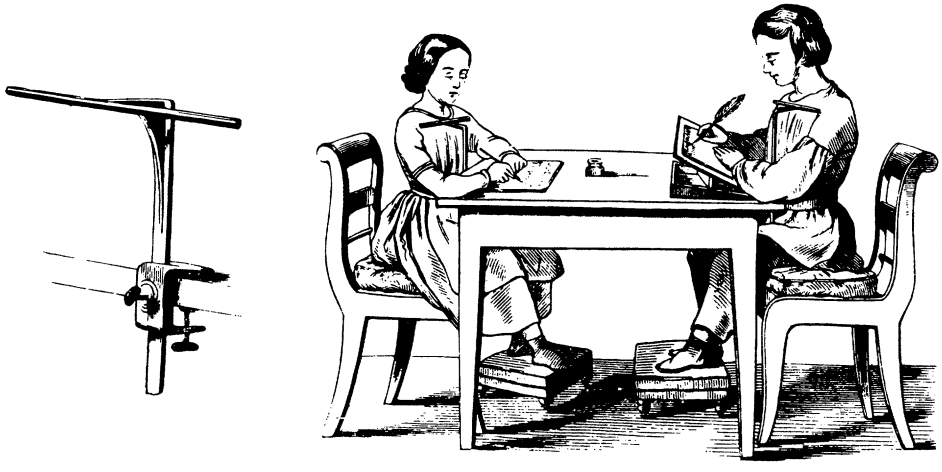

Figure 2. *Moritz Schreber's "straightener," a device for encouraging good posture in children. From Schreber,* Kallipädie, *pp. 203, 205.*

father. Before his illness, Schreber had displayed only heterosexual inclinations. Just before one of his hospitalizations, however, and while still half asleep, Schreber had suddenly experienced the "highly peculiar" and alien thought that it "really must be rather pleasant to be a woman succumbing to intercourse."[28] His subsequent illness involved his delusion that his psychiatrist and God were slowly changing him into a woman, a process against which he struggled for many years before finally becoming reconciled to God's plan. (That divine plan required Schreber's feminization in order that the world might eventually be redeemed.) Naturally, Freud interpreted these delusions as evidence for Schreber's unconscious homosexuality. But the psychoanalyst Lothane has concluded from a careful analysis of Schreber's *Memoirs* that Freud "manipulated the events described by Schreber and changed them to suit his bias."[30] These distortions involved imputing homosexual desires to Schreber under the most dubious of circumstances and ignoring the rage that Schreber felt toward his psychiatrist for abandoning him as a patient by having him transferred to an asylum for incurable patients. (Schreber had been treated and cured by the same psychiatrist a decade earlier.) After his illness had stabilized into a number of harmless delusions, Schreber struggled for many years to obtain his release from this asylum. Using brilliant legal means in his own defense, he finally won his case in a German court, despite the protests of the obdurate asylum director.

In any event, Freud evidently concluded that portraying Moritz Schreber as a despotic and persecutory father might only weaken his case for the homosexual and hence inverted oedipal nature of Schreber's illness. "Such a [superior] father as this," Freud argued in his case history, "was by no means unsuitable for transfiguration into a God in the affectionate memory of the son." Indeed, it was "the fact that his father-complex was in the main positively toned" and "unclouded" that finally allowed Schreber, in Freud's view, to reconcile himself to

[29] Schreber, *Memoirs* (cit. n. 25), p. 63.
[30] Lothane, "Schreber," p. 221.

his homosexual fantasies and thereby to achieve a partial mental recovery.[31] So the "despot in his household" was reconstructed by Freud as the "excellent father" of the published case history.

The Rat Man as Showpiece

Even the most complete and seemingly successful case histories of individuals actually treated by Freud are flawed by shaky "constructions" and lack of adequate follow-ups. His case histories of the Rat Man and the Wolf Man particularly illustrate this assertion. Freud was led to publish the first of these two case histories because he was feeling pressured to show the world that psychoanalysis could achieve successful therapeutic results.[32] Since the Rat Man had previously consulted Julius von Wagner-Jauregg, Freud's eminent psychiatric colleague at the University of Vienna, the case was a particularly critical test of Freud's therapeutic abilities. Before October 1908, when he communicated this case history at the First International Psychoanalytic Congress in Salzburg, Freud had yet to publish the results of a successful psychoanalysis. Astonishing as it may seem, it is unclear whether he had even conducted a successful analysis since Dora fled his office in 1900. "I have no case that is complete and can be viewed as a whole," Freud informed Carl Jung in a letter of 19 April 1908, just a week before the Salzburg Congress.[33] Freud also considered presenting details from the case history of Little Hans, whose treatment he was supervising at the time. But when Little Hans refused to be cured on schedule, the Rat Man became, by apparent default, Freud's first public communication of a psychoanalytic cure.

The Rat Man, whose real name was Ernst Lanzer, first came to Freud in October 1907 complaining of obsessive fears and compulsive impulses.[34] Lanzer's principal fear was that something terrible was going to happen to two of the people whom he cared about the most—his father and a lady friend, whom he eventually married. This fear had grown out of a vivid verbal account he had recently heard from a fellow army officer concerning a horrible Chinese torture. The torture involved strapping a large pot to the buttocks of the naked victim, who is chained and unable to move. Inside the pot, just before it is strapped on, the torturer places a large hungry rat. The rat is then terrorized by a red-hot poker introduced into the bottom of the pot through a small hole. In its fright, the rat retreats, tears at the buttocks of the victim, and finally, in desperation, attempts to bore into the victim's anus. Both the rat (through suffocation) and the victim (from hemorrhaging) eventually expire from this ghoulish torture.

Freud was able to understand the nature of Lanzer's obsession with rats by interpreting a number of his patient's associations to the German word *Ratten* (rats). Lanzer had revealed in analysis that his father had been a gambler, once losing money over a game of cards that he could not repay. Hence his father was a *Spielratte,* or "gambling rat." According to Freud, Lanzer also associated

[31] Freud, "Psycho-Analytic Notes on a Case of Paranoia," pp. 51, 78.

[32] Patrick Mahony, *Freud and the Rat Man* (New Haven, Conn./London: Yale Univ. Press, 1986), p. 85.

[33] *Freud/Jung Letters* (cit n. 17), p. 141.

[34] Sigmund Freud, "Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis" (1909), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 10, pp. 153–318.

"rats" directly with money through the word *Raten* (installments). The connection of the rat association with Lanzer's lady friend was hidden behind the screen-association *heiraten* (to marry). But the most crucial link in Freud's analysis was his patient's eventual identification of rats with children and, through children, with an episode in his own childhood when he had *bitten* someone and was punished by his father for this misbehavior. According to Freud's analysis, Lanzer unconsciously identified *himself* with rats. Since Freud, in a previous publication, had claimed that children sometimes imagine intercourse and birth as occurring *per anum,* the meaning of Lanzer's rat obsession became clear.[35] Lanzer was unconsciously fantasizing that he—a rat and a biter—was having anal intercourse with his father and with his lady friend. This appalling thought, kept from Lanzer's consciousness by repression, had become the source of his obsessive symptoms. Its ultimate psychological motive was Lanzer's aggression toward his father, who Freud believed, through further psychoanalytic reconstruction, had interrupted his son's early sexual life and threatened him with castration. According to Freud, his communication of this oedipal reconstruction "led to the complete restoration of the patient's personality, and to the removal of his inhibition."[36]

A number of significant discrepancies between the published case history and Freud's process notes, which were discovered among his papers after his death, have been pointed out by Patrick Mahony. According to Mahony, who is himself an analyst and sympathetic to the general goals of psychoanalysis, Freud's published case history is "muddled" and "inconsistent" on various matters of fact and also exhibits "glaring" omissions of information. In particular, there is an overemphasis on the father to the exclusion of the mother.[37] Mahony also points out that Freud misrepresented the length of his patient's treatment. The process notes show that Freud treated his patient for a little over three months on a regular daily basis. The treatment was irregular for the next three months and sporadic, at best, after that. (There is no actual record of any treatment after the first six months.) Yet Freud claimed that he had treated his patient "for more than eleven months," a claim that Mahony shows is quite impossible, and thus represents a "deliberate" distortion.[38]

In the published case history Freud engaged in a another misrepresentation of chronology in recounting one of his key reconstructions. On 27 December 1907 Lanzer reported certain information to Freud. This entailed Lanzer's habit of opening the door to his flat between 12 midnight and 1:00 A.M., apparently so that his father's ghost could enter. Lanzer would then stare at his penis, sometimes using a mirror. In the published case Freud history builds on this information:

[35] Sigmund Freud, "On the Sexual Theories of Children" (1908), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 9, pp. 209–226, on pp. 218–221.

[36] Freud, "Notes upon Obsessional Neurosis," p. 155.

[37] Mahony, *Freud and the Rat Man,* pp. 32, 34, 216. At a meeting of the Psychological Wednesday Evenings group in 1907, Otto Rank also criticized Freud's analysis of the Rat Man case for ignoring the mother: see Herman Nunberg and Ernst Federn, eds., *Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society,* 4 vols., trans. M. Nunberg in collaboration with Harold Collins (New York: International Universities Press, 1962–1975), Vol. I, p. 233.

[38] Mahony, *Freud and the Rat Man,* pp. 69, 81, 215.

> Starting from these indications and from other data of a similar kind, I ventured to put forth a construction to the effect that when he was a child of under six he had been guilty of some sexual misdemeanor connected with masturbation and had been soundly castigated for it by his father. This punishment, according to my hypothesis, had, it was true, put an end to his masturbating, but on the other hand it had left behind it an ineradicable grudge against his father and had established him for all time in his role of an interferer with the patient's sexual life.[39]

Obviously, Freud thought that it made more empirical sense for him to have suggested his reconstruction *after* hearing about the ghost story, and so that is how he presented it in the case history, even though he had actually proposed this reconstruction a month earlier. "Through alteration of temporal sequence," Mahony concludes of this particular distortion, "Freud's construction given to the Rat Man becomes in turn a fictionalized reconstruction shown to the reader."[40]

Such fictionalized reconstructions are especially common at key points in Freud's argument, and they influence, in subtle but significant ways, his reporting of what the Rat Man actually said to him.[41] Freud was concerned, for example, to show that the Rat Man's sexuality was liberated by the death of his father. He reports in the case history that the Rat Man was overcome by "compulsive" masturbation when he was twenty-one, "*shortly after his father's death*" (Freud's italics). The process notes tell a somewhat different story. "He [Lanzer] began it [masturbation] when he was about 21— after his father's death, as I got him to confirm—because he had heard of it and felt a certain curiosity." The patient apparently mentioned nothing about a "compulsion" to masturbate. Moreover, the whole connection between the Rat Man's masturbation and his father's death was largely engineered by Freud rather than volunteered by the patient through his "free associations." To make the reconstruction even more convincing, Freud omitted the word "about" from the original phrase "about 21" and inserted the word "shortly" into the phrase "after his father's death."[42] In actual fact the father had died two years earlier, when Lanzer was nineteen.

Freud's Rat Man case history is also characterized by exaggerated assertions regarding its therapeutic outcome. His claim to have cured his patient and to have brought about "the complete restoration of the patient's personality" is highly implausible on several grounds. To begin with, Lanzer had broken off his analysis with Freud after a relatively brief period and well before his transference had been fully resolved. Just after Freud had completed the written version of the case history in October 1909, he confessed to Jung that his patient was still having ongoing problems. "He is facing life with courage and ability," Freud reported to Jung. "The point that still gives him trouble (father-complex and transference) has shown up clearly in my conversations with this intelligent and grateful man."[43] Given that Lanzer's neurosis supposedly centered on his father-complex, it is extremely difficult to imagine how Freud could have considered his

[39] Freud, "Notes upon Obsessional Neurosis," pp. 204, 302–303; quotation on p. 205.

[40] Mahony, *Freud and the Rat Man,* p. 74.

[41] Adolf Grünbaum made this point rather effectively in "The Role of the Case Study Method in the Foundations of Psychoanalysis," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy,* 1988, *18*:623–658.

[42] Freud, "Notes upon Obsessional Neurosis," pp. 261 (process notes), 203.

[43] *Freud/Jung Letters* (cit. n. 17), p. 255.

patient "cured" after such a brief analysis ending in a still unresolved transference. At best Freud might have expected to achieve a symptomatic relief of this patient's rat obsession, which is apparently what did happen. But he could hardly have expected a complete dissipation of the broad spectrum of obsessions and compulsions that had engrossed his patient's psychic life since childhood.[44] As Mahony sums up, "Freud mixed momentous insights with exaggerated claims," some of which "were made in his zeal to protect and promote a new discipline." The Rat Man—cured or not—was clearly intended to be a showpiece for Freud's nascent psychoanalytic movement. That this case history became one (and for the loyal has remained one) is evidenced by Peter Gay's recent conclusion that it "brilliantly served to buttress Freud's theories, notably those postulating the childhood roots of neurosis. . . . Freud was not masochist enough to publish only failures." Since the patient died in World War I, there is no follow-up information on the case allowing us to assess the longer-term consequences of Freud's brief therapy.[45]

Conversations with the Wolf Man

There is one major patient of Freud's who did live long enough to provide a clear indication of the long-term consequences of his psychoanalysis. Freud treated the Wolf Man for four years, from 1910 to 1914, and he also conducted a brief second analysis five years later to remove a remnant of "transference" that had remained unresolved during the first treatment. In subsequent years the Wolf Man, whose real name was Sergei Pankejeff, was reanalyzed twice by Ruth Mack Brunswick.[46] After World War II a number of different psychoanalysts treated him until his death in 1978. The Wolf Man was therefore in and out of analysis repeatedly during more than sixty years. Unlike the Rat Man, he had the opportunity to tell about it.

Freud's reconstruction of the traumatic event that supposedly caused the Wolf Man's obsessional neurosis typifies the problematic nature of the psychoanalytic enterprise. According to Freud, the patient witnessed his parents having intercourse when he was one and a half, which prematurely awakened his libido and induced a passive homosexual attitude toward men. Freud reconstructed this traumatic event on the basis of a dream that the patient had had at the age of four:

[44] In a paper on his psychoanalytic procedures published in 1904, Freud stated that six months to three years were required for a successful psychoanalysis ("Freud's Psycho-Analytic Procedure," in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 7, pp. 249–254, on p. 254). By this measure, a severe case of obsessional neurosis like that displayed by the Rat Man should probably have received several years of treatment from Freud. In a footnote added in 1924 to a reprinting of his case history of Dora, who had fallen ill again in 1923 and had consulted one of his colleagues, Freud wrote: "No fair judge of analytic therapy will make it a reproach that the three months' treatment she received at that time effected no more than the relief of her current conflict and was unable to give her protection against subsequent illness": "Fragment of an Analysis" (cit. n. 22), p. 14n.

[45] Mahony, *Freud and the Rat Man* (cit. n. 32), p. 213; and Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York: Norton, 1988), p. 267. According to Lanzer's relatives, his analysis with Freud made him less shy, which helped him to marry: Daniel Goleman, "As a Therapist, Freud Fell Short, Scholars Find," *New York Times,* 6 Mar. 1990, Science Times section, pp. C1, C12. This is hardly confirmation, however, of Freud's far more dramatic claim, which was to have brought about "the complete restoration of the patient's personality."

[46] Ruth Mack Brunswick, "A Supplement to Freud's 'History of an Infantile Neurosis,' " *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.,* 1928, *9*:439–476.

> I dreamt that it was night and that I was lying in my bed. . . . 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 [see Figure 3]. . . . In great terror, evidently of being eaten up by the wolves, I screamed and woke up.[47]

Freud's analysis of this dream led him to conclude that the white wolves represented the parents' white underwear and that the castration fears of the dreamer stemmed from his having witnessed "coitus a tergo, three times repeated," which enabled the Wolf Man to see that his mother lacked a phallus. After a four-year analysis and a shorter reanalysis following a brief relapse, the patient was discharged by Freud as cured. James Strachey has called this "the most elaborate and no doubt the most important of all Freud's case histories." It has also generally been regarded by psychoanalysts as a considerable therapeutic success.[48]

Owing to the indefatigable efforts of an Austrian journalist, Karin Obholzer, who located the Wolf Man in Vienna in the early 1970s, we now have access to the Wolf Man's own impressions of his analysis with Freud. From Obholzer's conversations, we learn that the Wolf Man himself considered Freud's interpretation of his famous dream to be "terribly farfetched" and that he also felt betrayed by Freud, who had promised him that he would one day actually remember the traumatic event that had made him ill. "The whole thing is improbable," the Wolf Man also pointed out, "because in Russia, children sleep in their nanny's bedroom, not in their parents'."[49] The Wolf Man has also reported that the "wolves" in his famous dream were not wolves at all, but rather a special breed of wolflike dogs—a curious and unexplained discrepancy.[50]

We also learn from Obholzer's interviews that the Wolf Man was by no means cured, either by Freud or by subsequent analysts. He remained a compulsively brooding personality with endless self-doubts; and he himself strongly disputed the analytic myth of his "cure." "That was the theory," he told Obholzer, "that Freud had cured me 100 percent. . . . And that's why [Muriel] Gardiner recommended that I write memoirs [published by Gardiner in 1971]. To show the world how Freud cured a seriously ill person. . . . It's all false." As the eighty-six-year-old Wolf Man plaintively concluded of his psychoanalysis: "In reality, the whole thing looks like a catastrophe. I am in the same state as when I first came to Freud, and Freud is no more." Furthermore, subsequent analysts refused to leave the Wolf Man alone, insisting on giving him free psychoanalysis as a means of keeping historical tabs on him, contradicting one another's advice and opinions, and undermining the independence of his judgment. "Psychoanalysts are a problem," the Wolf Man confided to Obholzer, "no doubt about it."[51]

[47] Sigmund Freud, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis" (1918), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 17, pp. 3–122, on p. 29.

[48] *Ibid.,* p. 37; James Strachey, "Editor's Note" (1955), in Freud, *Standard Edition,* Vol. 18, pp. 3–6, on p. 3; and Muriel Gardiner, ed., *The Wolf-Man: By the Wolf-Man* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), p. vii.

[49] Karin Obholzer, *The Wolf-Man Sixty Years Later: Conversations with Freud's Controversial Patient,* trans. Michael Shaw (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 36.

[50] The actual breed was a Spitz, which includes Pomeranians and huskies: Patrick J. Mahony, *Cries of the Wolf Man* (New York: International Universities Press, 1984), p. 139.

[51] Obholzer, *The Wolf Man,* pp. 113, 172, 137. Compare these statements by the Wolf Man with Gardiner's rosy assessment of his analysis: "The Wolf-Man himself is convinced that without psychoanalysis he would have been condemned to lifelong misery" (Gardiner, *The Wolf-Man* [cit. n. 48], p. vii).

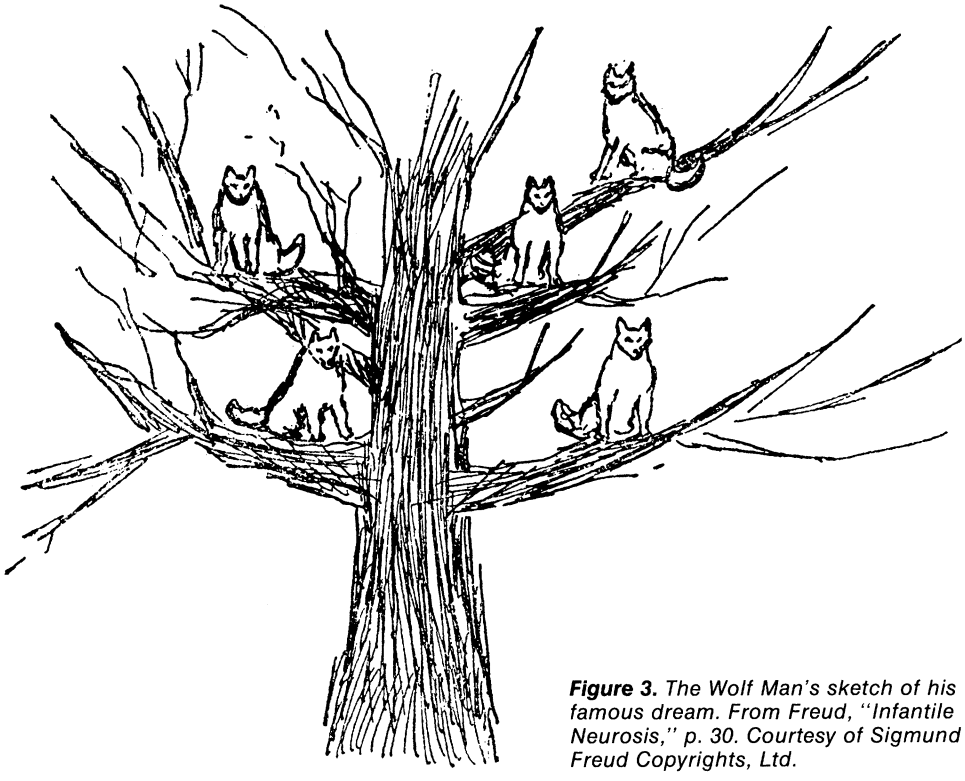

Figure 3. *The Wolf Man's sketch of his famous dream. From Freud, "Infantile Neurosis," p. 30. Courtesy of Sigmund Freud Copyrights, Ltd.*

Finally, we learn from Obholzer's account that Kurt Eissler, through the Sigmund Freud Archives, was sending the Wolf Man money on a regular basis, to help him pay off a certain lady friend and former sexual partner who was bleeding him dry. When the Wolf Man expressed his wish to emigrate to America in order to escape this costly and unpleasant situation, his request was repeatedly discouraged, apparently because the psychoanalytic movement preferred to support him financially in Vienna, where he was living in anonymity, rather than risk his discovery in America as Freud's most famous but still highly neurotic patient. (Just imagine him spilling his guts to a newscaster on one of television's major investigative reporting shows!) Eissler and other analysts also made strenuous efforts to dissuade the Wolf Man from talking with Obholzer, who only succeeded in her efforts because of her extraordinary perseverance and her promise not to publish her conversations with her ever-fearful informant until after his death. These conversations were, so to speak, the Wolf Man's dying protest against the false promises and disappointments of psychoanalysis. "Instead of doing me some good," he exclaimed to Obholzer, "psychoanalysts did me harm," adding plaintively, "I am telling you this confidentially."[52] In short, one must seriously wonder whether this famous case history was, as claimed, a therapeutic success and hence a demonstration of Freud's brilliant analytic powers. Stripped of the convenient censorship and the dubious reconstructions made pos-

[52] Obholzer, *The Wolf Man*, p. 112.

sible by the patient's anonymity, the case history appears instead to have been a tacitly recognized embarrassment whose true nature needed to be hidden by the arm-twisting and financial resources of the Sigmund Freud Archives.

Of course, the fact that the Wolf Man, Anna O., and various other famous psychoanalytic patients were not cured is not technically a refutation of Freud's clinical theories and claims. These cases *can* be admitted as failures, or as only partial successes, and Freud's theories still be correct. But research since the 1930s has repeatedly shown that psychoanalytic patients fare no better than patients who participate in over a hundred other different forms of psychotherapy. Freud maintained on the contrary that psychoanalysis was the only form of psychotherapy that could produce true and permanent cures—all other therapeutic successes being due to suggestion. As Hans Eysenck has argued, the failure of psychoanalysis to achieve *superior* cure rates, as promised, should be taken as strong evidence of its theoretical failure.[53] Freud himself seems to have been sensitive to this issue. In 1906 he told Jung that "I should not even claim that every case of hysteria can be cured by it," and he added: "It is not possible to explain anything to a hostile public; accordingly I have kept certain things that might be said concerning the limits of therapy and its mechanism to myself."[54] Such censored evidence, as Freud clearly knew, was crucial to any honest argument for or against the theoretical validity of psychoanalysis.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF PSYCHOANALYTIC KNOWLEDGE

If Freud did not cure most of his patients or even believe them generally curable, what was the purpose of publishing case histories? Even more to the point, why did Freud choose to publish analyses of individuals who were usually treated only briefly, usually never cured, and sometimes not even seen by him personally? Just who did he really expect to convince by these fragmentary and imperfect case histories? And why do many psychoanalysts proudly consider such problematic case histories to be, in Kurt Eissler's words, "the pillars on which psychoanalysis as an empirical science rests"?[55]

In answer to these questions it is important to recognize that there were two very different kinds of "construction" going on in Freud's case histories. The first kind of construction involved the interpretive "reconstruction" of traumatic childhood events. Freud was also engaged, however, in a much broader *social* construction of the psychoanalytic mode of knowledge. The enormously powerful role exerted by this second form of construction has not been given sufficient attention in the literature on Freud.[56] Yet social construction has been absolutely essential in the development of psychoanalysis as a discipline.

The role of social construction in science has received increasing attention

[53] Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1916/17), in *Standard Edition,* Vols. 15–16, in Vol. 16, pp. 450–451; and Eysenck, *Decline and Fall* (cit. n. 24), p. 44.

[54] *Freud/Jung Letters* (cit. p. 17), p. 12.

[55] Kurt R. Eissler, *Medical Orthodoxy and the Future of Psychoanalysis* (New York: International Universities Press, 1965), p. 395.

[56] The social structure of psychoanalysis as a profession has been discussed by Roazen, *Freud and His Followers* (cit. n. 8); Weisz, "Scientists and Sectarians" (cit. n. 3); and Janet Malcolm, *Psychoanalysis: The Impossible Profession* (New York: Knopf, 1981); and Malcolm, *In the Freud Archives* (New York: Knopf, 1983).

from historians and sociologists of science over the last decade.[57] In their accounts of scientific change, social constructionists have provided a welcome antidote to naive empiricism and logical positivism, on the one hand, and to extreme forms of sociological relativism, on the other hand. The basic argument of social constructionists is that "facts" do not just exist or gain recognition as such, even in the physical sciences. Nor do scientific arguments and theories follow directly from facts. Rather, the process by which facts and theories come to be accepted involves a complex set of social negotiations and personal linkages along usually extensive social and epistemological networks. Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer have recently described this process in some detail for a controversy that took place between Robert Boyle and Thomas Hobbes during the Scientific Revolution. Aspects of their analysis are highly relevant to the manner in which psychoanalysis took form as a discipline, so I shall briefly review their account here.

During the seventeenth century a new way of knowledge production through scientific experiment had begun to oppose itself to the older, Scholastic tradition of learning from books and authorities. The dispute between Boyle and Hobbes centered on various experimental results made possible by the newly invented air pump, which Boyle in particular championed in his advocacy of the new experimental philosophy. At stake in this debate for Boyle and his Royal Society peers was the status of their new method of knowledge production. According to Shapin and Schaffer, Boyle employed three different "technologies" or "knowledge-producing tools" in his efforts to win converts to the experimental philosophy.[58] These three technologies are similar to ones later utilized by Freud in his own quest for adherents. The first technology, a *material* one, entailed arguments for the physical integrity of the air pump and allowed others, by being able to construct working air pumps themselves, to replicate Boyle's experimental claims. Especially noteworthy was Boyle's use of extensive visual depictions of the air pump in order to illustrate all of the key parts of the apparatus. As a supplement to this material technology, Boyle's *literary* technology or style of rhetoric aimed at making his readers into vicarious witnesses of his experimental trials. By describing his experimental failures as well as his successes, Boyle also sought to underscore his modesty and trustworthiness as a scientist. Finally Boyle's third technology, a *social* one, revolved around the construction of open laboratory

[57] Among the most important exponents of the social construction of science are Latour and Woolgar, *Laboratory Life,* and Latour, *Science in Action* (both cit. n. 2); Andrew Pickering, *Constructing Quarks: A Sociological History of Particle Physics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1984); Steven Shapin, "History of Science and Its Sociological Reconstructions," *History of Science,* 1982, *20*:157–211; Harry M. Collins and Trevor J. Pinch, *Frames of Meaning: The Social Construction of Extraordinary Science* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982); and Collins, *Changing Order: Replication and Induction in Scientific Practice* (Beverly Hills, Calif./London: Sage, 1985). Ludwig Fleck, in a remarkably perceptive work that influenced Thomas Kuhn but was otherwise little read for forty years, set forth a pioneering account of the social construction of facts in science: see Fleck, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact,* ed. Thaddeus J. Trenn and Robert K. Merton, trans. Fred Bradley and Thaddeus J. Trenn (1935; Chicago/London: Univ. Chicago Press, 1979); and Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 1962). The extreme form of social construction offered by the Edinburgh school has generally been rejected by other sociologists of science: see, e.g., Barry Barnes, *Scientific Knowledge and Social Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974); Barnes, *Interests and the Growth of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977); and David Bloor, *Knowledge and Social Imagery* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976).

[58] Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump* (cit. n. 2), pp. 25–26.

spaces to which witnesses could freely come in order to observe experiments and equipment at first hand. The Royal Society of London was the institutional offspring of this third technology. The new social conventions of experimental science associated with this society stood in sharp contrast to the norms of bookish learning and secrecy promoted at that time by alchemy and Scholasticism.

FREUD'S MATERIAL TECHNOLOGY

In 1900, with the appearance of the *Interpretation of Dreams,* Freud found himself confronting many of the same obstacles that Robert Boyle and his fellow advocates of the new experimental science had faced during the Scientific Revolution. Like Boyle, Freud was attempting to develop and promote a controversial new method of investigation. He clearly hoped that this new approach would revolutionize psychology just as the experimental approach had revolutionized seventeenth-century natural science. Also like Boyle, Freud sought to avail himself of material, literary, and social technologies in his efforts to gain acceptance for his psychoanalytic methods and findings. He did not, however, exploit these technologies in the same way that Boyle had done three centuries earlier. Confronted by his own unique problems and given his own investigatory style and ambitions, Freud found his own unique solutions. These solutions, I believe, have given psychoanalysis many of its most distinctive institutional characteristics and have also determined, in large part, its current epistemological problems.

Freud's material technology centered on his psychoanalytic method of interpreting dreams, everyday slips and bungled actions, and psychoneurotic symptoms. By employing the method of free association he claimed that he could uncover the unconscious sources of these phenomena and thereby cure most neurotics of their illnesses. His whole program of publishing between 1900 and 1905 was focused on his attempts to describe the principal aspects of this material technology to his readers. In the *Interpretation of Dreams,* for example, Freud sought to convince his readers that dreams were "the royal road to the unconscious" and that his new method of dream interpretation was the only reliable one. His next two books, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* and *Jokes and Their Relationship to the Unconscious,* offered similar methodological demonstrations of how psychoanalysis illuminated normal psychology.[59] As a bridge to the field of psychopathology, Freud's case history of Dora, written in 1901 but withheld from publication until 1905, sought to elucidate the value of dream interpretation for psychotherapy. During these years, Freud was clearly seeking to make psychoanalysis into a *practical* form of knowledge. The best way to learn his new methods, he was saying, was first and foremost through self-observation and then through observation of others. To a certain extent this didactic approach worked. Some casual readers, like the Rat Man, became patients; and some patients, like Wilhelm Stekel, became psychoanalysts.

Freud was not as successful as Robert Boyle and his Royal Society peers, however, in convincing most of his medical colleagues that his controversial methods were really *replicable* in the hands of others. Whereas Boyle had eventually been able to instruct others how to build reliable air pumps (such apparatuses were ultimately mass produced and sold to a curious public by instrument

[59] Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1904 [1901]), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 6; and Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 8.

makers), Freud was either unable or unwilling to describe his own methods in such a way that they could be reproduced independently of himself and his incipient school.

Between 1900 and 1908 Freud published only two short descriptions of his psychoanalytic method, neither of which would have sufficed for anyone to have learned his interpretative techniques. "The details of this technique of interpretation or translation," he wrote in 1904, "have not yet been published." Freud even used the unavailability of his methods as a defense against criticisms. "Not one of all the people who have shown an interest in my therapy and passed definite judgements upon it have ever asked me how I actually go about it. . . . Still, as I am forced to be brief, I can only hint at this."[60]

In 1908 Freud actually planned to remedy his previous failure to publish a detailed description of his methods by writing a book to be called *General Methodology of Psychoanalysis*. This work, which would have made his techniques far more accessible to testing and peer criticism, never appeared. As James Strachey has concluded in this connection: "The relative paucity of Freud's writings on technique, as well as his hesitations and delays over their production, suggests that there was some feeling of reluctance on his part to publish this kind of material. And this, indeed, seems to have been the case." Freud did finally publish half a dozen papers on his therapeutic method between 1911 and 1915. Originally intended for private distribution among his followers, even these papers, as Strachey admits, "can scarcely be described as a systematic exposition of the psycho-analytic technique."[61]

So what kept Freud from making the most of his material technology by communicating it fully to his medical colleagues so that they could test it and vindicate it for themselves? In significant part, Freud's failure to take this step may have been motivated by the various criticisms that were already being directed against his methods. Many psychiatrists and neurologists believed that these unorthodox methods, and the therapeutic results Freud was claiming for them, were simply not reproducible by others. This had been, in fact, a recurrent criticism of his work ever since he collaborated with Breuer.[62]

Repeated criticisms regarding the difficulties and subjective elements inherent in Freud's techniques were voiced even by some of his closest sympathizers. In 1901 Wilhelm Fliess had gone so far as to accuse Freud of reading his own thoughts into the minds of his patients.[63] By withholding precise details about these methods from the wider medical profession and by teaching them only to his closest followers, Freud apparently hoped to control the practical application of his material technology and hence to arbitrate all of the discordant interpretations that might arise in connection with it. It is true, of course, that Freud's

[60] Freud, "Freud's Psycho-Analytic Procedure" (cit. n. 44), p. 252; and Freud, "On Psychotherapy" (1905), in *Standard Edition*, Vol. 7, pp. 257–268, on pp. 261, 266.

[61] James Strachey, "Papers on Technique: Editor's Introduction" (1958), in Freud, *Standard Edition*, Vol. 12, pp. 85–88, on p. 87, 86.

[62] See, e.g., Adolf von Strümpell, *Review of Studien über Hysterie*, by Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Nervenheilkunde*, *8*:159–161; Hannah S. Decker, *Freud in Germany: Revolution and Reaction in Science, 1893–1907*, *Psychological Issues*, 1977, *11*(1) (Monograph 41); and Norman Kiell, *Freud without Hindsight: Reviews of His Work, 1893–1939*, with translations from the German by Vladimir Rus, and the French by Denise Boneau (Madison, Conn.: International Universities Press, 1988).

[63] Freud, *Letters to Wilhelm Fliess* (cit. n. 4), p. 447.

theories could provide only a general guideline for his therapeutic methods, which would always remain something of an evolving art. But the difficulty of articulating an evolving and partly intuitive technique had never stopped him in the past from attempting to describe his various clinical methods, including the cathartic method and his method for interpreting dreams. In short, after 1900 Freud chose to play down the normal role that is performed in modern science by a material technology that can be widely tested and criticized by others (a topic to which I shall return). As a result of this decision, there is still no systematic treatment of psychoanalytic technique today. "Analysts know too," Mahony has commented, "that our understanding of technique owes much more to the weight of oral tradition and elaboration than to the relatively few comments in Freud's written works."[64]

FREUD'S LITERARY TECHNOLOGY

After 1897 Freud's literary technology—or rhetorical style—became an increasingly important legitimating device for explaining why his material technology had been demoted from its usually prominent place in science. In the literary sphere Freud was, of course, a master. It was for his literary abilities, not his scientific ones, that he later received the Goethe Prize in 1930.

Many scholars have commented on Freud's literary style, and I will describe here only those aspects of it that facilitated his post-1900 construction of psychoanalysis as a discipline.[65] Freud was not one to minimize the difficulties inherent in convincing his readers. In fact, he went out of his way to advertise these difficulties. By his willingness to address the many obstacles confronting psychoanalytic knowledge, Freud clearly encouraged his readers to identify sympathetically with his aims while suspending their criticisms. At the same time, he sought to turn the incompleteness and speculative nature of his case materials into a kind of rhetorical virtue. In his introduction to the Dora case he explained the various dilemmas entailed in publishing detailed information from a psychoanalysis. The more that one learned about a patient's life and illness, he observed, the more it became impossible to publish the evidence in clinical form, since the identity of the patient might be compromised. He also opposed the device of extensive dissimulation in case histories, since the act of falsifying information to preserve the patient's anonymity inevitably compromised the integrity of the report.[66] Thus it was generally only *incomplete* analyses like that of Dora and the Rat Man that could be published! Furthermore, the most interesting analyses from a theoretical point of view, he stressed, were usually therapeutic failures, since successful treatment leads to the patient terminating the analysis and thus places significant limitations on the evidence obtained.[67]

[64] Patrick J. Mahony, *Freud as a Writer* (New York: International Universities Press, 1982), p. 5.

[65] See, e.g., the numerous studies reviewed by Mahony, *ibid.*; and the essay by Stanley Fish, on whose treatments I draw heavily in the following discussion: "Withholding the Missing Portion: Psychoanalysis and Rhetoric," in *Doing What Comes Naturally* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 525–593. See also Clark Glymour, "The Theory of Your Dreams," in *Physics, Philosophy, and Psychoanalysis,* ed. R. S. Cohen and L. Laudan (Dordrecht/Boston: D. Reidel, 1983), pp. 57–71; and Holt, *Freud Reappraised* (cit. n. 8).

[66] Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis" (cit. n. 22), pp. 7–9, 12 (Dora); and Freud, "Notes upon Obsessional Neurosis" (cit. n. 34), pp. 155–156 (dissimulation).

[67] Freud, "Notes upon Obsessional Neurosis," p. 208n; and Freud, "The Future Prospects of Psycho-Analytic Therapy" (1910), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 11, pp. 141–151, on p. 142.

Another hallmark of Freud's literary style, as Stanley Fish has pointed out, is his consummate use of "rhetoric disclaiming rhetorical intention." In the Wolf Man case, for example, Freud disavowed that his analysis was written "in order to produce conviction." Rather he claimed that it was composed for those readers who were "already . . . convinced by their own clinical experiences." As Fish perceptively notes, however, "The denial of a strategy of conviction is itself a strategy of conviction."[68] Freud's tactic was clearly to induce the reader to abandon all "resistance" toward his arguments and thus to surrender to his psychoanalytic judgments. Like the patient, the reader is subjected to a psychoanalytic "education" and is encouraged to set aside a critical attitude for the sake of promised progress. Ultimately, the surrender to Freud's judgment becomes virtually complete, since Freud was also responsible for all the strange new rules and procedures that allowed him to "reconstruct" the unconscious material that emerges during an analysis.

Even Freud's remarkable literary style, however, could not fill the gap created by his decision to withhold his material technology from public scrutiny. Rather, his rhetorical abilities helped him to ease the transfer of responsibility from his material to his social technology. For ultimately it was to a powerful *social technology* that Freud looked after 1900 to secure the adherents and intellectual commitments that his material technology had been unable to achieve.

THE EMERGENCE OF FREUD'S SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY

Before 1900, with the salient exceptions of his collaboration with Josef Breuer and his close friendship with Wilhelm Fliess, Freud worked alone. He later looked back with nostalgia on his years of "splendid isolation" before the psychoanalytic movement became a reality.[69] In 1902 Freud invited a small group, composed of Alfred Adler, Max Kahane, Rudolf Reitler, and Wilhelm Stekel, to join him once a week for psychoanalytic discussions at his home. This group, initially known as the Psychological Wednesday Evenings circle, had grown to seventeen members by 1906, when Otto Rank became the society's paid secretary and began to keep regular minutes of the meetings. This same year Freud began to correspond with Carl Jung, who was Eugen Bleuler's assistant at the Burghölzli Mental Hospital in Zurich. Bleuler and Jung had already been experimenting with Freud's psychoanalytic approach for several years, and in 1907 Jung extended Freud's ideas to the study of schizophrenia with his *Psychology of Dementia Praecox*.[70] The psychoanalytic movement reached full stride in 1908 with its First International Congress, organized by Jung and attended by forty individuals from six countries. In step with this growing institutional status, that year Freud's Wednesday Evenings group renamed itself the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. By 1910, with the founding of the International Psychoanalytic

[68] Fish, "Withholding the Missing Portion" (cit. n. 65), pp. 550 (rhetoric), 529 (denial); and Freud, "Infantile Neurosis" (cit. n. 47), p. 13.

[69] Freud, "History of the Movement" (cit. n. 5), p. 22.

[70] Carl Gustav Jung, *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox* (1907), in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, 18 vols., ed. Gerhard Adler, Michael Fordham, and Herbert Read, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon, 1953–1966; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1967–1976), Vol. III, pp. 3–151. For Rank's minutes see Nunberg and Federn, *Minutes of the Vienna Society* (cit. n. 37).

Association and the second of two new psychoanalytic journals, Freud's social technology had achieved imposing status.

It was this rapidly emergent social and institutional structure within the psychoanalytic movement that inherited Freud's most pressing epistemological problem: if psychoanalysis was not to be learned from books, then was it learnable at all? And if it was learnable, how was this to be achieved? In other words, how was psychoanalysis to make the transition from a theoretical science developed primarily by one individual, to a practical science applied by many? The case of Little Hans (1909) was strategic in this respect because it demonstrated that Freud's methods could be replicated by someone working under his guidance. Most of the running narrative of the case was actually supplied by the patient's father. Freud interspersed this text with observations of his own and contributed a final section. When it first appeared in print the case history was not actually published under Freud's own name but was reported as having been "communicated" by him.

Even within his own group of followers, however, Freud's methods were not always easily learned and sometimes provoked considerable controversy in their application. A presentation by Otto Rank at a Psychological Wednesday Evenings meeting in 1906 was greeted with repeated accusations that Rank's psychoanalytic interpretations were strained and excessive. "The tendency of the paper," argued Philipp Frey, "is to interpret everything according to Freud's method, and . . . therefore too much has been read into the method and interpreted from it." "There was too much interpretation!" seconded Adolf Häutler. And Max Kahane reiterated the views of his fellow critics with the retort: "The speaker is going too far in some of his interpretations; it is like overextending an elastic band." As the later editors of these discussions—aided by their more secure belief in psychoanalysis—were compelled to remark: "In these early days, the same situation appears again and again: there is the complaint that too much is being interpreted, and the oedipus complex has no reality for the discussants. In other words, their resistances are strong."[71]

Emerging signs of dissension within the psychoanalytic movement brought the question of standardized methods and training procedures to the forefront. After Freud, in 1907, presented case material about the Rat Man at the Psychological Wednesday Evenings circle, Alfred Adler is recorded as saying that he "doubts that psychoanalysis can be taught or learned." And he concluded, "There is more than one way in psychoanalysis"—an ominous portent of the schisms to come. Freud did not let such an apparent challenge to the future of psychoanalysis go unanswered. "There should not be any doubt," he responded firmly to Adler, "that the psychoanalytic method can be learned. It will be possible to learn it once the arbitrariness of individual psychoanalysts is curbed by tested rules."[72]

The principal challenge confronting Freud's social technology at this time was maintaining control over the diverse approaches that were beginning to assert themselves within psychoanalysis. The need for "tested rules" of analytic procedure was only a part of this problem. Freud took advantage of the Second International Psychoanalytic Congress in 1910 to create an International Association

[71] Nunberg and Federn, eds., *Minutes of the Vienna Society* (cit. n. 37), Vol. I, pp. 7, 9, 12.
[72] *Ibid.*, pp. 234, 237.

that would coordinate the different local branches and have power over them. He saw this organization as a means of regulating who could call themselves "psychoanalysts" and hence whose therapeutic efforts should be counted in assessments of his methods.[73] To Sándor Ferenczi, whose views on this matter were closest to his own, Freud assigned the task of presenting an outline of the new organization to the congress. "The psychoanalytic outlook," Ferenczi had confided to Freud just before the meeting, "does not lead to democratic equalizing: there should be an *élite* rather on the lines of Plato's rule of philosophers."[74] In accordance with these views, and with Freud's explicit approval, Ferenczi insisted to his colleagues at the congress that all papers written by psychoanalysts should be submitted first to the president of the new association. The president, who was to be appointed for life, was to have the power of veto over publication. He was also to have absolute power to appoint or depose analysts! Naturally, such a dictatorial proposal was rejected by most of the other members attending the meeting, especially the Viennese, who also resented Freud's efforts to impose Jung as president of the association. Although Freud and Ferenczi backed off from most of their initial proposals, Jung was successfully elected president, largely owing to Freud's impassioned plea that a non-Jew must lead the organization in order for it to gain international respect.[75]

Increasing dissension within the movement only strengthened Freud's resolve to make social control essential to the rites of passage within psychoanalysis. In papers published between 1910 and 1912 he again stressed the importance of proper training. He also insisted that psychoanalytic techniques were like any other medical procedure and must be learned firsthand from experts.[76] An analyst without proper training, he maintained, "will easily fall into the temptation of projecting outwards some of the peculiarities of his own personality . . . as a theory having universal validity; he will bring the psycho-analytic method into discredit, and lead the inexperienced astray."[77] Criticism and dissension, in short, were to be viewed as stemming from deviations in proper technique. And proper technique demanded a proper personal analysis.

When Jung, in 1912, suggested that every analyst should undergo a supervised personal analysis, Freud was quick to agree. "I count it as one of the many merits of the Zurich school of analysis that they have laid increased emphasis on this requirement, and have embodied it in the demand that everyone who wishes to carry out analyses on other people shall first himself undergo an analysis by someone with expert knowledge. Anyone who takes up the work seriously should choose this course." Thus Freud's original emphasis on the importance of self-analysis gave way to the notion of a training analysis—a "psychoanalytic purification" as he called it.[78] Recognizing the element of social construction that

[73] Jung had already foreseen this problem in 1906. "The more psychoanalysis becomes known," he wrote to Freud, "the more will incompetent doctors dabble in it and naturally make a mess of it. This will then be blamed on you and your theory": *Freud/Jung Letters* (cit. n. 17), p. 11.

[74] Jones, *Life of Freud* (cit. n. 1), Vol. II, p. 69.

[75] *Ibid.*; and Fritz Wittels, *Sigmund Freud: His Personality, His Teaching, and His School,* trans. Eden Paul and Ceder Paul (London: Allen & Unwin, 1924).

[76] Sigmund Freud, " 'Wild' Psycho-Analysis" (1910), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 11, pp. 221–227, on p. 226.

[77] Sigmund Freud, "Recommendations to Physicians Practising Psycho-Analysis" (1912), in *Standard Edition,* Vol. 12, pp. 111–120, on p. 117.

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

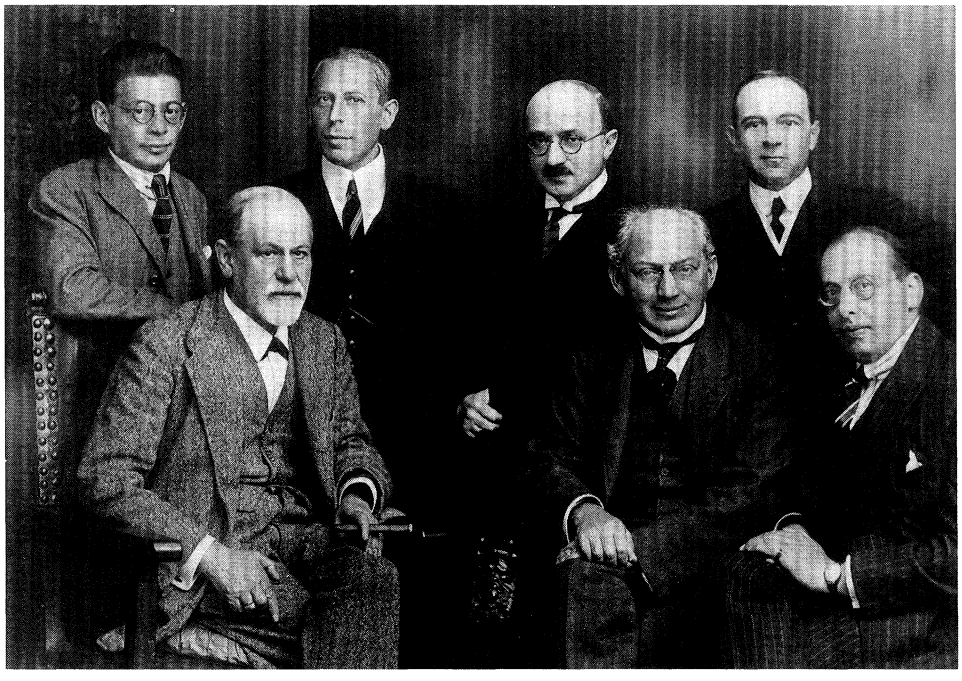

Figure 4. *Sigmund Freud with the secret committee (1922). Left to right, standing: Otto Rank, Karl Abraham, Max Eitingon, and Ernest Jones. Sitting: Freud, Sándor Ferenczi, and Hanns Sachs. Sachs appears to be wearing as a ring one of the intaglios that Freud presented to each committee member. Courtesy of Sigmund Freud Copyrights, Ltd.*

is required in learning any technical component of practical science, Freud increasingly accorded to his own emerging social technology a right to assert similar didactic control. "Neither I myself nor my friends and co-workers," he nevertheless insisted, "find it agreeable to claim a monopoly in this way in the use of a medical technique." But the potential dangers, both to patients and to the field of psychoanalysis, had left his new discipline with "no other choice."[79]

Responding to the defections of Adler and Stekel, and to the impending defection of Jung, Sándor Ferenczi suggested in 1912 that the ideal plan would be to station individuals who had been personally analyzed by Freud in different countries, where they could train other psychoanalysts. Realizing that Ferenczi's plan would take considerable time to implement, Ernest Jones proposed as a first step the establishment of a secret committee composed of Freud and several of his most loyal adherents (see Figure 4). The self-appointed task of this committee was to reply on Freud's behalf to his critics and to assist him in various other ways. No member of the committee was to depart publicly from any of the fundamental tenets of psychoanalysis without first discussing his views with the others. Freud agreed to Jones's proposal on the condition that "this committee would have to be *strictly secret* in its existence and actions." The committee members (Ferenczi, Jones, Rank, Karl Abraham, and Hanns Sachs) were each given a Greek intaglio from Freud's private collection of antiques, which they

[79] Freud, " 'Wild' Psycho-Analysis," p. 226.

had mounted on gold rings like the one already worn by Freud. This "happy band of brothers" remained the secret controlling body of Freud's psychoanalytic organization until 1927, when it was absorbed into the board of the International Psychoanalytic Association. Jones tells us that his proposal of a secret council had been inspired by "stories of Charlemagne's paladins from boyhood, and many secret societies from literature."[80]

By 1920 Max Eitingon (a subsequent addition to the secret committee) had set up the Psychoanalytic Clinic and Training Institute in Berlin, the first of its kind. A second training institute followed in Vienna two years later. After 1920 Freud mostly confined himself to analyzing pupils rather than patients, which is one reason why he published no further case histories. This change in clientele was much to Freud's liking. "I prefer a student ten times more than a neurotic," he told Joseph Wortis in 1934, punctuating his comment with "a disparaging gesture and a laugh."[81] Thus by the mid-1920s the general pattern of psychoanalytic training was largely determined. No one could claim to be a psychoanalyst without first having been analyzed by someone already certified by the movement.

The function of such didactic analyses was described by Hanns Sachs, who moved to Berlin in 1920 to teach at the first training institute. "Religions have always demanded a trial period, a novitiate, of those among their devotees who desired to give their entire life . . . to become monks or priests. . . . It can be seen that analysis needs something corresponding to the novitiate of the church."[82] Increasingly psychoanalysis became socially constructed as a secular priesthood of soul doctors. Its theories and techniques were to be taught only by sanctioned experts trained to detect and treat "resistances," thus minimizing the kind of unfortunate defections that had marred the early years of the movement.

Freud's social technology of the didactic analysis also gave him enormous power in the form of patronage and referrals. Many more candidates came to him for training analyses in the 1920s and 1930s than he could possibly accept. By referring these candidates to other analysts who were in favor with him, he helped to determine both the financial rewards of his institution and its hierarchy of social prestige.

As the case of Clarence Oberndorf indicates, Freud's power of patronage reached all the way to America. In 1923 Horace Frink received orders from Freud to reorganize the New York Psychoanalytic Society. When Oberndorf, who had recently completed a training analysis with Freud, was told that he was not to be a member of the organizing committee, he was stunned. "I'm one of the old-timers here," he protested to Frink. "Why do you take these novices and put them in important positions and I get left out?" Frink replied: "I'm sorry, I'm following directions. Freud does not want you in."[83] Oberndorf had unfortunately gotten on the wrong side of Freud from the first day of his training analy-

[80] Jones, *Life of Freud* (cit. n. 1), Vol. II, pp. 154, 152, 164.

[81] Joseph Wortis, *Fragments of an Analysis with Freud* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1954), p. 18.

[82] Hanns Sachs, *Freud, Master and Friend* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1944), p. 45. Similarly, the analyst Abram Kardiner has written: "For those who are not analysts, this description [of psychoanalysis] can only be compared to a religious dogma. And a source that blocks its own growth tends to resemble a cult": *My Analysis with Freud: Reminiscences* (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 121.

[83] Kardiner, *My Analysis,* p. 81.

sis. He had come to Freud's office prepared with a dream about riding in a carriage that was pulled by two horses, one white and the other black. Freud's interpretation of this dream was that Oberndorf, a Southerner, could never marry because he could not decide between a white woman and a black one. Oberndorf made the mistake of disputing this interpretation, which they haggled about for months until Freud finally got fed up and brought the analysis to an end.

Abram Kardiner, who has related this story, has added the following comment on it: "The sad fact was that the whole economic structure of the psychoanalytic movement rested entirely on Freud's shoulders. He was the dispenser of all the favors and patients for the entire group of analysts in Vienna, and this was the source of both loyalty and corruption. . . . He had an enormous amount of control over both economic and status advancement."[84] Freud's social technology, then, proved to be a very powerful one; and Freud himself personally wielded the bulk of this power in the service of what he called "the cause."

CONCLUSIONS

What role, then, did Freud's case histories play in the establishment of psychoanalytic knowledge? Depending upon one's position within the psychoanalytic movement, the role was different. It follows from Freud's reluctance to communicate his psychoanalytic method more explicitly in writing that his case histories were never intended to be "the pillars on which psychoanalysis as an empirical science rests," as Eissler and others have uncritically maintained.[85] At best, these case reports offered a tantalizing glimpse of Freud's methods in action. Such reports were meant to be more like wine tastings than the full bottle of wine. Freud's deliberate choice of titles like "Fragments of an Analysis . . ." and "Notes upon a Case . . ." (Freud also considered using the word "Aphorisms" in the Rat Man title) underscores his deeper message. *This message was, quite simply, that psychoanalysis could never be learned from published case histories.* "A fixed sense of conviction" about psychoanalysis, he wrote, "can never be obtained from reading about it but only from directly experiencing it." The general techniques that constitute psychoanalysis, he stated bluntly, "cannot yet be learned from books."[86] Thus an important subsidiary goal of Freud's case histories was to convince potential converts to learn his theory and methods by another route. That other route, as it was gradually developed and perfected by Freud's social technology, was the training analysis.

This is not to say that Freud deliberately chose to publish imperfect or incomplete case histories with an eye to forcing all of his would-be followers into a personal analysis. Rather, having decided for technical and other reasons that reasonably complete case histories could never be published, he sought to make the best of this situation by using compelling rhetorical tactics and by shaping his social technology to maximize control over psychoanalytic training.

For Freud's followers, the case histories served somewhat different functions than they did for Freud. Once having accepted Freud's premise that a self-analysis and ultimately a personal analysis were necessary to learn his methods, his

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] Eissler, *Medical Orthodoxy* (cit. n. 55), p. 395.

[86] Freud, "Analysis of a Phobia" (cit. n. 24), p. 113; and Freud, " 'Wild' Psycho-Analysis" (cit. n. 76) p. 226.

followers sought an alternative and more heroic meaning in his case materials. For them, the case histories performed a powerful ritualistic function—they became dramatic showpieces of the healing powers of psychoanalysis, of the arduous and even herculean nature of the analytic process, and of Freud's own brilliance as an investigator and physician. These early followers knew all of Freud's works by heart—even the footnotes—and they "were as proud [of themselves] . . . as the pupils of Aristotle in the days before that philosopher's works had become widely known."[87] Subsequent psychoanalysts have described Freud's case histories in the most hyperbolic of terms: they "transcend the boundaries of the clinical and assume legendary proportions as part of the human heritage"; they exhibit "rich data and pioneering formulations" having "universal relevance"; and even their occasional shortcomings, "which would soon be overcome, do not detract from the genius, intuition, and creative ability that Freud showed."[88] Inspired by his case histories, Freud's followers sought to emulate his methods and to persevere in the face of frequent criticisms from the wider medical community.

Freud's case histories sent another important message to his followers besides one of general inspiration. These case histories clearly encouraged analysts to adopt an attitude of suspended criticism, both toward their own clinical inferences and toward those of their colleagues. If there was no way to communicate the full richness or conviction of analytic material even in a published case history, then the discipline would have to exact from its practitioners a kind of collective intellectual empathy based on their common experience in the didactic analysis. In place of a critical scientific attitude, psychoanalytic training therefore encouraged collective faith in Freud's basic teachings. Thus, ironically, case histories that were supposedly not meant to convince became remarkably convincing, precisely because the kind of person willing to undergo psychoanalytic training was generally also willing to accept the requisite role of a "true believer."

Freud's ultimate decision to limit accessibility to his methods and to require a training analysis of all officially sanctioned analysts marks a momentous but highly problematic innovation. Instead of remaining within the already established medical apparatus for training neurologists and psychiatrists, Freud created his own training institutes and sought to keep psychoanalysis independent from the medical schools. He also discouraged his followers from trying to establish medical school ties or to set up training institutes within medical schools. Philip Holzman has rightly emphasized the extensive scientific and epistemological problems that were created by this divorce between psychoanalytic institutes and medical schools.[89]

In relying so heavily on an esoteric and private social technology to transmit

[87] Wittels, *Freud* (cit. n. 75), pp. 130–31.

[88] Mark Kanzer and Jules Glenn, preface, in *Freud and His Patients* (cit. n. 26), pp. xii–xvi, on p. xiii; Stanley S. Weiss, "Reflections and Speculations on the Psychoanalysis of the Rat Man," *ibid.*, pp. 203–214, on p. 213; and Harold P. Blum, "The Borderline Childhood of the Wolf Man," *ibid.*, pp. 341–358, on p. 341.

[89] Sigmund Freud to Karl Abraham, 4 July 1920, in Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham, *A Psycho-Analytic Dialogue: The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham 1907–1926*, ed. Hilda C. Abraham and Ernst L. Freud, trans. Bernard Marsh and Hilda C. Abraham (New York: Basic Books, 1965), p. 315. See also Philip S. Holzman, "Psychoanalysis: Is the Therapy Destroying the Science?" *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Ass.*, 1985, *33*:725–770.

his theories and methods, Freud departed not only from the institutional norms established by science but also from his own earlier behavior as a scientist. In *Studies on Hysteria,* for example, he and Breuer had provided six detailed case histories (five of them written by Freud) as well as a substantial chapter explaining the cathartic method of therapy (which Freud also wrote). The goal of this volume was clearly to propagate their method of treating hysterical illness through the written word, and a number of other psychotherapists did indeed attempt to duplicate their procedures over the next decade. Why, then, did Freud subsequently feel the need to depart from his previous format of communicating his methods openly to his medical peers?

The answer to this question, which I touched upon earlier, is that Freud's increasing preference for rhetorical devices, private instruction, and a social technology that allowed him maximum personal control over his adherents was closely tied to problems basic to his technical methods. His patients' associations were simply not "free" in any real sense, and Freud's own interpretations and reconstructions were not in fact reached by any automatic process reliably rooted in the case material. As Clark Glymour has pointed out in a perceptive analysis of Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams,* the decision to pursue or break off a line of associations is ultimately what enables the analyst to reach the *proper* Freudian "interpretation." Freud was well aware of this fact. "Examination of Freud's interpretations," Frank Cioffi has also pointed out in a trenchant critique, "will show that he typically proceeds by beginning with whatever content his theoretical preconceptions compel him to maintain underlies symptoms, and then, by working back and forth . . . , constructing pervasive but spurious links between them."[90]

Freud's "constructions" of the forgotten events of childhood were even more embedded in a theory-dependent craft process. Not only was this reconstructive process deeply rooted in the analyst's theoretical expectations, but the ultimate achievement of childhood reconstructions was clearly the result of repeated negotiations with a patient who was already inevitably contaminated by the expectations of the analyst.[91] The analyst Judd Marmor has acknowledged as much:

> Depending upon the point of view of the analyst, the patients of each [psychoanalytic] school seem to bring up precisely the kind of phenomenological data which confirm the theories and interpretations of their analysts! Thus each theory tends to be self-validating. Freudians elicit material about the Oedipus Complex and castration anxiety, Jungians about archetypes, Rankians about separation anxiety, Adlerians about masculine stirrings and feelings of inferiority, Horneyites about idealized images, Sullivanians about disturbed interpersonal relationships, etc.[92]

Freud was right, then. His methods and his science could not really be learned from books. They were also not to be learned in person—unless, that is, the

[90] Glymour, "Theory of Your Dreams" (cit. n. 65), p. 62; Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams* (cit. n. 4), p. 152; and Frank Cioffi, "Freud and the Idea of a Pseudoscience," in *Explanation in the Behavioral Sciences,* ed. Roger Borger and Frank Cioffi (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 471–499, on p. 497.

[91] Donald P. Spence, *Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis* (New York: Norton, 1982); and Grünbaum, *Foundations of Psychoanalysis* (cit. n. 2), p. 265.

[92] Judd Marmor, "Psychoanalytic Therapy as an Educational Process," in *Psychoanalytic Education,* ed. J. Masserman (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1962), pp. 286–299, on p. 289.

learner was willing to accept Freud's own theoretical conclusions as a guide to interpreting free associations and reconstructing childhood events. In short, agreement about the "constructions" reached during a Freudian analysis was achieved only by socially constructing the "construction" process itself around a core of fundamental assumptions. To curb the inevitable dangers to be found in a truly free application of the free association technique, Freud's pupils had to learn to entertain only certain kinds of interpretations and hence only certain kinds of constructions. This is what the didactic analysis ultimately sought to do. Without it, the number of recalcitrant Jungs, Adlers, and Stekels might have been limitless; and even *with* the didactic analysis, the history of psychoanalysis has still become the history of numerous factions and rival schools. There are limits even to the cohesive power of social construction, precisely because rival theories can also be socially constructed.

The short-term benefits of Freud's rhetorical and social technologies were of course considerable. They turned an otherwise impractical theory into a practical one, thereby offering a new method of psychotherapy. They also made Freud into a household word and eventually into one of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century. What he and his early followers apparently did not stop to consider, however, were the many difficulties they would have in attaining scientific objectivity and integrity, given the kind of social technology they had created. Edward Glover, who for sixteen years was Director of Research at the London Institute of Psychoanalysis, has aptly described the scientific pitfalls that can subvert the training analysis:

> It is scarcely to be expected that a student who has spent some years under the artificial and sometimes hothouse conditions of a training analysis and whose professional career depends on overcoming "resistance" to the satisfaction of his training analyst, can be in a favorable position to defend his scientific integrity against his analyst's theory and practice. And the longer he remains in training analysis, the less likely he is to do so. For according to his analyst the candidate's objections to interpretations rate as "resistances." In short there is a tendency inherent in the training situation to perpetuate error.[93]

Unfortunately, when Freud and his followers developed the social technology that has characterized psychoanalytic training, the kinds of "errors" they were most concerned about were not their own but those of their critics.

Ultimately, Freud's approach to rhetoric and persuasion after 1900 seems to reflect a kind of personal failing on his part, a disregard for the need for peer criticism that lies at the heart of modern science. The essence of science does not lie merely in replicating one's theories and praxis. Rather, it lies in replicating them *outside of one's own immediate social group*. Thus Frenchmen who were not members of the Royal Society eventually came to accept Robert Boyle's air pump experiments. Boyle won, but not by forcing Frenchmen to become members of *his* scientific society, or to rely on *his* claims about his air pump experiments, or to build and operate air pumps only under *his* personal supervision. Freud, by contrast, converted and kept loyal primarily those individuals whom he (or a trusted surrogate) could personally train and control. Although his

[93] Edward Glover, "Research Methods in Psycho-Analysis," *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 1952, *33*:403–409, on p. 403.

increasing emphasis on the social construction of psychoanalytic knowledge was not, by itself, a departure from the accepted methods of knowledge production, his own tightly controlled version of this process reinforced all of the epistemological problems already entailed in his methods.[94] Instead of training scientists, Freud ended up training practitioners in a relatively fixed system of ideas. Instead of trusting that his methods would withstand critical scrutiny and flourish independent of opposition, Freud privatized the mechanism of their dissemination and trained a movement of loyal adherents. His most talented followers naturally tended to rebel under this totalitarian regimen. "The goody-goodys are no good," Freud lamented to a patient in the late 1920s, "and the naughty ones go away."[95]

One of the great epistemological achievements of modern science has been its balancing of an undeniable need for craft knowledge with open peer criticism.[96] Subjecting theories to experimental tests and other forms of community self-criticism was a seventeenth-century lesson that the alchemists, Scholastics, and other opponents of the new science were not willing or able to learn. It was a lesson that Sigmund Freud did learn from his teachers, but one that, for a variety of reasons inherent in his personality and his methods, he ultimately chose to disregard.

[94] Ludwig Fleck, in his masterful work *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* (cit. n. 57), pointed out long ago that the detrimental consequences of social construction for knowledge production are largely determined by the power that elites hold within the community. "If the elite enjoys the stronger position [compared with non-elites], it will endeavor to maintain distance and to isolate itself from the crowd. Then secretiveness and dogmatism dominate. . . . This is the situation of religious thought collectives. The first, or democratic, form must lead to the development of ideas and to progress, the second possibility to conservatism and rigidity" (pp. 105–106).

[95] Roazen, *Freud and His Followers* (cit. n. 8), p. 303.

[96] It is not the individual who generally succeeds in being optimally self-critical but rather the scientific community as a whole; see David Hull, *Science as a Process: An Evolutionary Account of the Social and Conceptual Development of Science* (Chicago/London: Univ. Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 3–4; and Steve Fuller, *Philosophy of Science and Its Discontents* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1989), p. 11. The rational nature of modern scientific theories and practice lies in this community dynamic, which must be allowed to operate freely if a given discipline is to remain "scientific."