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**“Notes from the House of Sleep: Reading the Hieroglyphs of Night-  
Language in Anais Nin, H.D., and Anna Kavan**

„Poznámky z Domu spánku: Jak číst hieroglyfy nočního jazyka v díle Anais Nin, H.D. a  
Anny Kavanové“

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## Introduction

It is debatable whether one can construct a thorough definition of modernism, draw a precise map of all the influences or determine concrete classifications in the movement. However, one can easily trace the impact of Sigmund Freud on modernist thinkers and writers for his doctrines represent some of the main constituents of modernism. Since the works of H.D., Anais Nin and Anna Kavan — to be discussed in the following chapters — display close relations to psychoanalysis and consist of modernist attributes, discussing the influence of Freud on modernism seems a fitting starting-point. To start with the main points of his impact, Susan Stanford Friedman summarizes modernism as nothing short of Freud's personification,

[t]he starting point of modernism is the crisis of belief that pervades twentieth-century western culture: loss of faith, experience of fragmentation and disintegration, and shattering of cultural symbols and norms. At the center of this crisis were the new technologies and methodologies of science, the epistemology of logical positivism, and the relativism of functionalist thought; in short, major aspects of the philosophical perspectives that Freud embodies.<sup>1</sup>

Taking the initial aspect of modernism that she chooses to start her definition with, “the crisis of belief” plays a significant role in shifting towards a different form of expression. It could simply be that relying more and more on the scientific inventions and explanations with a steadily increasing improvement led to a detachment from conventional beliefs and institutionalized religions. Considering Freud's well-known atheist approach and the fact that his doctrines originated from his neurological practice, he does fit the description.

“Crisis of belief” stands as especially influential for it consists of alternative interpretations, uses and readings of the major holy books, and the literature as well as the legends they influenced and inspired. These alternative approaches signify the shift from a traditional self who serves a “greater good” within the lines of religion to an individual who serves only their own destiny. In analyzing Freud as a modernist, John Brenkman describes this as “the interpretive transformation of cultural traditions into ciphers of personal destiny”, detailing how,

[p]sychoanalysis takes up cultural works from diverse traditions and turns them into ciphers of personal destiny. Freud's theoretical writings and therapeutic sessions are filled with fairy

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Stanford Friedman, *Psyche Reborn: The Emergence of H.D.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 97.

tales, the humanist canon from *Oedipus Rex* to *Faust*, modern dramas and realist novels, popular fiction, and humor. Whatever social origins or purposes animated the works themselves, they became an immense vocabulary and flexible grammar for elaborating the self, its benchmarks of identity, its desires, its aspirations. The modernist interprets freely. Stories and symbols become meaningful if they can illuminate—or are illuminated by—the individual’s ongoing, continually revised life story, *One’s personal life-history grounds cultural receptivity and learning; traditions loop through individual contingencies*.<sup>2</sup>

This alteration concerning the interpretation of culturally influential works including the religious ones toward making them about the identity and using them as means of “illuminating” oneself marks the change and crisis of belief in question. Modernism thus transforms the theological search for God into a search of self, the great modernist invention which Freud explored extensively through psychoanalysis.

Continuing with the significance of individuality, as Brenkman remarks, modernism is known for its invention thereof, in relation to the loss of belief, “the rights-bearing individual with the freedom to pursue a chosen course of life, as well as the alienated individual deprived of community and living in the world spiritually homeless”.<sup>3</sup> Psychoanalytic therapy itself alone signifies this birth of the individual, for its major aim is to discover and display the layers and powers of the self, more so than it has ever been done before.

Regarding the influence of Freud and the discovery of the unconscious on the individual and modernism, his influence was combined with that of another prominent figure in the field of psychology. Carl Gustav Jung introduced significant concepts such as the collective unconscious and anima, which were some of his influential ideas on modernism. His concept of the collective unconscious suggests that there is another layer to the unconscious; while one has the personal unconscious which consists of experiences only gained personally, one also has the collective one which is identical in everyone, passed down through centuries, and is revealed through archetypes. His concept of anima, the female aspect of the psyche, indicates that it dominates the unconscious, which can be related to Kavan’s *Sleep Has His House* in depicting unconsciousness primarily as feminine. Through Jung’s concepts which challenge those of his mentor Freud, modernist writers including Kavan, explored the universal human experiences and emotions from a “collective” perspective while also indulging in a modernist quest for individuality.

The fact that psychoanalysis revealed that the intended thoughts of daily manners and common desires are not all there is to what one thinks and is, that one is actually under the influence of the larger portion of the iceberg, meaning the discovery of the unconscious

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<sup>2</sup> John Brenkman, *Freud the Modernist*, (Stanford University Press, December 11, 2003), 172 (emphasis mine).

<sup>3</sup> Brenkman, *Freud the Modernist*, 173.

extended the focus on the self and it would be possible to state that it highly influenced a modernist take especially on literature. Exploring the concealed forces on the individual experience was one of the dominant aspects of modernism with the contribution of not only Freud but also other influential names, as Brenkman details:

Freud's thought, like that of Nietzsche, Bergson, and Heidegger, stylizes the large-scale, invisible forces at work within society and the uncertain, largely unpredictable trends of historical change, distilling them down to a drama of forces and trends within individual experience.<sup>4</sup>

In discussing the hidden influence of the unconscious on the individual experience, Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* can be considered revolutionary. He studied nighttime dreams as well as daydreams as the unconscious communication with one's conscious self, as a source of revelations of one's repressed desires, fears, and traumas carried from childhood, the impact of one's relationship with one's parents and how it shapes one's personality and even determines micro reactions, but particularly as wishes which the dreamer desires or have desired in the past to come true. *The Interpretation of Dreams* is also significant in its objection to the common scientific approach to dreams at the time, which argued that dreams were somatic experiences instead of psychic ones, resulting in depriving dreams of any kind of meaning. His opposition initiated the start of an ongoing exploration of the "individual".

As mentioned before, the "individual" that was born through modernism, although blessed with autonomy and freedom from cultural and religious definitions, was beset with a loss of faith, of the sense of belonging, with being "spiritually homeless". According to Friedman, the cataclysm of World War I was one of the main forces influencing this aspect of modernism and increasing the focus on the language itself as it becomes the medium through which a rebuilding of the lost meaning is being attempted. As Friedman notably stated in her description of modernism:

The rationalism of science and philosophy attacked the validity of traditional religious and artistic symbols while the growing technology of the industrialized world produced the catastrophes of war on the one hand and the atomization of human beings on the other. Art produced after the First World War recorded the emotional aspect of this crisis; despair, hopelessness, paralysis, angst, and a sense of meaninglessness, chaos, and fragmentation of material reality. [...] The search for order and pattern began in its own negation, in the overwhelming sense of disorder and fragmentation caused by the modern materialist world. The artist as seer would attempt to create what the culture could no longer produce: symbol and meaning in the dimension of art, brought into being through the agency of language, the Word or Logos of the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>5</sup> Friedman, *Psyche Reborn*, 97.

For Friedman, art took up the responsibility for restoring meaning against the despair caused remarkably by World War I. Although positioning modernism in the post-World War I world brings certain limitations on including most of the modernist artists, it is possible to state that this process is especially valid in reading Anna Kavan's work which is occupied by a negative perception towards the world that is heavily influenced by a post-World War I environment of which her characters are inhabitants. Her portrayal of such hopelessness can also be connected to Carl Gustav Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, for her characters are not in direct relation with the war but are connected to its experience through their despair as well as through nighttime dreams, which will be discussed more in detail later in the following pages.

Regarding Friedman's definition, Shari Benstock objects to the idea of modernist writing as a reaction to the collapse of traditional and cultural norms and suggests that the majority of the modernist wrote about the continuing orders after the war. Benstock writes:

The work of these writers does not situate itself in reaction to a collapse in cultural values, taking as its defense the ironic mode, but rather exposes the continuing hegemony of traditional material and patriarchal values. Unfortunately, the First World War had not made the world safe for democracy, but neither had it blown sky-high the values that had supported western culture. When the air cleared from the smoke bombs, the old order quickly re-established itself.<sup>6</sup>

The continuing order and values in question form the discourse of male assertions and heterosexual ideals which led writers to turn their focus somewhere else rather than the world with the unchanged patriarchal structure embedded in the culture that the war left behind.<sup>7</sup>

Regardless of the difference between the two approaches, modernist writers were engaged in writing about the psyche, about observing their individual approach towards the world, whether it was a reaction to the change of norms or to the values staying the same. As Benstock further argues,

[a]lienated by this world, unwilling (and unable) to share its values, some of these writers turned away from the modern world, creating an interior landscape in which language recorded the psyche. In place of traditional material values, literature turned its attention to the ways in which the mind perceived the external world and recorded its impressions. Various Modernists were interested in cultural symbols and norms as subjects under analysis, writing a literature that exposed the operations of these cultural norms as they were present in language.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Shari Benstock, "From the Editor's Perspective: 'Beyond the Reaches of Feminist Criticism: A Letter from Paris'," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 3. ½ (1984): 12.

<sup>7</sup> Benstock, "From the Editor's Perspective," 11.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

This new focus on recording the innermost experiences of the individual naturally meant the fixation on the meaning and reaching to it through experiments with language and illuminating obscure layers of the psyche such as dreams and “nighttime language”<sup>9</sup> as Kavan describes it in her introduction to *Sleep Has His House*. Benstock demonstrates the modernists’ notion of language as a powerful tool in restoring and in experimenting as follows:

The one sacred belief common to them all seemed to be the indestructibility of the bond between the word and its meanings, between symbol and substance, between signifier and signified. Multiple linguistic experiments, juxtaposition of unlike words, typographical experimentation, translations of language into the dreamworld of the night or the language of the mad only reinforced the linguistic claims on meaning. [...] The word held within it the possibilities of restructuring, rewriting, the world: the writer would succeed where God had failed.<sup>10</sup>

In this context, quite clearly, the works of Anna Kavan, Anais Nin and H.D., which treat daydreams, nighttime dreams, and phantasies as their starting points, possess some essentially modernist aspects. These words could be read as turning towards the very private and individual experience, one of the significant characteristics of modernist writing. Especially the fact that Freud’s discovery of the importance of interpreting dreams as well as the unconscious and the effect it had on exploring individuality can be spotted as a powerful influence on the works of these writers.

With reference to the First World War and its socio-political impact, one must mention the women’s suffragette movement that accelerated and gained power especially after the war, for it certainly affected women’s role in literature and culture, in addition to the improvement of their social, political, and cultural situation. Although women’s suffrage was a fight that started long before the First World War, reaching back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, apart from the numerous horrific downsides, the war brought certain “opportunities” for women to advance their emancipation. The war brought about a massive absence of working force powered by men, especially in U.S. and in England. Working-class women not only filled-in for this absence but they also were vital in warfare, thanks to their crucial role in nursing the wounded soldiers back to health. Regardless of the importance of their role concerning the war and the future of their countries, they were not allowed to have a say in the matter. A sign by the Pennsylvania Women’s Suffrage read as follows,

[w]ho nurse the wounded, feed the sick, support the helpless, brave all danger? Who see their homes destroyed by shell and fire, their little ones made destitute, their daughters outraged?

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<sup>9</sup> Anna Kavan, *Sleep Has His House*, (London: Peter Owen Modern Classics, 1948), 6.

<sup>10</sup> Benstock, “From the Editor’s Perspective,” 13.

Who dares say that war is not their business? In the name of Justice and Civilization give women a voice in Government and in the councils that make or prevent war.<sup>11</sup>

Undoubtedly, the war gave women every reason to claim their right to vote and it was also rather crucial in their ongoing fight for emancipation since it was after their attempt at forming trade-unions. As R.S. Neale states more in detail,

[d]uring the course of the nineteenth century exploited working-class women slowly, but inevitably, emerged as a self-conscious social class exerting progressive and emancipist influences on the climate of opinion. That after organizing themselves into trade unions, working-class women became members of militant pressure-groups endeavoring to compel governments to act to remedy some of the social problems of industrialization. And that when this failed, they infused the women's suffrage movement with a new vitality, leadership, and militancy to draw attention to the plight and position of women generally.<sup>12</sup>

The demand by women for fair and equal treatment in politics emerges as a crucial aspect of feminist history. In order to confront attitudes and beliefs that consider women as second-class citizens in order to oppose the exclusion of women from voting, it was necessary to conceptualize women as a group whose collective predicament needed to be addressed.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, women's suffrage is one of the critical steps of feminism. Leaving behind women's "second-class citizen" status, it could also be shown how the sense of individuality stepped up in the writings of women, which went parallel with the focus on individuality carried forward by psychoanalysis.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to argue that psychoanalysis and Freud's arguments on sexuality have been on good terms with feminism. His theories of the sexuality of men and women, their hidden desires, sexuality of children and how they form their personalities as well as the influence of social structures on the unconscious, are well-known for classifying women as the weaker, the inferior sex compared to male primacy. Before demonstrating the psychoanalytic gender-essentializing, it needs to be mentioned that although Freud did proclaim some prominent assumptions about the inferiority of women, he admitted that the sexual life of women and the psychology of the female children preserved their mystery and that his research on women was limited. This proves that regardless of the power and influence of his arguments on female sexuality, they were rather far from reliable, considering he based his research mainly on the experiments he had with his male patients. As Freud declares in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*:

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<sup>11</sup> Abigail Higgins, "American Women Fought for Suffrage for 70 Years. It Took WWI to Finally Achieve It," *History*, January 12, 2023, <https://www.history.com/news/wwi-women-suffrage-connection>.

<sup>12</sup> R.S. Neale, "Working-Class Women and Women's Suffrage." *Labour History* 12, (1967): 16.

<sup>13</sup> Susan Ware, "Leaving all to younger hands: Why the history of women's suffragist movement matters," *Brookings*, May 2020. Online: <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/leaving-all-to-younger-hands-why-the-history-of-the-womens-suffrage-movement-matters>.

The significance of the factor of sexual overvaluation can be best studied in men, for their erotic life alone has become accessible to research. That of women—partly owing to the stunting effect of civilized conditions and partly owing to their conventional secretiveness and insincerity—is still veiled in an impenetrable obscurity.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, in the editor's note to his *Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes*, Freud is quoted as follows, "We know less about the sexual life of little girls than of boys. But we need not feel ashamed of this distinction; after all, the sexual life of adult women is a 'dark continent' for psychology"<sup>15</sup>; as well as "In consequence of unfavorable circumstances, both of an external and an internal nature, the following observations apply chiefly to the sexual development of one sex only that is, of males."<sup>16</sup> Freud also mentions that he had taken male children as the subjects of his investigation concerning the sexual life of children and assumed that female children would be somehow similar, although there might be some differences and goes on to argue that "The point in development at which this difference lay could not be clearly determined."<sup>17</sup> Thus one may argue how "understandable" it is that his claims made waves, especially in feminism. In *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Joyce Jennings Walstedt argues that Freud's doctrines and psychoanalysis single out the masculine sex as the credible one and disregard the female one, with the following consequences:

Freud's theories grew out of the fact that he lived in a culture in which the power position of males was superior to that of females. The masculine was identified as the absolute norm and taken as valid for humankind, irrespective of sex. We see this way of thinking in all aspects of our present culture. [...] Freud who lived before anthropology came into its own, was unable to see women as human beings who could provide their own universal norms. The results have been a mystification and over-estimation of female virtues that cannot be explained by male criteria, and a contempt for human beings who fail to live up to the norm.<sup>18</sup>

Regarding Freud's statements on the lack of information of female sexuality mentioned above, it would not be wrong to state that Walstedt does not mention anything questionable here.

To be more precise about Freud's theories on female sexuality, one of his most controversial statements regarding it is the masculinity complex. He claims that girls are doomed to discover the genitals of the opposite sex and to come to the understanding of its superiority, for his are larger in proportion and as soon as she recognizes the difference, she

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<sup>14</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 38.

<sup>15</sup> Freud, "The Question of Lay Analysis: Conversations with an impartial person," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 212.

<sup>16</sup> Freud, *On the Sexual Theories of Children* (Read Books Limited, 2014).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Joyce Jennings Walstedt, "Beyond Freud: Towards a New Psychotherapy for Women," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 1.3 (1976): 2.

starts envying him. While she decides this immediately after she catches a glimpse of the penis, it is different when it comes to the male child. He explains:

He begins by showing irresolution and lack of interest; he sees nothing or disavows what he has seen, he softens it down or looks about for expedients for bringing it into line with his expectations. It is not until later, when some threat of castration has obtained a hold upon him, that the observation becomes important to him: if he then recollects or repeats it, it arouses a terrible storm of emotion in him and forces him to believe in the reality of the threat which he has hitherto laughed at.<sup>19</sup>

Freud believes that the male fear of castration which is initiated early in boyhood accompanied with the anxiety of being like a girl, results in behaving more responsibly and in the fear of making mistakes, this in contrast to women who do not have such fears regarding the fact they are already castrated. If this idea were to hold true, we would anticipate the bulk of criminals, mass murderers, and witch burners to be female, which clearly is not the case.<sup>20</sup> One may connect the widespread influence of these statements also to the fact that it was convenient for a patriarchal society to preserve patriarchal values.

According to Freud, penis-envy has various effects on the woman, which may continue to the later periods of a woman's life and cause her to develop what he calls the masculinity complex. Although penis-envy is a certain phase that a woman has to undergo at an early age, it can and should be overcome later. If she does not get over the hope that one day she might have a penis and become a man, this would create a serious obstacle in her reaching femininity and "may become a motive for strange and otherwise unaccountable actions."<sup>21</sup> These "strange" actions can be explained as homosexuality, while they can also mean developing their skills and focusing on themselves which for Freud and for the mass culture would mean the loss of femininity.<sup>22</sup> Another impact of penis-envy, even if one were able to "get over" it, is the character trait of jealousy. As Freud demonstrates,

[e]ven after penis-envy has abandoned its true object, it continues to exist by an easy displacement, it persists in the character-trait of jealousy. Of course, jealousy is not limited to one sex and has a wider foundation than this, but I am of opinion that it plays a far larger part in the mental life of women than of men and that that is because it is enormously reinforced from the direction of displaced penis-envy.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Freud, "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes," S.E., (London: Hogarth Press, 1968), Vol.19, 250.

<sup>20</sup> Walstedt, "Beyond Freud", 3.

<sup>21</sup> Freud, "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes," S.E., Vol.24, 163.

<sup>22</sup> Walstedt, "Beyond Freud," 6.

<sup>23</sup> Freud, "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes," S.E., Vol.21, 254.

Finally, penis-envy results in anger toward one's mother and an irreversible damage in the relationship of a mother and a daughter because the daughter cannot forgive her mother for bringing her into the world unprepared: "The situation as a whole is not very clear, but it can be seen that in the end the girl's mother, who sent her into the world so insufficiently equipped, is almost always held responsible for her lack of a penis."<sup>24</sup>

Penis-envy has brought about strong opposition, especially because the envy stated here gives the impression of a very conscious experience in which a young girl knowingly compares her genital with that of the opposite sex. As the majority of women would agree, girls usually do not grow up with any thorough awareness of their vagina or clitoris, still less do they compare it this deliberately with the penis or come to the conclusion that they are inferior. Walstedt further argues, "Freud, reasoning from his own shock at discovering the girl's unique anatomy, assumed that the 'loss' of a penis resulted from mutilation or punishment. The imagined comparison took place in the mind of a man, not a little girl."<sup>25</sup> In fact, it is boys, parents, teachers, children's literature, television cartoons, and observations of their mothers' domestic tasks that contribute to girls receiving the message of their own inferiority at a young age, for as Walstedt concludes, "Penis envy is symptomatic of patriarchal cultures and is not a universal phenomenon."<sup>26</sup>

The above-mentioned reactions from feminism toward psychoanalysis occurred mainly after World War I, a period when Freud's claims regarding female sexuality were criticized more and more by women analysts, particularly Karen Horney, Melanie Klein, and Clara Thompson as some of the leading figures. It could be stated that these analysts and the notions that were built in this period formed the first continuous relation between feminism and psychoanalysis. They did not deny the findings of psychoanalysis but rather modified them and offered different interpretations. For example, while Horney argued that penis-envy resulted from the Oedipal disappointment of girls in reaction to the loss of their fathers' love, Klein placed penis-envy in the pre-Oedipal period and connected it to the girl infant's oral relationship with her mother.<sup>27</sup> Later Thompson along with Horney developed the claim that is mentioned before, that the penis-envy was not anatomical but "phallus symbolic", deriving

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Walstedt, "Beyond Freud," 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, Laura Wexler, "On 'Psychoanalysis and Feminism'", *Social Research* 59. 2 (1992): 454.

from the envy toward male status and privileges.<sup>28</sup> As Young-Bruehl and Wexler further points out:

Horney and Thompson thus became feminists without the name as they generated discussions and debates, supplying the first generation of non-analyst feminist critics with a wedge: psychoanalysis is not, their work said, a monolith—it has dissenting schools, and it has internal dissent over the topic of female psychology.<sup>29</sup>

However, in *Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis* Rachel Bowlby asserts that such a sustained union between feminism and psychoanalysis is not so likely, since,

[o]ne of the difficulties in bringing about or rejecting the desirability of a final union between psychoanalysis and feminism has been precisely that of identifying the sexes of the two parties. From the point of view of anti-psychoanalytic feminism, the person of Freud as a Victorian patriarch is usually taken as the ground for assuming an inescapably anti-feminist stance built into the texts and the practice of psychoanalysis ever since.<sup>30</sup>

One may thus conclude that H.D., Anais Nin and Anna Kavan wrote their works at a time when feminist critique of psychoanalysis mostly focused on psychoanalysis' gender essentialization and reproaching it for reiterating the already dominant sexual norms.

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<sup>28</sup> Young-Bruehl, Wexler, "On 'Psychoanalysis and Feminism'," 454.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Rachel Bowlby, "Still crazy after all these years: Travels in Feminism and Psychoanalysis," *Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 1989), 45.

## Chapter 1 - H.D. and Tribute to Freud

### 1.1 The God of Gates: Introduction to Psychoanalysis and Dreams

Psychoanalysis marks the beginning of systematic study of the unconscious, of talking therapy and of the depth of dreams, and the question of its approach towards female patients, the female body and mind has been present even in its earliest stages for its emergence is in close relation to treatments of hysteria, a mental illness associated mainly with women. Sigmund Freud dedicated the vast majority of his studies to patients suffering from hysteria and based his findings on their reactions, dreams, and trauma responses.

A brief introduction to psychoanalysis and the interpretation of dreams may as well start with mentioning a patient with hysteria since Freud's interaction with this patient led him to discover alternative ways to treat this illness. This patient, Bertha Pappenheim, who is often referred as Anna O., was in the care of Dr. Joseph Breuer, a distinguished physician trying to cure his patients with the method of hypnosis. Freud recounted the case of Bertha in one of the series of lectures he delivered at Clark University:

Dr. Breuer's patient was a girl of twenty-one of a high degree of intelligence. She had developed in the course of two years' illness a series of physical and mental disturbances. [...] She was subject to states of "absence," of confusion, delirium, alteration of her whole personality... [...] It had been noticed that the patient, in her states of "absence," of psychic alteration, usually mumbled over several words to herself. These seemed to spring from associations with which her thoughts were busy. The doctor, who was able to get these words, put her in a sort of hypnosis and repeated them to her over and over, in order to bring up any associations they might have. The patient yielded to his suggestion and reproduced for him those psychic creations which controlled her thought during her "absences." [...] Whenever she had related a number of such fancies she was, as it were, freed and restored to her normal mental life. [...] The patient herself gave this new kind of treatment the name "talking cure," or jokingly designated it as "chimney-sweeping."<sup>1</sup>

Following this experience, Freud was encouraged by Jean-Martin Charcot, with whom Freud was studying in Paris, to continue examining hysteria from a psychogenetic view, which eventually resulted in Freud's discovering that "persons who had apparently forgotten what happened during somnambulism could, if urged, be helped to recall these experiences more or less vividly. With his own neurotic patients, he became convinced that these apparently forgotten memories were not lost."<sup>2</sup> He argued that these memories of absences, suppressed

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Arthur L. Beeley in "Freud and Psychoanalysis", *Social Service Review* 5.1 (1931): 11.

<sup>2</sup> Beeley, "Freud and Psychoanalysis," 12.

wishes, as well as traumas that one seeks to forget, are hidden in the unconscious, which actively affects the conscious. As Beely further quotes from Freud,

[t]hey were in the possession of the patient, ready to emerge and form associations with his other mental content, but hindered from being conscious and forced to remain in the unconscious by some sort of a force. [...] The patients] have, indeed, driven it out of consciousness and out of memory, and apparently saved themselves a great amount of psychic pain, but in the unconscious the suppressed wish still exists, only waiting for its chance to become active.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, although suppression of emotions help for the moment being, their effect on individuals grow in time and “underneath”.

To continue with the significance of hysteria might help us see the standpoint of women in psychoanalysis rather thoroughly. Hysteria used to be considered a female illness and treated as such, since the word hysteria is derived from *hysteron*, meaning womb in Greek, since it formerly was thought to be related to uterine diseases,<sup>4</sup> limiting the incidence only to female patients. It is important to mention that despite admitting the lack of knowledge of the mind and body of women, Freud marks a rather crucial shift in the perception of hysteria. He was the first to claim hysteria as a male condition as well as a female one. As argued in the work of Cecilia Tasca, et al.,

Sigmund Freud provides a contribution that leads to the psychological theory of hysteria and the assertion of a “male hysteria”. Freud himself wrote in 1897: “After a period of good humor, I now have a crisis of unhappiness. The chief patient I am worried about today is myself. My little hysteria, which was much enhanced by work, took a step forward.” [...] We now reach a crucial point: until Freud it was believed that hysteria was the consequence of the lack of conception and motherhood. Freud reverses the paradigm: hysteria is a disorder caused by a lack of libidinal evolution (setting the stage of the Oedipal conflict) and the failure of conception is the result not the cause of the disease.<sup>5</sup>

Following Freud’s pattern, the studies on the effect of war on men contributed to the argument that hysteria is not a female condition, for it was discovered that the symptoms of hysteria occur when one of the main instincts is disturbed,

[t]he first result of the dispassionate study of the psycho-neuroses of warfare, in relation to Freud’s scheme, was to show that in the vast majority of cases there is no reason to suppose that factors derived from the sexual life played any part in causation, but that these disorders became explicable as the result of disturbance of another instinct, one even more fundamental than that of sex—the instinct of self-preservation.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Arthur L. Beeley in “Freud and Psychoanalysis,” 12.

<sup>4</sup> Beeley, “Freud and Psychoanalysis,” 19.

<sup>5</sup> Tasca C, et al. “Women and Hysteria in the History of Mental Health” *Clin. Pract. Epidemiol. Ment. Health*, 110-119, 2012. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3480686/>

<sup>6</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, *Instinct and the Unconscious* (Cambridge: University Press, 1922), 136.

It would be fair to argue that although his approach to women through his psychoanalytic treatments and studies, Freud did cause a critical change in the perception of hysteria in opposing its exclusive relation to women and therefore allowed different treatments and experiments in search for a cure.

Freud's interpretation of dreams started out as one of his experiments to cure hysteria as well as his neurotic patients. Instead of hypnosis, he used his method of "free association," allowing the patient to talk freely without limits and censors and resulting in thorough accounts of dreams and their analysis. His *Interpretation of Dreams* consists of his main arguments concerning sexual patterns embedded in familial relations, his approach to previous methods of dream interpretations and his theories on what dreams actually mean, although Freud also contradicts himself at times throughout the book, especially concerning his take on symbolism, as well as the unintentional revelation of the faults in his interpretation style. He starts by stating that the traditional perception of dreams has not made much progress:

A reminiscence of the concept of the dream that was held in primitive times seems to underlie the evaluation of the dream which was current among the peoples of classical antiquity. They took it for granted that dreams were related to the world of the supernatural beings in whom they believed, and that they brought inspirations from the gods and demons. Moreover, it appeared to them that dreams must serve a special purpose in respect of the dreamer; that, as a rule, they predicted the future.<sup>7</sup>

Freud was clearly not of the opinion that dreams predict future or that they are supernatural messengers. In this matter, he supports Aristotle's view which emphasizes dream as a psychic activity of the sleeper and the effect of sensations that one's body experiences during sleep on dreams,<sup>8</sup> which he examines later in his work in detail under the classification of "dreams of convenience". One of the first points Freud makes clear in *Interpretation of Dreams* is which method he employs and which he rejects; he prefers the "cipher method," which approaches dreams in detail and not altogether as one unit and "conceives the dream, from the outset, as something built up, as a conglomerate of psychic formations."<sup>9</sup> What he claims to reject is interpreting dreams through symbolism, as has been so commonly done, differing from a Jungian approach which argues for a collectivity behind the symbols. He admits that symbols are present in dreams but only to conceal their actual meanings, which is a suppressed wish aiming to be realized:

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<sup>7</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, (International Alliance Pro-Publishing, 2010): 4.

<sup>8</sup> Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 12.

What is today symbolically connected was probably united, in primitive times, by conceptual and linguistic identity. The symbolic relationship seems to be a residue and reminder of a former identity. It may also be noted that in many cases the symbolic identity extends beyond the linguistic identity [...] Dreams employ this symbolism to give a disguised representation to their latent thoughts.<sup>10</sup>

Although he believes that it is impossible to interpret a dream without using symbolism as one's tool, he also states that it is mostly forced on one and its importance is exaggerated.<sup>11</sup> However, later he presents a very precise list of some symbols and their meanings, leading always to sexual connotations. His explanations of these symbols are so precise that they almost leave no chance for a dream not to have a sexual meaning underneath:

All elongated objects, sticks, tree-trunks, umbrellas (on account of the opening, which might be likened to an erection), all sharp and elongated weapons, knives, daggers, and pikes, represent the male member. A frequent, but not very intelligible symbol for the same is a nail-file (a reference to rubbing and scraping?). -- Small boxes, chests, cupboards, and ovens correspond to the female organ; also cavities, ships, and all kinds of vessels. -- A room in a dream generally represents a woman; the description of its various entrances and exits is scarcely calculated to make us doubt this interpretation.<sup>12</sup>

Later he also adds,

[d]reams of falling are more frequently characterised by anxiety. Their interpretation, when they occur in women, offers no difficulty, because they nearly always accept the symbolic meaning of falling, which is a circumlocution for giving way to an erotic temptation.<sup>13</sup>

It is significant to mention some of his explanations of symbols since he employs their use regardless of the fact that he believes any exclusive reliance on symbols in interpretation is not the method he practices. It would be wrong to argue that he relies on symbols in such a way, even though his own analysis of symbols does affect the interpretation of the whole dream. As an illustration, he relates his interpretation of one dream of a woman who saw herself wearing a hat, and how he reads the hat as a symbol of male genitals, resulting in conceiving of the dream as her dissatisfaction with her husband's genitals.<sup>14</sup> Previously, another dream of a woman is interpreted as her guilt in having had sexual relations out of wedlock and in rejecting the better suitors of marriage beforehand, as he argues, "When a person of the female sex dreams of falling, this almost always has a sexual significance; she becomes a 'fallen woman.'"<sup>15</sup> As David Willbern concludes on the matter,

[t]he idea that words and objects have specific and constant symbolic meanings [...] participates in the magic of an animistic text: a text which requires no active interpretation,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 171.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 184.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 74.

which can be deciphered by a Dreambook Symbology that holds the keys to its code. Throughout his life, Freud remained ambivalent about such an idea, recurrently warning others about symbology while practicing it himself.<sup>16</sup>

To mention Freud's employment of symbols is noteworthy especially because later it will be discussed more in detail how his interpretation of symbols affects his approach to H.D.'s dreams as well as "visions".

Clearly, nothing guides his interpretations as prominently as his distinction between the manifest and latent content of the dream and how the manifest content often hides the latent one which is always a wish-fulfilment. He elaborates on it as follows,

[i]t is merely necessary to observe that our doctrine is not based upon the estimates of the obvious dream-content, but relates to the thought-content, which, in the course of interpretation, is found to lie behind the dream. Let us compare and contrast the manifest and the latent dream-content. It is true that there are dreams the manifest content of which is of the most painful nature. But has anyone ever tried to interpret these dreams -- to discover their latent thought-content? If not, the two objections to our doctrine are no longer valid; for there is always the possibility that even our painful and terrifying dreams may, upon interpretation, prove to be wish-fulfilments.<sup>17</sup>

According to Freud, there is no dream that does not contain a suppressed wish, and these wishes do not have to be the current desires of the dreamer, it is often the case that the dreamer sees the manifestation of a wish made in the past, consciously or unconsciously, "they may also be bygone, discarded, buried and repressed wishes, which we must nevertheless credit with a sort of continued existence, merely on account of their reappearance in a dream."<sup>18</sup> He argues that these wishes are suppressed and the consciousness of the dreamer actively denies acknowledging their existence. What happens as a result is what he calls "dream distortion" and "censorship", which allow the dream to be known to the consciousness by hiding the wish and by almost completely alter its presentation to the point of unrecognizability. He explains it by replacing unconsciousness with a political writer,

The political writer who has unpleasant truths to tell to those in power finds himself in a like position. If he tells everything without reserve, the Government will suppress them—retrospectively in the case of a verbal expression of opinion, preventively if they are to be published in the press. The writer stands in fear of the censorship; he therefore moderates and disguises the expression of his opinions.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> David Willbern, "Freud and the Inter-Penetration of Dreams" *Diacritics* 9.1 (1979): 108.

<sup>17</sup> Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 33.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 102.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 37-8.

Furthermore, he asserts that every single dream that succeeds in appearing is a wish-fulfilment simply because the ego's wish to sleep<sup>20</sup>, therefore merely dreaming is enough to draw the conclusion that a wish, maybe not a suppressed one, has been realized.

Although one cannot deny that his theories and methods employed certainly have resulted in plentiful precise analysis, it can also be argued that Freud's are rather heavily influenced by his active presence in altering and re-presenting<sup>21</sup> the dreams of his patients, as well as his acquaintances. Throughout *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud refers to numerous dreams including his own. He dissects the details of each dream, and lengthy lines of connections are aligned. However, as Willbern suggests, "Freud uses his own personal involvement in another's dream in order to interpret it; [...] he intermixes his subjectivity with the objective text of the dream, inserting himself into the fantasy in order to know its secrets."<sup>22</sup> The first example that is suitable for mention would be his very personal interpretation of a friend's dream, where he states that he bases his interpretation on his assumption and not his analysis,

I took the liberty of interpreting a little incident in the life of a friend, who had been my companion through eight classes at school. He once heard a lecture of mine, delivered to a small audience, on the novel idea that dreams are wish-fulfilments. He went home, dreamt that he had lost all his lawsuits -- he was a lawyer -- and then complained to me about it. I took refuge in the evasion: "One can't win all one's cases"; but I thought to myself: "If, for eight years, I sat as primus on the first bench, while he moved up and down somewhere in the middle of the class, may he not naturally have had the wish, ever since his boyhood, that I too might for once make a fool of myself?"<sup>23</sup>

Here his involvement concerns his own failure as the dreamer's wish that is desired to be fulfilled, which is a quite personal approach to take. In other cases, his subjectivity is recognized mostly through the connections he makes which are not known to the dreamers themselves. A good example here would be the "meat-shop" dream. Freud quotes from the woman whose dream is in question:

"I dreamt that I arrived at the market too late, and could get nothing from either the butcher or the greengrocer woman." [...] She goes to the market with her cook, who carries the basket. The butcher tells her, after she has asked him for something: "That is no longer to be obtained," and wants to give her something else, with the remark: "That is good, too." She refuses, and goes to the greengrocer woman. The latter tries to sell her a peculiar vegetable, which is bound up in bundles, and is black in colour. She says: "I don't know that, I won't take it."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>21</sup> Willbern, "Freud and the Inter-Penetration of Dreams," 105.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 104.

<sup>23</sup> Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 42.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 62.

What Freud does in the interpretation of this dream is to make some verbal connections as well as additions to the dream which are not generally originated by the dreamer herself and to re-present the dream to the dreamer with numerous new extensions. He starts with picking apart the term “meat-shop” and mentions that the dreamer was indeed late to the market and adds:

“[t]he meat-shop was already closed”, comes into one's mind as a description of the experience. But wait, is not that a very vulgar phrase which — or rather, the opposite of which — denotes a certain neglect with regard to a man's clothing? The dreamer has not used these words; she has perhaps avoided them.

Here he translates the dreamer's account of an occurrence into his own words, following what he refers to as the structure of the incident, and introduces an idiomatic phrase that he then proceeds to reverse and interpret using sexual symbolism.<sup>25</sup> Further, he recognizes the vegetable in question to be a dream combination of asparagus and black radish, which does not occur in the dream and reminds him of the saying, “Blacky! Save yourself” which seems to him “to point to the sexual theme at which we guessed in the beginning, when we wanted to replace the story of the dream by ‘the meat-shop is closed.’”<sup>26</sup> It is important to stress that none of these phrases or the suggested vegetable takes place in the original dream, they are purely Freud's additions. This example reveals some of the outstanding characteristics of Freud as an interpreter of dreams, as Willbern summarizes:

Freud's actual interpretive style is interpolative. He introduces his own associations into the reported dream text, translates that text into his own terms, and reconstructs the dreamer's dream by way of his own interpretive inclinations. In a real and important sense, he takes the dream and makes it his own. The dream under investigation, the text, which is subjected to interpretation, becomes in practical reality a co-creation of the dreamer and the interpreter.

The method of his dream interpretations and his subjective role in it determine the dynamics of his sessions with H.D. for it is one of the matters which creates a passive clash between them. However, Freud is H.D.'s “Janus”, the two-faced god of the gates, in H.D.'s terms, who stands between the conscious and the unconscious, regardless of the subjective role he puts forward at times.

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<sup>25</sup> Willbern, “Freud and the Inter-Penetration of Dreams,” 104.

<sup>26</sup> Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 62.

## 1.2 “Writing on the Wall”: A Dangerous Symptom or Inspiration?

Psychoanalysis has influenced cultural theory and practice from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through its effect on individualism, its focus on inwardness, and especially through its discovery of the unconscious and its vast impact on the conscious. As has been stated, Freud and psychoanalysis put forward great innovations along with great controversies concerning women as well as art. A particular case of this clash of psychoanalysis versus the question of women and culture happened to be documented by H.D. in her *Tribute to Freud*, first published in 1956, in which she revised and collected her memories of her sessions with Freud that had taken place more than ten years before the book’s publication. Starting to see Freud when she was 47, the sessions were not her first encounter with psychoanalytic therapy, with Hanns Sachs having been her first analyst. Later she continued with Mary Chadwick, about whom she mentions that “Miss Chadwick could not follow the workings of my creative mind.”<sup>27</sup> Contrarily, her discussions with Freud about her dreams, visions, views on creativity, mysticism, and the unconscious would help in her spiritual quest, to overcome her writer’s block, and to reach a better understanding and development of her own artistic style, especially regarding, and regardless of, her disagreements with Freud.

Throughout *Tribute to Freud*, H.D. voices a clear admiration and gratitude towards Freud; for her, he was “Janus, the old Roman guardian of gates and doors, [...] with all ‘beginnings.’ Janus faced two ways, as doors and gates opened and shut.”<sup>28</sup> She elaborates further on her affection in one of her letters, as recorded by Susan Stanford Friedman:

I wish he had a thousand lives and arms and brains ... the world is literally his "child." He is so impersonal and tender. ... Freud is simply Jesus Christ after the resurrection, he has that wistful ghost look of someone who has been right past the door of the tomb, and such tenderness with such humor, he just IS all that. I am sure he IS the absolute inheritor of all that eastern mystery and majic, just IS, in spite of his monumental work and all that, he is the real, the final healer.<sup>29</sup>

However, this admiration for him does not stem from the fact that she completely agrees with his interpretation of her dreams and his analysis of her personality. In fact, H.D.’s artistic approach almost completely differed from that of Freud’s analytical one. As Friedman summarizes the differences in their approaches,

[h]e celebrated reason over passion and belief, and looked forward to a future when the infantile consolations of religion would be replaced by the rational power of "logos." His conception of reality was unreservedly materialist. [...] In contrast, H.D. and others

<sup>27</sup> H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, (New York: New Directions Books, 1956), 182.

<sup>28</sup> H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, 138.

<sup>29</sup> Friedman, *Psyche Reborn*, 37.

influenced by Freud were disillusioned with the limited truths of rationalism and the destructive horrors of technological progress. They celebrated intuition, the vision of dreams, and the "primitive" myths still living in the human psyche and recorded in tradition.<sup>30</sup>

The contrast in their views is especially influential in the analysis of some of H.D.'s dreams and visions as she refers to them as "the writing-on-the-wall,"<sup>31</sup> two of the most stressed topics in their sessions. To start with her dreams, there is one that generates long discussions and several analyses from both sides: the Princess dream. The dream is as follows,

She was a dark lady. She wore a clear-colored robe, yellow or faint-orange. It was wrapped round her as in one piece, like a sari worn as only a high caste Indian lady could wear it. But she is not Indian, she is Egyptian. She appears at the top of a long staircase; marble steps lead down to a river. She wears no ornament, no circlet or scepter shows her rank, but anyone would know this is a Princess. Down, down the steps she comes. She will not turn back, she will not stop, she will not alter the slow rhythm of her pace. [...] The steps are geometrical, symmetrical and she is as abstract as a lady could be, yet she is a real entity, a real person. I, the dreamer, wait at the foot of the steps. I have no idea who I am or how I got there. There is no before or after, it is a perfect moment in time or out of time. I am concerned about something, however. I wait below the lowest step. There, in the water beside me, is a shallow basket or ark or box or boat. There is, of course, a baby nested in it. The Princess must find the baby. I know that she will find this child. I know that the baby will be protected and sheltered by her and that is all that matters.<sup>32</sup>

H.D. admits that the subject is a very familiar one, for it is a description of *Moses in Bulrushes*. Although both she and Freud take this obvious reference into account in their interpretations, they identify the baby in the basket differently, which leads them to diverse conclusions. For Freud the baby is H.D. herself, identifying herself with a prophet and desiring to be "the founder of a new religion," as he raised the question: "The Professor asked me then if I were the child Miriam who in the Doré picture had stood, half hidden in the river-reeds, watching over the new-born child who was to become leader of a captive people and founder of a new religion."<sup>33</sup> This interpretation suggests that according to Freud, H.D.'s perception of herself as well as her expectations from her artistic career are exceptionally high, and she desires to be a leading figure of inspiration herself. However, H.D. had several different interpretations of this dream of hers; firstly, she reads it as a family portrait, claiming that the meaning is psychoanalytically very obvious. Initially, for her the dream portrays,

"[a] girl-child, a doll, an aloof and silent father form this triangle, this family romance, this trinity which follows the recognized religious pattern: Father, aloof, distant, the provider, the protector — but a little un-get-at-able, a little too far away and giant-like in proportion, a little chilly withal; Mother, a virgin, the Virgin, that is, an untouched child, adoring, with faith,

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>31</sup> H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, 49.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 147.

building a dream, and the dream is symbolized by the third member of the trinity, the Child, the doll in her arms.”<sup>34</sup>

But later she relates to the dream by focusing on the baby, the prophet. Freud’s suggestion of her being or desiring to be the prophet does not resonate with her, instead, the baby is Freud, the founder of a new religion: “Obviously it was he, who was that light out of Egypt. [...] But the Professor insisted I myself wanted to be Moses; not only did I want to be a boy, but I wanted to be a hero.”<sup>35</sup> It can be suggested that the first crucial point in this reference to his approach to this dream is the aspect of “insistence”. As previously shown through examples, Freud’s active participation in the interpretation of dreams is rather evident here in how he rejects H.D.’s own understanding and is convinced of her self-perception to be self-centered and egoist. This would not be such a strong argument, considering that he believes every dream to be egoistical:

Dreams are absolutely egoistic. In cases where not my ego but only a strange person occurs in the dream-content, I may safely assume that by means of identification my ego is concealed behind that person. I am permitted to supplement my ego.<sup>36</sup>

In his interpretation, Freud himself is visible, he directs it and takes it to a different direction from what the dreamer herself actually suggests. Because what if “she has perhaps avoided” or intentionally ignored this meaning in her own interpretation? In that case, he may need to fill in the blanks. Also, considering H.D.’s admiration for Freud, her reference to the world as his child, actually proves her interpretation right, for she so openly thinks the world of him.

Identifying the baby with H.D. also indicates her desire to be a boy. Freud acknowledges H.D.’s interest in women and the notion that she has two sides to herself, as Friedman argues and quotes from one of her letters to Bryher,

[n]ot only did he satisfy that need to understand, but even more, during their sessions Freud apparently connected H.D.’s writer’s block to her discomfort with her bisexuality. H.D. wrote to Bryher: I have gone terribly deep with papa [Freud]. He says, “you had two things to hide, one that you were a girl, the other that you were a boy.” It appears that I am that all-but extinct phenomena, the perfect bi -. Well, this is terribly exciting.<sup>37</sup>

His claim about her desire to be a boy could be about finding another point that leads to her bisexuality. However, it could also be about arguing that regardless of being both a girl and a boy, in fact, what she actually desires is to be only a boy. In that case, this brings forward the question of sex and Freud’s concepts of “penis envy” and “masculinity complex”, which are

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 155-6.

<sup>36</sup> Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 147.

<sup>37</sup> Friedman, *Psyche Reborn*, 425.

very likely to be employed in his analysis of H.D. in general, and of her dreams in particular. The question of sex, Freud's judgement on the matter, and the differences in their opinions will be analyzed more in detail in the following section of this chapter.

Another important factor that results in Freud's interpretation diverging from that of H.D. is their contrasting beliefs when it comes to the spiritual meaning of dreams, as well as art and even daily matters. As already stated, Freud the rationalist and materialist does not interpret dreams as prophecies or as messages from the future. For him, the meaning of the dream "hieroglyphics" can be decoded to find what is hidden, what it disturbs, and how it could be fixed. In his *Interpretation of Dreams*, he asserts that dreams are symptoms that need to be treated:

My patients, after I had pledged them to inform me of all the ideas and thoughts which occurred to them in connection with a given theme, related their dreams, and thus taught me that a dream may be interpolated in the psychic concatenation, which may be followed backwards from a pathological idea into a patient's memory. The next step was to treat the dream itself as a symptom, and to apply to it the method of interpretation which had been worked out for such symptoms.<sup>38</sup>

Treating dreams as symptoms proves that Freud does not think of dreams as spiritual messages but as indicators of some problem that causes difficulties. In addition to his insistence on H.D. being the baby in the basket, he further comments that the princess in the dream represents a mother figure and reveals that H.D. is in need of motherly care, which conceals some fear underneath, as noted by Peggy A. Knapp, for whom "[c]onnected with the desire for mother is the fear of being turned out, a fear consciously experienced in adult life."<sup>39</sup> Here, apart from the effect of H.D.'s familial relations on her, and the mother/father figure of Freud for H.D., the point lies in the connections Freud creates between dream content and symptoms, while H.D. employs a more spiritual approach. As stressed by Friedman together with Rachel Blau DuPlessis:

Freud could not accept the immortality of the soul, that in general his rationalist perspective blinded him to the spiritual realities she found embedded in dreams, religious vision, occult traditions, and art. In analysis, Freud identified her desire buried in "the deepest unconscious or subconscious layers of my being, to be the founder of a new religion." In her dreams and visions, she was the Prophetess who would reunite the divided truths of religion, art, and medicine to bring meaning to the world drifting disastrously toward another war. H.D. wanted Freud to acknowledge this religious task of the poet to understand these spiritual realities. For Freud, however, H.D.'s psychic visions were "symptoms" -even "dangerous" symptoms- of megalomania and an infantile desire for reunion with her mother.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, 10.

<sup>39</sup> Peggy A. Knapp, "Women's Freud(e): H. D.'s 'Tribute to Freud' & Gladys Schmitt's 'Sonnets for an Analyst'," *The Massachusetts Review* 24.2 (1983): 341.

<sup>40</sup> Rachel Blau DuPlessis, and Susan Stanford Friedman, "'Woman Is Perfect': H.D.'s Debate with Freud." *Feminist Studies* 7.3 (1981): 418.

On the contrary, for H.D. her dreams and visions had religious and mythological significance, she perceived them as the necessary messages she needed to put into practice her mission in life, i.e. to produce art. Through her own interpretations, she aimed to reveal the universal language that poets and artists can decipher through dreams and translate into a daytime language. In *Tribute*, she explains Freud's methods:

This old Janus, this beloved light-house keeper, old Captain January, shut the door on transcendental speculations or at least transferred this occult or hidden symbolism to the occult or hidden regions of the personal reactions, dreams, thought associations or thought "transferences" of the individual human mind. It was the human individual that concerned him, its individual reactions to the problems of every-day, the relation of the child to its environment, its friends, its teachers, above all its parents.<sup>41</sup>

By defining his approach, here she outlines that of her own, for hers quite departs from what she describes above. Apart from the Princess dream, another subject dominates their sessions together; the writing-on-the-wall. H.D. had seen some visions during her stay on the Greek island of Corfu with Bryher. She describes it as if it were a projection, something over which she had no control, that happened to her. The vision is rendered as follows:

I saw a dim shape forming on the wall between the foot of the bed and the wash-stand. It was late afternoon; the wall was a dull, mat ochre. I thought, at first, it was sunlight flickering from the shadows cast from or across the orange trees in full leaf and fruit and flower outside the bedroom window. But I realized instantly that our side of the house was already in early shadow. The pictures on the wall were like colorless transfers or "calcomanias" as we pretentiously called them as children. The first was head and shoulders, three-quarter face, no marked features, a stencil or stamp of a soldier or airman, but the figure was dim light on shadow, not shadow on light. It was a silhouette cut of light, not shadow, and so impersonal it might have been anyone, of almost any country. And yet there was a distinctly familiar line about the head with the visored cap; immediately it was somebody, unidentified indeed, yet suggesting a question — dead brother? lost friend?<sup>42</sup>

Freud and H.D. pursued a completely different analysis of her writing-on-the-wall, and H.D. developed hers against the current of Freud's strong diagnosis; she mentions that he "picked on the writing-on-the-wall as the most dangerous or the only actually dangerous 'symptom.'" <sup>43</sup> For him, it meant a severe indication of megalomania, also in relation to her Princess dream while she interprets it as an almost tangible inspiration, something that is revealed to her. H.D.'s repressed desires manifesting during the day, or even outside of consciousness, must have given Freud the impression that H.D.'s ego was seriously weakened.<sup>44</sup> As a reaction to his "diagnosis" she writes, "But symptom or inspiration, the

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<sup>41</sup> H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, 140.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 66.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

<sup>44</sup> Friedman, *Psyche Reborn*, 139.

writing continues to write itself or be written. [...] The original or basic image, however, is common to the whole race and applicable to almost any time.”<sup>45</sup> She keeps her own assumption of the visions as an inspiration while sparing room for Freud’s use of “symptom”, and the challenge of this duality is the greatest effect that her sessions with Freud had on her creativity. Throughout *Tribute* she makes it clear that they do not always agree, that she does not accept every single one of his opinions, regardless of her high respect for him, as she notes, “Whatever his idea, I wanted then, as at other times, to meet him halfway.”<sup>46</sup> What Freud succeeds in doing through their sessions is he pushes H.D. forward with his principles to her spiritual quest where she creates her own. Friedman summarizes the importance of disagreement with Freud in order to actually benefit from his doctrines:

Their relationship was a complex emotional and intellectual dialogue in which their disagreements did as much as their agreements to focus Psyche’s quest. [...] As much as agreement, her opposition to his ideas vitalized his influence. His impact on H.D. and other artists was dependent upon their ability to revise fundamental assumptions in his work.<sup>47</sup>

More than his specific interpretations of her dreams and visions, his theory of the unconscious and the way it communicates through images in dreams shaped her artistic expression and helped her overcome the creativity block she was experiencing at the time. As Friedman demonstrates,

[m]any have noticed the striking similarity between the mechanisms of the dreamwork and the devices of poetic form. [...] Freud and his interpreters did not mean that art is achieved through “automatic writing”; the dreamwork is not itself the artist. Rather the conscious craft of the poet is analogous to the techniques of the dreamwork. The language of poetry, like the script of the dream, embodies thought in a nonconceptual, often visual form that conceals as it reveals. This concept of poetic form is potentially stimulating to many types of poets. But it probably had a special relevance for H.D. because Freud's description of unconscious thought processes is particularly in tune with imagist aesthetics. The most striking parallel is the imagist and psychoanalytic emphasis on nonrational image. The dreamwork thinks in pictures, never in concepts.<sup>48</sup>

H.D.’s approach differed from that of Freud, but this was not an obstacle for her to absorb his teachings and to appreciate her chance to be exposed to his ideas. In *Tribute*, their disagreements regarding her visions and dreams are clear. However, the conflict that is not mentioned relates to Freud’s notorious theories on female sexuality. Their sessions were significant also because they reviewed H.D.’s familial issues, the influence of her relationship to Freud on discovering these issues as well as H.D.’s quiet challenge as a woman pitted against “the man”.

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<sup>45</sup> H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, 76.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 97.

<sup>47</sup> Friedman, *Psyche Reborn*, 31-2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 81.

### 1.3. The Figure without Her Spare: Daughter against Father, Woman against Man

In her psychoanalytic sessions with him, Freud tapped into H.D.'s past and its effect on her present, revising her childhood dreams and sorrows, her family, and her relationships. When she started seeing Freud, she was at a point in her life where she was trying to recover from losing her brother, parents, a baby, her husband, Richard Aldington, and a lover/friend, D.H. Lawrence. Additionally, she had gone through one world war and was fearfully anticipating another; they had a plenty to dip into. As the only daughter of her parents, H.D. grew up with her two brothers older than herself, her professor father, and her distant mother who was an inspiration for H.D.'s artistic path. As she put it, “[o]bviously, this is my inheritance. I derive my imaginative faculties through my musician-artist mother, through her part-Celtic mother, through the grandfather of English and middle-European extraction.”<sup>49</sup> Growing up, she kept comparing herself with her brothers, for whom her parents allegedly had more affection and interest. In *Tribute to Freud*, she expresses how she felt misplaced, misunderstood, describing her psychological state as follows:

One of these souls was called Mignon, though its body did not fit it very well. It was small, *mignonne*, though it was not pretty, they said. It was a girl between two boys; but ironically, it was wispy and mousy, while the boys were glowing and gold. It was not pretty, they said. Then they said it was pretty — but suddenly, it shot up like a weed. They said, surprised, “She is really very pretty, but isn’t it a pity she’s so tall?” The soul was called Mignon, but, clearly, it did not fit its body. But it found itself in a song. Only the tune is missing.<sup>50</sup>

This feeling of misplacement originates from her feeling loved by and close to neither of her parents. She admired her mother, and wanted to be closer to her, however, a competition for her love was out of question, as it had been won by her brother already. As she describes their relationship:

She has bound music folios and loose sheets on the top of our piano. About her, there is no question. The trouble is, she knows so many people and they come and interrupt. And besides that, she likes my brother better. If I stay with my brother, become part almost of my brother, perhaps I can get nearer to her.<sup>51</sup>

When it comes to her father, it is understood that he was buried in his work, inaccessible and remote, “[a]s far as that goes, there is his study. Provided you do not speak to him when he is sitting at his table, or disturb him when he is lying down, you are free to come and go. It is a

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<sup>49</sup> H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, 157.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 146.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 53.

quiet place. No one interferes or interrupts.”<sup>52</sup> More importantly, he wanted her to continue to prepare for college, focus on science like him and her half-brother and to make a Marie Curie out of her while she would have preferred to study at an art school.<sup>53</sup> He was supportive of her to become an intellectual woman, and to achieve success in the academia, but H.D. and her father had two different expectations from her. Friedman mentions the frustration she ended up feeling in reaction to her father’s attempts to teach her science:

Her father, H.D. told Norman Pearson, was a great sympathizer with the feminist demands to open options for women beyond the home. For H.D., his sympathy took the form of active encouragement for her to become the “new woman,” one like Marie Curie, who would achieve great things in fields traditionally reserved for men. As in many father-daughter relationships, however, his attempt to help her with math resulted in her frustration, fear of disappointment or rejection, and paralysis— social scientists today call this complex of emotions “math anxiety” and recognize its predominance among girls and women. Her failure to please her father no doubt eroded her self-image considerably, but she did not rebel against her father's “modern” ambitions by fleeing into the security of a traditional female role. [...] She would achieve in art what her father hoped she would accomplish in science.<sup>54</sup>

Especially compared to her brother who surpassed his father’s success in his field, H.D.’s relationship with her father was determined by feeling insufficient, and like a failure. As Norman Holmes Pearson quotes in the afterword to *Tribute*, “She only felt that she [was] a disappointment to her father, an odd duckling to her mother.”<sup>55</sup>

When she started her sessions with Freud, she had already lost most of her family; her mother, father and brother. Deeply affected by Freud’s assistance to the understanding of her mind, feeling welcomed and valuable in his presence, as well as not having any more chance in repairing her unsatisfied relationship with her parents, it could be stated that H.D. developed parental feelings toward Freud. Although this was acknowledged by both, they did not agree on which one of her parents H.D. associated with Freud. For H.D., Freud is a paternal figure. Firstly, the fact that he was quite old when they met made H.D. think of him as somehow vulnerable; she often found herself worried about his state, or about a possible sudden interruption of their sessions caused by his death. She refers to him in *Tribute*, “I think of Sigmund Freud as this little-papa, Papalie, the grandfather. Talking half-asleep to myself, or rather to the Professor, I realize I am using the rhythm or language I use only for cats and children.”<sup>56</sup> A point she keeps coming back in *Tribute* is the fact that Freud lived longer than her father, “He was younger than the Professor when he died, so perhaps it is

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Norman Holmes Pearson, “Afterword”, *Tribute to Freud*, (New York: New Directions Books, 1956), 228.

<sup>54</sup> Friedman, *Psyche Reborn*, 54.

<sup>55</sup> Pearson, “Afterword,” 227.

<sup>56</sup> H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, 166.

natural, one way and another, to give the Professor the role of grand- or great-father, for all he is little-father or Papalie.”<sup>57</sup> Obviously, his age was a dominant factor in her associating him with her father, but Freud and her father resembled each other especially in their scientific approach that contrasted with that of H.D.’s. As already mentioned, while H.D. interpreted her dreams and visions as steps towards a spiritual quest, Freud went on to diagnose them as symptoms of megalomania, and so Freud’s distance from spirituality resembled that of her father’s. Her attempts at making spiritual connections during the interpretation process were dismissed as simply the result of her poetical approach, as she mentions in *Tribute*, “[t]he Professor repeated, ‘You see, after all, you are a poet.’ He dismissed my suggestion of some connection with the old mysteries, magic or second sight.”<sup>58</sup> Both Freud and her father interpreted her differently than she did herself, for their techniques and H.D.’s were quite divergent, as she also mentions through their rejection of astrology, in which H.D. was highly interested, “But we must not talk astrology. In that, at least, my father and Sigmund Freud agree. Nevertheless, in spite of them, or to spite them, I find enchanting parallels in the Ram, the Bull, the Heavenly Twins.”<sup>59</sup> In reference to her mention of “to spite them”, it reveals H.D.’s subtle fight against these two men whom she valued so much but could never be fully understood by regardless.

While it was clear for H.D. that Freud was a father figure, he had an opposing idea on the matter. For him, she replaced her mother with him, something he detested:

The Professor’s surroundings and interests seem to derive from my mother rather than from my father, and yet to say the “transference” is to Freud as mother does not altogether satisfy me. He had said, “And — I must tell you (you were frank with me, and I will be frank with you), I do not like to be the mother in transference — it always surprises and shocks me a little. I feel so very masculine.” I asked him if others had what he called this mother-transference on him. He said ironically and I thought a little wistfully, “O, very many.”<sup>60</sup>

He mentions in the very beginning of their sessions that her mission is to find her mother and by coming to Vienna to meet him, he might have interpreted that she found her in him:

“Why had I come to Vienna? The Professor had said in the very beginning that I had come to Vienna hoping to find my mother. Mother? Mamma. But my mother was dead. I was dead; that is, the child in me that had called her mamma was dead.”<sup>61</sup>

Furthermore, according to Freud, her Corfu visions also indicated a connection with her mother: “The Professor translated the pictures on the wall, or the picture-writing on the wall

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 202.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 179-180.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 32.

of a hotel bedroom in Corfu, the Greek Ionian island, that I saw projected there in the spring of 1920, as a desire for union with my mother.”<sup>62</sup> They agreed, although never discussed, that H.D. confronted some of her parental problems through Freud, but they both had a different one in mind. The choice of parents here is interesting for it also raises the question of gender, which was the main clash they had, though they never directly addressed it.

Throughout *Tribute*, it is difficult to determine whether H.D. agrees with Freud’s renown arguments concerning female sexuality and the disposition of the female body and mind. She presents no account of any conversation taking place between them concerning the topic, however, there are subtle implications of her disagreement, a few instances where they challenge each other, and some suggestions pointing that she did not always agree with and blindly accept his arguments. As she brings forward at the very beginning of *Tribute*, “I was a student, working under the direction of the greatest mind of this and of perhaps many succeeding generations. But the Professor was not always right.”<sup>63</sup> This is significant for her since she is a female analysand, both admiring the professor who assists her with understanding herself and preserving her own views, especially when it comes to her womanhood. A silent but constant defence against his claims known by her, though not discussed, was needed in the process of her turning into the artist and woman she was supposed to be. Friedman quotes a passage from one of his letters in which he attacks John Stuart Mill’s arguments on the equality of women, which clearly presents his strong Victorian values when it comes to women:

In his [Mill’s] presentation it never emerges that women are different beings—we will not say lesser, rather the opposite—from men. He finds the suppression of women an analogy to that of Negroes. Any girl, even without a suffrage or legal competence, whose hand a man kisses and for whose love he is prepared to dare all, could have set him right. It is really a stillborn thought to send women into the struggle for existence exactly as men. [...] It is possible that changes in upbringing may suppress all a woman’s tender attributes, needful of protection and yet so victorious, and that she can then earn a livelihood like men. It is also possible that in such an event one would not be justified in mourning the passing away of the most delightful thing the world can offer us—our ideal of womanhood. [...] Nature has determined woman’s destiny through beauty, charm, and sweetness. Law and custom have much to give women that has been withheld from them, but the position of women will surely be what it is: in youth an adored darling and in mature years a loved wife.<sup>64</sup>

Therefore, merely being a woman studied by him can be considered a challenge, especially when one does not share these same values. It is pointed out in *Tribute* that H.D. read her

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 32-3.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Friedman, *Psyche Reborn*, 26.

Freud and formed her idea on the topic, especially when it comes to creativity it seems that she is rather offended but displays an accepting attitude:

I was rather annoyed with the Professor in one of his volumes. He said (as I remember) that women did not creatively amount to anything or amount to much, unless they had a male counterpart or a male companion from whom they drew their inspiration. Perhaps he is right and my dream of “salting” my typewriter with the tell-tale transference symbol is further proof of his infallibility.<sup>65</sup>

But in fact, she never really accepted the views she “was rather annoyed with” as she already makes sure in the beginning that she does think that the professor is always right. Their subtle clash starts the moment she enters his room where all their sessions take place for H.D.’s attitude is different compared to his other analysands:

But waiting and finding that I would not or could not speak, he uttered. What he said — and I thought a little sadly — was, “You are the only person who has ever come into this room and looked at the things in the room before looking at me.” But worse was to come. A little lion-like creature came padding toward me — a lioness, as it happened. She had emerged from the inner sanctum or manifested from under or behind the couch; anyhow, she continued her course across the carpet. Embarrassed, shy, overwhelmed, I bend down to greet this creature. But the Professor says, “Do not touch her — she snaps — she is very difficult with strangers.” Strangers? Is the Soul crossing the threshold a stranger to the Door-Keeper? It appears so. But, though no accredited dog-lover, I like dogs and they oddly and sometimes unexpectedly “take” to me. If this is an exception, I am ready to take the risk. Unintimidated but distressed by the Professor’s somewhat forbidding manner, I not only continue my gesture toward the little chow, but crouch on the floor so that she can snap better if she wants to. Yofi — her name is Yofi — snuggles her nose into my hand and nuzzles her head, in delicate sympathy, against my shoulder.<sup>66</sup>

H.D. keeps this indirect challenging manner toward Freud along with her admiration. Their first interaction can be firstly interpreted as an encounter of dominance; for Freud, H.D.’s preference of his room and its contents to him at first might have felt like a slight blow on his importance in reaction to which, perhaps, he stresses the fact that she is a stranger, to Yofi and perhaps by implication to him as well. It is as if he were “forbidding” her to get close to the room she seems to be so impressed by and is maintaining his territory by drawing a line between his side and hers. However, later into the sessions, Freud makes a remark about one of his favourite figures on his table, which indicates more than it seems. As she recounts,

“[t]his is my favourite,” he said. He held the object toward me. I took it in my hand. It was a little bronze statue, helmeted, clothed to the foot in carved robe with the upper incised chiton or peplum. One hand was extended as if holding a staff or rod. “She is perfect,” he said, “only she has lost her spear.” I did not say anything.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, 181-2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 135.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 97.

Here the spear could be interpreted as a phallic symbol, and the whole commentary as an implication of “penis envy”. Freud’s belief of women’s innate inferiority was the main point with which H.D. conflicted.

Regardless of his scientific and rational analysis of H.D.’s problems with and exploration of her artistic expression, Freud’s help with her growth as a poet cannot be ignored. Her dilemma lay in confronting Freud’s misogyny with her silence in order to let him help her develop as an artist.<sup>68</sup> As stated, his adherents needed to follow Freud’s way leading to the discovery of themselves and partly to leave some of his doctrines behind and partly to translate them into their own discourse. H.D. had to do the same, a shift in her doctrines was necessary for her to improve. As Friedman states,

[o]n another level, H.D.’s very survival as a woman artist required her to confront Freud’s misogyny if she were to continue in the traditionally male roles of questor and poet. [...] His theories of psychosexual development became “scientific” arguments for the inferiority of women and therefore rationalizations for inequality. H.D. sought inspiration from one of the greatest legitimizers of patriarchy. Her success as a woman depended upon conflict. [...] But, once reborn, Psyche emerged with a voice distinctly her own. Once having clarified the poles of opposition, her search for synthesis led to a transcendence of their differences in a vision that incorporated the whole. This transformation of Freudian theory simultaneously served as the basis of her mature art and as a brilliant reevaluation of Freud’s significance for the twentieth century.<sup>69</sup>

As a poet, H.D. expressed her resistance to his theories most fully in a poem called “The Master”, which she refused to publish. Through the poem, H.D. articulates her anger at Freud, for she thinks women are perfect and though wise, he is wrong. She writes, “O, it was late, and God will forgive me, my anger, / but I could not accept it. / I could not accept from wisdom / what love taught, / woman is perfect.”<sup>70</sup> As Friedman and DuPlessis suggest that H.D. did not want to publish “The Master”, written in 1934-5, because she wanted to preserve the privacy of their sessions, for in *Tribute* she reveals more than the poem does.<sup>71</sup> Her motivation in not publishing lies in the lesbian content of her attack to his theories on female sexuality for Freud was the one who acknowledged her lesbian desires and even connected her writer’s block to her “discomfort with her bisexuality” regardless of their disagreements, moreover, “she had made her peace with Freud-and with their differences-and did not want to raise the controversy she had, in other perhaps more repressive ways, resolved.”<sup>72</sup> As H.D. sums up the matter in “The Master”, “I had two loves separate; / God

<sup>68</sup> Friedman, *Psyche Reborn*, 32.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 32-3.

<sup>70</sup> H.D., “The Master,” *Feminist Studies* 7.3 (1981): 411.

<sup>71</sup> DuPlessis and Friedman, “‘Woman Is Perfect,’” 417.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*.

who loves all mountains, / alone knew why / and understood / and told the old man / to explain / the impossible, / which he did.”<sup>73</sup>

Fascinated by his ability to help her find a path inside her mind and to understand her creative force and the blockages in its way, H.D. did not mind disagreeing with Freud, and did not mind the objectionable points of his perspective. Just as in discussing her visions and dreams, Freud had his own interpretations of female question, which did not affect H.D. from having her own, quite distinctive ones. His role was being “the midwife to the soul”, it was up to her what to become and how to continue developing henceforth.

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<sup>73</sup> H.D., “The Master,” 409.

## Chapter 2: Anais Nin and *House of Incest*

### 2.1. Psychoanalysis and Poetry: Otto Rank's Guide through Creativity

As the previous chapter has presented, Freud's discovery of psychoanalysis and the unconscious are undoubtedly most effective in critical theory and literature. The intellectual group made up of his leading followers provided one of the major sources of his support and a confidential space for discussing his theories and their development. One of the most crucial members of this group was Otto Rank, who was not only part of Freud's consulting team, but also had a son/father relationship with him. Regardless, Rank is known for his departure from Freud's theories, despite his close association with him. As has been made clear in H.D.'s case, Freud's approach and his psychoanalytic principles toward art and the spiritual matters into which it branches could be described as rather subjective and analytical, rather limited in terms of articulating the complexity that art brings to question. This was the crucial point of the shift in his devotion to Freud's principles. Art and creativity played a far more important role in Rank's approach to the unconscious, to neurosis, and in the method employed by him during talking therapy. Certainly, his prioritizing of the artist in analysing his patients worked especially well in the case of Anais Nin, who got over her writer's block precisely thanks to Rank's guidance through creativity.

Freud played a major role not only in the formation of Rank's divergent theories, but also in his personal life. Growing up with an alcoholic father and an older brother who followed his lead, Rank and his mother lived with them until they could no longer bear it and had to flee. The first significant aspect this dynamic reveals is his relationship with his mother. Unlike Freud, Rank bases the initial familial relationships on the importance of the mother, which he also connects to the artist's main anxieties, as Ellen Handler Spitz states,

[w]ith his publication of *The Trauma of Birth*, it became clear that the nurturing, protective, powerful birth mother—neglected by Freud—had moved to center stage in Rank's thinking. His thesis that anxiety stems from the trauma of birth, i.e., from separation from this primal mother, dovetails with his sensitivity to artists' fears surrounding the birth (the making, completing, exhibiting, selling, giving up) of works of art. [...] Where Freud had placed the father at the core of emotional life, Rank now substituted the mother—an instance again of biography intruding into creative life.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen Handler Spitz, "Conflict and Creativity: Reflections on Otto Rank's Psychology of Art," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 23.3 (1989): 100.

Shifting the importance towards the mother could be interpreted as a strong protest against Freud considering his priority of penis envy and masculinity complex as its outcome. The second aspect is Rank's relationship with his brother. Although they were close, this closeness was uncertain and unsatisfactory for Rank. He mentions that a 'father complex' is hidden within the 'brother complex.' Furthermore, this pattern may explain some of the disputes he had with his co-workers (Abraham and Jones), and subsequently, with Freud.<sup>2</sup> His "father complex" led him to disavow his father in mid-adolescence by changing his surname from Rosenfeld to Rank. This significant separation from his father becomes a decisive step in Rank's self-creation, which, according to him, emphasizes the creative will rather than the Oedipus complex.<sup>3</sup> Regarding Freud's interpretation of the Oedipus myth, it is another significant matter which Rank offered an exceptional analysis of. While Freud approaches the myth from the perspective of the father and partly the mother, Rank focuses on the child and the various expectations projected on them. Concentrating on the part of the myth where Oedipus is left to die due to the prophecy that he would kill his father, Rank draws attention to what a child actually signifies for his/her parents before even being born, as Spitz argues:

Rank asks us implicitly to take account of the complex meanings that children have for their parents even before they come into the world as well as, certainly, thereafter. What does each child signify to his father? What, by analogy, does each work of art signify to its creator? What is imagined for him/it? What hopes and fears are awakened by his birth/its completion?<sup>4</sup>

This shift in his focus can also be related to his basing his theories on the importance of the mother rather than the father.

His self-creation started and continued through art during the years of the Industrial Revolution when he had to work at a mechanic's shop and when he was filling his notebook with poems, plays, and more. Furthermore, he was doing mainly self-analysis, as Rudnytsky explains on the basis of quotes from Rank's journal,

[l]ike Freud, Rank prepared for his discovery of psychoanalysis by engaging in self-analysis. In his first journal entry, dated January I, 1903, Rank declares: "Before everything, I want to make progress in psychology," by which he means "the comprehensive knowledge of mankind that explains the riddles of our thinking, acting, and speaking, and leads back to certain basic characteristics." To achieve this goal, he adds, "self-observation is a prime essential and to that end I am making these notes."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Peter L. Rudnytsky, "Rank: Beyond Freud?" *American Imago* 41.4 (1984): 326.

<sup>3</sup> Rudnytsky, "Rank: Beyond Freud?" 326.

<sup>4</sup> Spitz, "Conflict and Creativity," 102.

<sup>5</sup> Rudnytsky, "Rank: Beyond Freud?" 328.

Here it is crucial to notice the connection between self-observation and the role of art. It points out that his discovery of analysis took place in accordance with his passion for art, which explains the importance of the artist in his analysis of neurosis.

Rank presented his essay on the artist when he first met Freud, which marked the beginning of their intellectual and intimate relationship. Freud took the place of his rejected father due to his financial, academic, and emotional support. However, after almost two decades of loyalty to Freudian theories, Rank started to drift apart from them, realizing some of the problematic points contained within orthodox psychoanalysis. In the preface to Rank's *Art and Artist*, Ludwig Lewisohn details these points as follows:

The limitation of the Freudian psychology was its general unwillingness to draw the ultimate conclusions inherent within itself. Like its great founder [...] it was itself "sold" to nineteenth century mechanistic doctrine; it, too, insisted on an unbroken chain of causality, of which all the links were to be the same in kind. It had the nineteenth-century passion for "reducing" all phenomena to a common denominator. [...] Since man was "only" an animal by the general consent of a "scientific" age, it followed very smoothly that art should be "only" the sublimation of repressed sex-wishes. Hence the pure Freudian teaching gradually assumed a character of rigidity.<sup>6</sup>

He continues to stress the question of the soul in psychoanalysis, which is a point Rank took seriously and granted it great importance in his own theories. Rank states that orthodox psychoanalysts "left out the vital spark or soul or essence — the essential mark or quality or character that made the phenomenon what it was and differentiated it from others."<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, in Anais Nin's diary records of their sessions, he clearly mentions this problem of psychoanalysis and his contradictory preference:

I believe analysis has become the worst enemy of the soul. It killed what it analyzed. I saw too much psychoanalysis with Freud and his disciples which became pontifical, dogmatic. That was why I was ostracized from the original group. I became interested in the artist. I became interested in literature, in the magic of language. I disliked medical language, which was sterile. I studied mythology, archeology, drama, painting, sculpture, history. What restitutes to scientific phenomenon its life, is art.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, his divergent approach to familial complexes, to the "soul", its connection to art and the artist, and finally art's relation to analysis were the major points of Rank's departure from complete loyalty to Freudian theories.

His focus on art and the artist could be considered Rank's major contrast in his theories. He connects almost every concept put forward by psychoanalysis, including neurosis, dreams, the unconscious, and even sexual impulses to what he terms as "creative

<sup>6</sup> Ludwig Lewisohn, "Preface to *Art and Artist*," (New York: Agathon Press, 1968), 8.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Anais Nin, *The Diary of Anais Nin* (New York: A Harvest Book, The Swallow Press and Harcourt, Inc., 1966), 322.

will". Whereas in Freudian theory, a conflict of instinctual origin was thought to be the causative component in neurosis, Rank saw neurosis as a conflict caused by a lack of separation and individuation, and hence "a failure to express the will of the self creatively."<sup>9</sup> The neurotic was nothing more than an artist who was having a creativity block, as Kainer points out:

Rank likened the neurotic to the "artist manqué," i.e., the blocked artist. What is blocked is the capacity to individuate oneself to carry out self-created ideals, because one has been unable first to take on the obligations of life—either those imposed by the nature of the self, or those imposed by the necessities of co-existence with others. [...] In Rank's view, "neurotic" and "creative" refer to how successful one has been in carrying out what is a strong underlying need for individual expression.<sup>10</sup>

His understanding of neurosis plays a significant role in the sessions he had with Anais Nin. When she started seeing Rank, she was struggling to get over her physical and emotional connection to her father and over her writer's block. Her previous attempt at being an analysand ended up as a failure, for she thought that her artistic and complex self was not perceived rightfully. In the fourth volume of her diary, she explains why René Allendy's analysis did not suit her,

[w]ith Allendy, I was an ordinary woman, a full human being, a simple and naive one; and he would exorcise my disquietudes, vague aspirations, my creations which sent me out into dangerous realms. [...] he suggested I should take love more lightly, give it less importance, to evade tragedy. That I should take a playful attitude towards it. [...] and if he was right about overcoming tragedy, *par contre*, he overlooked the deeper cravings of an artist, for whom deep full love is the only possible form, no simmering life but a boiling one, no small compromise with reality.<sup>11</sup>

When it comes to Rank's method of analysis, his priority was directly to handle the problems related to creativity instead of focusing on daily emotional struggles. The most effective aspect of his method, especially for Nin, was to avoid treating his analysands as a case that needed to be classified. This was one of the limiting factors of a pure Freudian approach; narrowing down the symptoms just to be able to place them in a category and to turn the neurotic into an acceptable member of society. Regarding the artist and the question of creativity, being accepted by society is not often the case or the main concern. Rank refers to the difference between Allendy's method and his as placing the emphasis on adaptation to ordinary life or individual life; while Allendy tried to replace Nin's artistic struggles and extremities with daily concerns thanks to which she would take life "lightly", Rank aimed at

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<sup>9</sup> R. G. K. Kainer, "Art and the Canvas of the Self: Otto Rank and Creative Transcendence," *American Imago* 41.4 (1984): 359.

<sup>10</sup> Kainer, "Art and the Canvas of the Self," 366-7.

<sup>11</sup> Nin, *The Diary of Anais Nin*, 327.

strengthening her artistic life by helping her create an inner world which would help her to balance out the lack of imagination life offers.<sup>12</sup> Nin demonstrates this in a lecture she gave at The Otto Rank Association,

[n]o matter what disintegrating influences I was experiencing, the writing was the act of wholeness. [...] I realized later he had shifted the whole problem of human life to the problem of the creative will, and he was counting on this creative will to find its own solutions.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, her creative block was Rank's starting point in his treatment. According to him, creative block stems from the artist's relationship with the artists of the past and his/her idols; the artist is often torn between following the traditions and the creative impulses to abandon all of them, which results in "unconscious needs for self-punishment" and "temporary blocks to [his/her] progress."<sup>14</sup>

Continuing with "creative will", Rank explains the gap between the artistic creation and sexual impulse which is rather unexplored in psychoanalysis by placing the artist somewhere between the neurotic and the dreamer. As Kainer quotes him:

Psychology could not explain how from the sex impulse there was produced, not the sex-act, but the artwork, and all the ideas called in to bridge this infinite gulf—"compensation," "sublimation," etc.—were only psychological transcriptions for the fact that we have here something different, higher, symbolical.[...] When psychoanalysis speaks of a sublimated sexual impulse in creative art, meaning thereby the impulse diverted from its purely biological function and directed towards higher ends, the questions as to what is diverted and what directed are just being dismissed with an allusion to repression. [...] the further question remains to be answered: what originally led to such repression? [...] I, for my part, am of opinion that positively willed control takes the place of negative inhibition, and that it is the masterful use of the sexual impulse in the service of this individual will which produces the sublimation.<sup>15</sup>

While for Freud, the ultimate source of artistic creation consisted in sexual energy, for Rank it was this creative will that he connected with individual expression and firmly separated from the "wish" which he described as "a faded, weakened impulse (not weak will) from which the will has withdrawn the energy necessary to achieve its goal and which must now be content with a mere longing for its fulfillment."<sup>16</sup> In her lecture, Nin describes the creative will as, in her terms, "stubbornness", the urge not to give up and to take refuge in creation from the "human condition, human sorrows, human handicaps."<sup>17</sup> As in clear opposition to Freud, Rank disagrees with the argument that humans are doomed to self-destruction as a result of

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 328-9.

<sup>13</sup> Anais Nin, "On Truth and Reality," *In Favor of the Sensitive Man and Other Essays* (New York: A Harvest Book, 1973), 48-9.

<sup>14</sup> Spitz, "Conflict and Creativity," 103.

<sup>15</sup> Kainer, "Art and the Canvas of the Self," 361.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 362.

<sup>17</sup> Nin, "On Truth and Reality", 47.

these “human sorrows”, and suggests that this destructive tendency is balanced by the overcoming spirit of the creative will.<sup>18</sup> Concerning the creative will as the spirit or the soul of the self, he argues that the subject of the soul is neglected altogether in psychoanalysis which is closely related to the role of the imagination and the construction of the artist. He places the soul, the essence as the base of the inner world which he puts forward as the only source one could fall back upon. Nin describes it as a private center:

It is only in the private world that we can learn to alchemize the ugly, the terrible, the horrors of war, the evils and cruelties of man, into a new kind of human being. I do not say turn away or escape, [...] but we need to create a center of strength and resistance to disappointments and failures in outward events.<sup>19</sup>

It is this private world that Rank encouraged Nin to create or to hold on to, the construction of which is only possible by the creative will, that helped Nin get over writer’s block, for she was able to shift her focus from several roles she was playing, numerous people she was trying to satisfy, to her “stubbornness”, to her writing which saved her already many times. Notably, not classifying her condition as another case of neurosis stemming from a repression of her past and sexuality, was the main factor that made her feel understood immediately,

[h]e considered neurosis a failed work of art, the neurotic a failed artist. Neurosis, he had written, was a manifestation of imagination and energy gone wrong. Instead of a fruit or a flower, I had borne obsessions and anxieties. It was this concept which appealed to me, that he did not call it an illness, but, as in nature, a misbegotten object which might have equal beauty and fascination as the relatives of more legitimate and noble birth.<sup>20</sup>

Compared to Freud’s approach to H.D.’s artistic struggles and how she needed to translate his questionable interpretation of her imagination, Rank provided a more comprehensive environment for the artistic by not relating the urge to create to megalomania but to the necessity of will and the inner, creative world of one’s own. Rank’s disparate views serve as a reminder that the study of psychology and the research of the unconscious need an openness to multiple points of view as well as an understanding of the varied character of human existence.

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<sup>18</sup> Kainer, “Art and the Canvas of the Self,” 365.

<sup>19</sup> Nin, “On Truth and Reality,” 49.

<sup>20</sup> Nin, *The Diary of Anais Nin*, 314.

## 2.2. 'I am an orphan': A Maimed Daughter

When Anais Nin started her sessions with Otto Rank, she was in the midst of quite a complicated relationship with her father. Through the role that she plays in this relationship, and its effects she had been experiencing since her childhood, which was reflected in all her other relationships, Rank and Nin aimed at freeing her from her wounded daughter-self and creating a new self who was grounded in her inner world and who was in touch with the womanhood she needed. The crucial aspects in realizing her ideal artist self were Rank's radical theories on feminine psychology and his approach to her diary which was her main work of art that she had been working on since she was eleven. Rank presented his arguments concerning the question of feminine and masculine psychology in his collection of essays entitled *Beyond Psychology*. He illustrates a world that is the creation of man, in which women live lives to which they do not belong. He summarizes his understanding of the nature of man and woman:

Man born of woman never accepted this basic fact of being mortal, that is, never accepted himself. Hence, his basic psychology is denial of his mortal origin and a subsequent need to change himself in order to find his real self which he rationalizes as independent of woman. Woman, on the contrary, fundamentally accepts her basic self, that of motherhood; at the same time, having taken on the masculine ideology, she needs constant confirmation from the man that she is acceptable to him. [...] Furthermore, woman seems to have a resistance to revealing to revealing her own psychology: first, because it is her last weapon against the man, [...] second, because, as often has been said, her psychology is a mystery not only to the man but to herself. [...] This *real woman*, psychologically, can only be described in negative terms, because her reality is irrational (intuitive, *sybille*).<sup>21</sup>

To start with the role of motherhood, Nin was certainly a woman caught up in numerous motherly duties, despite not having any kids of her own. She took on the responsibility of taking care of the men in her life, one way or another. The role of the mother she undertook in her relationships was, in fact, one of the obstacles in her path to the discovery and practice of all the other women she could have become. She mentions in her diary that Rank showed her that the mother was her concept of womanhood, that she defined herself through its duties, "To protect, serve, mother, care for. So it was the mother in me which found uses for her talents, but the woman?"<sup>22</sup> Although it was necessary for her not to define herself through her nurturing self, it could be argued through Rank's theories that the motherhood she preserved

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<sup>21</sup> Otto Rank, "Feminine Psychology and Masculine Ideology", *Beyond Psychology* (New York: Dover Publications, 1941), 178.

<sup>22</sup> Nin, *The Diary of Anais Nin*, 336.

and practiced so devotedly is the essence of her creativity, as Rank states, “this force in woman [the motherhood], man always was and still is afraid, because it symbolizes the epitome of irrationality, the marvel of creation itself. [...] In this sense, woman’s psychology as a whole can be designated as insideness.”<sup>23</sup> Inspired or reinforced by his theories, further in her life Nin based her priority in her writing on the female inwardness, on the “writing of the womb”. Sharon Spencer demonstrates on the matter that by constructing a “womb-oriented writing”, she became one of the first women who established her art mainly on “the need for a feminine theory and practice of literature.”<sup>24</sup> As Spencer elaborates on the characteristics of Nin’s “womb-oriented writing”,

[t]he writing of the womb must be alive: that is, natural, spontaneous, flowing (to use one of Nin's favorite words). It must have warmth, color, vibrancy, and it must convey a sense of movement (often Nin’s characters are stuck, immobile, or paralyzed), the momentum of growth. Woman's literature (a literature of flesh and blood) must create syntheses; it must reconnect what has been fragmented by excessive intellectual analysis.<sup>25</sup>

Nin not only employs the characteristics of the womb in her writing but also refers to it as the center of her relation to the empathy she has for man. When she mentions her brother who was going through physical pain in her diary, she reveals her motherly feelings as well as the womb as their essence:

He is not only my brother; he is my child. I took care of him. I was his nurse and his second mother. [...] I love my brother, and there are times when I know this love of my brother makes me feel man is a brother; it created a pact which has disarmed my power to do man any harm. Man, my brother. Needing care and devotion. [...] To feel life and love and pain in the womb, always, as if in our own body.<sup>26</sup>

Referring to man as her child, her kin, can be related to Rank’s observation on the subject. During their sessions, he claimed “[a] man can never have the indulgence for a woman’s behaviour which a woman has towards man's behaviour, because a woman's maternal instinct makes her perceive the child within the man. And it is when she becomes aware of this that she cannot judge.”<sup>27</sup> However, the mother in her was certainly not the only woman she contained. Throughout her work, she often visits the theme of being made of numerous women or being divided into two divergent sides. She describes her duality as follows:

There were always, in me, two women at least, one woman desperate and bewildered, who felt she was drowning, and another who only wanted to bring beauty, grace, and aliveness to people and who would leap into a scene, as upon a stage, conceal her true emotions because

<sup>23</sup> Rank, “Feminine Psychology and Masculine Ideology,” 179.

<sup>24</sup> Sharon Spencer, “The Music of the Womb: Anais Nin’s Feminine Writing”, *Breaking the Sequence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 165.

<sup>25</sup> Spencer, “The Music of the Womb,” 165.

<sup>26</sup> Nin, *The Diary of Anais Nin*, 138.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 333.

they were weaknesses, helplessness, despair, and present to the world only a smile, an eagerness, curiosity, enthusiasm, interest.<sup>28</sup>

In the beginning of her sessions with Rank, this division and the difference of her “selves” she illustrates represent an imbalance in her personality, which is related to the roles she divided herself into in order to fulfill the expectations of others, mainly the men in her life. Nevertheless, Rank connects her creation of multiple selves to the most determining relationship of her life; the one with her father. Nin is known to have started her diary at eleven years old when her father left, and her mother took her and her brother to the United States. All the stories she wrote at the time started with the sentence “I am an orphan”, which could easily be interpreted in Freudian terms as the desire to disavow the mother out of jealousy towards the father; nonetheless, Rank relates it to a similar case as his own—the creation of the self by rejecting the parents<sup>29</sup>. While Rank connects this self-creation initially to the desire to become an individual, he further interprets it, as Nin mentions, “as the creator’s desire to be born a hero, self-born, a mythical birth.”<sup>30</sup> Having idolized him following his departure, Nin met her father again prior to the start of her sessions with Rank; therefore, she was already in the midst of a complicated, incestuous reunion. The fact that she left her father when they first met was translated by Rank as her desire to complete the cycle which started when he left the family. As he emphasized during one of their sessions,

[y]ou had to abandon him first, to complete the cycle. You had to fulfill the obsession to be reunited with him, but also to liberate yourself from the fatalistic determinism of your whole life, of being the abandoned one. When you lost him as a child, you lost in him the personification of your ideal self. He was the artist, musician, writer, builder, socially fascinating personage. When you found him, you were a young woman in search of your real self. This your father could not give you, because the relationship was only a reflection of the past, of child and father love. This had to be broken so you might find a man independently of this image. Your father, as far as I can make out, is still trying to create you to his own image.<sup>31</sup>

He further suggests that the combination of the desire to be loved by her father, her creative will, and her mother-self resulted in her creating several selves; one for her artistic life who was brave and enthusiastic about the extravagancies of life, one who was a woman of beauty and discipline and one with a limitless capacity of nurturing for the weak.<sup>32</sup> The self that woman forms to be loved by her father is stated by Rank as a crucial point in feminine psychology, regarding the theory that woman lives in the world of man with an irrational

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 314.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 316.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 340.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 323.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 317.

psychology that is unknown even to her and that every attempt of man to shape her and every attempt of woman to be loved by him is another step away from this “true” feminine self, as he further adds that the very first experience of femininity in her life occurs within a masculine framework,

[i]n order to be accepted, that is, liked and loved by him (man), she takes on his masculine psychology, becomes like him, at best, his “pal.” In this sense, the early relationship of the daughter to her father, is responsible for whatever masculine tendencies she may develop later in life. Especially, since she cannot be a woman in relation to her father, her first becoming feminine, that is, liked by a man, is only possible on a masculine pattern, a paradox which lays the foundation for later neurosis. Against the fundamental violation of her woman-self, she rebels later by becoming a woman either against her father-pattern, thereby feeling herself to be “bad” (a sexual woman), or, when she stops fighting him, by identification with a feminine woman, leading to Lesbianism, i.e., becoming “good” like him.

In Nin’s case, several points of his theory can be recognized as realized. Firstly, her incestuous affair could be the case of “becoming a woman in relation to her father”, feeling as if she finally completed the first point in “becoming feminine.” Nin’s active sexual life can be read as her protest against her father in terms of “becoming feminine” as well as against his absence throughout most of her life. Above all, the point of lesbianism here is noteworthy for in her diary she recounts her emotionally as well as physically intense experience with June Miller who was an influence on *House of Incest*. Nin met June through Henry Miller whose wife she was at the time, and she found herself in an extraordinary relationship that involved a great admiration for one another. From what Nin portrays, their physical relationship made her feel as if she caressed her own self rather than another body, “the love between women is a refuge and an escape into harmony and narcissism in place of conflict. [...] Two women do not judge each other. They form an alliance. It is, in a way, self-love. I love June because she is the woman I would like to be.”<sup>33</sup> Rank considered her relationship with June not as lesbianism but as a consequence of her desire to be loved by her father, as stated in her diary:

Dr. Rank immediately clarified my relationship to June. It was not Lesbianism. I was imitating my father, courting women. “You replace the lost object of your love by imitating him. It was also an act of fear of man's sensuality which had caused you so much sorrow as a child.” (I knew all the storms and wars at home were due to my father's interest in women.) I became my father. I was the intellectual adviser of my mother. I wrote. I read books.<sup>34</sup>

Further, they discuss her father’s desire to attain an image of a perfect lover through Nin; the fact that their similarities were often stressed by her father indicated his attempt to love his feminine self through her, attracting the men he would have wanted to attract, as she would

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 326.

her masculine self through him, thus, she would succeed in being the perfect Androgyne.<sup>35</sup>

Rank associates his motivation to build a connection with her with his effort to escape loneliness:

There is so much more in all this than the simple fact of incestuous longings. It is only one of the many variations upon the effort we make to unite with others; and when, for one reason or another, fusion with others has become difficult, one falls back again into the easiest one, the readymade one, of blood affinities. It is only one of the millions of ways to palliate loneliness.<sup>36</sup>

Loneliness as well as the desire to complete themselves through each other are some of the many driving forces behind their unity.

For Nin, Rank played a significant role in her awakening as a woman, as a “freed” daughter, and as a writer. Nin went through an awakening as an artist and discovered her many selves through Rank’s guidance, however, their therapeutic sessions took on a more intimate and complex level. Rank’s understanding of Nin both as a woman and as an artist, and his helping her transform her traumas into keys to understanding herself must have been significant factors in her deep emotional connection to him. This connection can also be seen as an extension of her need for validation and love, in relation to her feelings towards her father. While their romantic relationship can be interpreted as the profound impact of personal relationships on one’s self-discovery and creative expression, it also rises ethical concerns regarding the credibility and professionalism of their sessions. Rank’s position as the therapist created an inequality of power while his pieces of advice and perception of Nin could have been influenced by his personal feelings. Regardless, their sessions had an extensive effect on Nin’s journey of becoming an artist while embracing her woman self.

The combination of woman and writer was a whole other issue to work on. Rank’s description of the neurotic as a failed artist suited her well; in her case, the woman she needed to discover in herself was in a clash with her artist self for at times, she had put the roles she performed before her art, as she excitedly reacts to one of her associates when he suggests that she should work only for herself:

But I feel alive only when I am living for or with others! And I'll be a great artist in spite of that. And if I am not a great artist, I don't care. I will have been good to the artist, the mother and muse and servant and inspiration. It's right for a woman to be, above all, human. I am a woman first of all. At the core of my work was a journal written for the father I lost, loved and wanted to keep. I am personal.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 333.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 236.

Here, the priorities of her definition of woman can be interpreted as the obstacles standing in her way to becoming a more fulfilled artist, which, as stated in Rank's theories, is more of a consequence of a "woman living in men's terms". Above she states that she is primarily a woman, and Rank refers to this desire to be a woman only as a contrasting aspect of feminine psychology compared to that of masculine, "she has always wanted and still wants first and foremost to be a woman, because this and this alone is her fundamental self and expresses her personality."<sup>38</sup> Therefore, Nin's conflict is based on creating a woman artist while trying to realize the authentic woman Rank introduced. In her lecture about Rank, she mentions the role played by guilt in artistic creation. She argues that when it comes to sparing time for creation and recognizing it as one's priority, man is spared from the guilt that haunts a woman artist. The guilt affecting peculiarly the woman artist is related to the priorities that are assigned to woman by the society:

Man is expected to achieve, [...] he is delivered of guilt when he produces. But woman was trained to give first place to her personal commitments—home and children and husband or family—she was encumbered with duties which absorbed all her energies, and the very concept of love was united to the concept of care and nurturing, whether physical or symbolic. When she reduced the hours of devotion and have her energies to other interests, she felt a double guilt. She was made aware that she was failing in her personal responsibilities, and her other achievements were severely undervalued by the culture.<sup>39</sup>

According to Nin, when man creates, he is not concerned about whether the time he spares costs him his "more important" responsibilities, his creation "justifies all sacrifices."<sup>40</sup> However, in the woman's case, her social responsibilities and the role she is assigned as a devoted nurturer and lover weigh heavier than the inner responsibility that she owes to herself as a creator. Moreover, she refers to her younger self as "living vicariously", declaring that she does not mind being the muse instead of the artist:

In the early days when I was a young woman, I stated that I would rather live vicariously through the man, I would be all the artist needed—muse, assistant, the protective, nurturing mother. In my twenties, this role seemed more comfortable. It was only when I met Dr. Rank that I realized I had my own work to do. When we live vicariously, we expect the other to do our work, and we are disappointed when he does his own, diverging from our wishes.<sup>41</sup>

Breaking the cycles that had shaped her life, her missing father, and her neglected artistic self, Nin was able to tap into her creative will and become an artist herself instead of the artist's muse or assistant. However, she achieved fulfillment only when finally publishing her life-long work of art volume by volume, presenting her quest to become an artist in its

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<sup>38</sup> Rank, "Feminine Psychology and Masculine Ideology," 182.

<sup>39</sup> Nin, "On Truth and Reality," 50.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

honesty, by referring to Rank, “[w]hatever we achieve is ultimately our gift to the community and to the collective life.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 51.

### 2.3. Unfolding of the Self through Dreams

Psychoanalysis was a vital aspect of Nin's discovery and expression of herself. Throughout her sessions with Rank, she developed a strong interest in it and even studied under him to become an analyst herself. The most engaging factor offered her by psychoanalysis was the exploration and analysis of the "hidden self", the unconscious. Similar to Rank's introspection through literature in his youth, Nin subjected herself to self-analysis through her diary. Her diary gives the impression of a record of dreams, illusions, and visions that determine her perspective and character altogether. The realm of dreams guarded in the unconscious is expanded into her daily life, meaning that she is constantly in touch with and under a "conscious" influence of her unconscious. She describes the function of dreams "not as symptoms of neurosis, but as guidance to our secret nature."<sup>43</sup> *House of Incest*, her fiction of dream flow was derived from her diaries and turned into "a woman's Season in Hell."<sup>44</sup> Therefore, Nin did not build her work on dreams separately from her autobiographical, daily writing, on the contrary, the relationship between reality and the dream was quite integrated for her. During the period of her sessions with Rank, she was working on *House of Incest*; she was analysed by him and by herself through her dreams simultaneously. According to Nin, the self was exposed in the dreams, and the unconscious was the origin of femininity and the "womb-oriented" writing, as Harriet Zinnes further states,

[t]he artist creates an authentic work because to Nin it stems from the dream, the unconscious; concealed in the womb it emerges from it transformed only by the senses it has impinged upon. The womb or the self is the diary; out of those materials and within those materials is the subject. It is authentic. It becomes a cellular miracle, not an analytical product of mind.<sup>45</sup>

For her, the revelation of the self is possible to attain through constant communication between the conscious and the unconscious, and she places the dream in the middle of these two different layers of the mind. Nin points out that she avoids the habit of separating the body from the soul as well as the reality from the dream; she bases the creation of her novel on building a passageway between the opposites or not even dividing them but taking them as one and placing the dream, this passageway, as the starting point.<sup>46</sup> She presents her character through the method of free association in her self-analysis firstly by presenting symbols and

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<sup>43</sup> Nin, "Anais Nin Talks About Being a Woman: An Interview," *In Favor of the Sensitive Man and Other Essays*, (New York: A Harvest Book, 1973), 40.

<sup>44</sup> Nin, *The Novel of the Future*, (Texas: Sky Blue Press, 2014), 43.

<sup>45</sup> Harriet Zinnes, *Art, The Dream, The Self* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 59.

<sup>46</sup> Nin, "Out of the Labyrinth", *In Favor of the Sensitive Man and Other Essays*, 60.

dream-flow as they are and then interpreting them; however, in her fiction, the interpretation is made through an independent combination of experiences with the assistance of the other characters instead of Nin assuming the role of a controlling psychoanalyst.<sup>47</sup> The significant connection Nin draws between the artist and the psychoanalyst is their ability to find relief for neurosis through analysis and creativity. As she points out,

[t]he novelist today works parallel to the psychologist, recognizes the duality and multiplicity of the human personality. [...] Dream, waking dream, reverie, fantasy, all interlock and interrelate simultaneously but on different levels. These two ways of describing the unconscious through the symbol and surrealism paralleled exactly the development of the psychological study of dreams.<sup>48</sup>

The significant factor that the novelist needs to focus on in order to create thorough characters is the necessary attention to dreams, daydreams, and fantasies free association reveals more about a person than merely the conscious thoughts, and presented with inner monologues, and symbolic dreams of the characters, the reader would achieve a better perception of their disposition.<sup>49</sup> Nin's approach to art as "the sharing of the dream, making the most intimate aspect of our consciousness, fantasy, part of the shared consciousness of people,"<sup>50</sup> as Paul Grimley Kuntz demonstrates, is redolent of Freud's association between creative writers and daydreaming. Freud insists that a creative writer resembles a child at play; a creative writer operates the same as a child who creates a world of their own detailed with characters and a specific storyline and perceives it all seriously while they are aware of the distinction of play versus the real.<sup>51</sup> According to him, these fantasies and daydreams often belong to an unsatisfied person and represent the suppressed wishes. Regardless of her faith in psychoanalysis, Nin linked the source and importance of dreams and fantasies to a wider range of definitions; it can be argued that Freud's was way too limiting for her, as she writes, "Scientific analysis, in its effort to simplify, in order to conclude, restricts the outline of the personality and slowly creates a kind of disillusion, or impoverishment."<sup>52</sup> In her definition of the dream, she demonstrates the artist's role as a conduit for symbols bridging different realms:

It is interesting to return to the original definition of a word we use too often and too carelessly. The definition of a dream is: ideas and images in the mind not under the command of reason. It is not necessarily an image or an idea that we have during sleep. It is merely an

<sup>47</sup> Oliver Evans, "Anais Nin and the Discovery of Inner Space," *Prairie Schooner* 36.3 (1962): 226.

<sup>48</sup> Nin, *The Novel of the Future*, 17.

<sup>49</sup> Evans, "Anais Nin and the Discovery of Inner Space," 218-9.

<sup>50</sup> Paul Grimley Kuntz, "Art as Public Dream: The Practice and Theory of Anais Nin," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 32.4 (1974): 532.

<sup>51</sup> Freud, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming", *National and Kapodistrian University of Athens*, accessed August 3, 2023, 2. <http://users.uoa.gr/~cdokou/FreudCreativeWriters.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> Nin, *The Diary of Anais Nin*, 343.

idea or image which escapes the control of reasoning or logical or rational mind. So that dream may include reverie, imagination, daydreaming, the visions and hallucinations under the influence of drugs—any experience which emerges from the realm of the subconscious. These various classifications are merely ways to describe different states or levels of consciousness. The important thing to learn, from art and from literature in particular, is the easy passageway and relationship between them. Neurosis makes a division and sets up defensive boundaries. But the writer can learn to walk easily between one realm and the other without fear, interrelate them, and ultimately fuse them. Psychoanalysis proved that dreams were the only key to our subconscious life. What the psychoanalysts stress, the relation between dream and our conscious acts, is what the poets already know.<sup>53</sup>

In her sessions with Rank, they discussed that this ability to build a “passageway” between the conscious and the unconscious is more familiar to female psychology. He asserts that thanks to the discovery and study of the unconscious, it was revealed how strongly a woman’s motivations are tied to intuition, instinct, feeling, and instant vision, indicating that women had always been more connected to the unconscious, and therefore had been more in touch with symbols, dreams, and myths.<sup>54</sup> Nin had the opportunity to experience the effects of LSD as part of an experiment organized by Dr. Oscar Janiger, which made it possible for her to compare hallucinations to her idea of the dream. The drug led her into experiencing visions, voices, physical impossibilities, and even into a transcendental understanding of life that were too overwhelming to record, as she notes, “I felt I could capture the secret of life because the secret of life was metamorphosis and transmutation, but it happened too quickly and was beyond words. [...] Ah, I cannot capture the secret of life with WORDS.”<sup>55</sup> However, after the experience in which she thought of whether the dimension offered by LSD was accessible only through the drug, she concluded that it did not reveal any experience she did not have before in her daily life:

I could find correlations all through my writing, find the sources of the images in past dreams, in reading, in memories of travel, in actual experience, such as the one I had once in Paris when I was so exalted by life that I felt I was not touching the ground, I felt I was sliding a few inches away from the sidewalk. Therefore, I felt, the chemical did not reveal an unknown world. What it did was to shut out the quotidian world as an interference and leave you alone with your dreams and fantasies and memories. In this way it made it easier to gain access to the subconscious life. But obviously, by way of writing, reveries, waking dreams, and night dreams, I had visited all those landscapes.<sup>56</sup>

She defends an organic, active kind of dreaming through which an individual tastes life with all senses, aware of the journey, the harmony of color, vision, and texture against depending

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<sup>53</sup> Nin, *The Novel of the Future*, 14.

<sup>54</sup> Nin, *The Diary of Anais Nin*, 320-1.

<sup>55</sup> Nin, “From *The Diary of Anais Nin, 1947-1955*,” *Sisters of the Extreme: Women Writing on the Drug Experience*, ed. Cynthia Palmer and Michael Horowitz, (Vermont: Park Street Press, 1982), 169.

<sup>56</sup> Nin, “From *The Diary of Anais Nin, 1947-1955*,” 169.

on “the dissolving, dissipating, vanishing quality of the drug dreams.”<sup>57</sup> Her experience with LSD illustrates the woman’s connection with the dream realm and its reflections through symbols in daily life. Concerning the distinction between man and woman regarding this “organic” connection to dream, her discussions with Henry Miller while she was working on *House of Incest* could serve as an example of the female approach to dream as accepting versus the male approach as constructive. Firstly, Nin’s connection to her diary was rather unbreakable, and the diary developed in her a great fascination for the daily, mundane life. Consisting of her dreams, nightmares, as well as everyday happenings, the diary presented her with a map of the connection of symbols produced consciously and unconsciously. Therefore, the diary was her source of fiction; she would make collages of different entries and dreams and base her fiction on them. This resulted in critiques conceiving of her fiction as “dreamlike and unreal” before the publication of the diaries for Nin’s connection between reality and dream and “how autobiography was turned into fiction” had not been revealed.<sup>58</sup> Miller was one of her many friends trying to encourage her to quit the diary; his personal desire to be liberated from reality made him perceive her “need to retain the diary as a withdrawal and denial of art itself.”<sup>59</sup> Later, inspiring Miller to write about his dreams, their discussions started being more about how to illustrate them. Nin criticized Miller for presenting his dreams too explicitly:

If the films are the most successful expression of surrealism, then the scenario is what suits the surrealist stories and the dreams best. Henry sensed this when he suggested a scenario be made out of *House of Incest*. Now I advised him to do the same for his dreams, because they were, as yet, too explicit. (I did not object to obscenity or realism but to explicitness.) It all needed to be blurred, the outline must be less definite, one image must run into another like watercolors.<sup>60</sup>

The dream-flow she describes here is present throughout *House of Incest*; where vivid colors and intense images guide the reader through the narrative:

I am an insane woman for whom houses wink and open their bellies. Significance stares at me from everywhere, like a gigantic underlying ghostliness. Significance emerges out of dank alleys and sombre faces, leans out of the windows of strange houses. I am constantly reconstructing a pattern of something forever lost and which I cannot forget; I catch the odors of the past on street corners and I am aware of the men who will be born tomorrow. Behind windows there are either enemies or worshippers. Never neutrality or passivity. Always intention and premeditation. Even stones have for me druidical expressions.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 171.

<sup>58</sup> Zinnes, “Art, The Dream, The Self,” 54.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>60</sup> Nin, *The Diary of Anais Nin*, 353.

<sup>61</sup> Nin, *House of Incest*, (Alan Swallow Press, 1936): 14.

A moment later, she moves to describe her time on several planets:

I remember the cold on Jupiter freezing ammonia and out of ammonia crystals came the angels. Bands of ammonia and methane encircling Uranus. I remember the tornadoes of inflammable methane on Saturn. I remember on Mars a vegetation like the tussock grasses of Peru and Patagonia, an ochrous red, a rusty ore vegetation, mosses and lichens. Iron bearing red clays and red sandstone. Light there had a sound and sunlight was an orchestra.<sup>62</sup>

Her transitions between changing dreamscapes highlight the point she mentioned to Miller; the necessity to blur the strict lines throughout the dream quest. The contrast between his tendency towards explicitness and her ambiguous flow could be demonstrated through her comparison between male and female psychology. Firstly, she refers to man's dominance over nature: "He conquered the sea, the jungle, the desert, disease."<sup>63</sup> However, this dominance has cost him the loss of the connection between man and nature; man has lost the understanding of nature's irrationalities, disasters, earthquakes, and floods and built planes, bridges, and medicine to defeat them.<sup>64</sup> She argues that in contrast with man's approach to nature based on a fallacy of his objectivity, woman has been more accepting through her connection with intuition, she knows how to corroborate it and is aware of where they stem from.<sup>65</sup> Importantly, she does not need to follow precise steps or inductions in order to achieve a certain feeling, while man arrives at a feeling step by step, aware of the process; she further states that a man who knows to approach life more like a woman, knowing how to leap and jump between ideas and experiences is the artist, assuming that the artist man is a man who possesses this "feminine" quality.<sup>66</sup> These opinions are clearly inspired by Rank's guidance, and it is important to note that Nin bases her ideas on the female acceptance of irrationality as well as being ambiguous about her own nature, therefore, leaving limitless space for change, which Rank demonstrates as follows,

[w]oman, as the eternal bearer of the irrational element in human nature, for that reason always has been and still is "tabued," which in the original sense of the word means cursed and venerated, avoided and sought, feared and loved. As to her own fear, it is unlike man's fear- not fear of the irrational chaos, which is her very life-element, but fear of loss, of separation, which is bound up with childbirth and the care of the young, but carried over into her relation to the man whom she loves by taking him in, hence, is afraid of losing.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Nin, *House of Incest*, 14.

<sup>63</sup> Nin, *The Novel of the Future*, 47.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Rank, "Feminine Psychology and Masculine Ideology," 184.

Here the theme of fear is significant for the dark setting of *House of Incest*, where the narrator is trapped inside of a nightmare consisting of fears creeping in. In her diary, she connects this fear to a sort of loneliness that cannot be known by man:

Man can never know the kind of loneliness a woman knows. Man lies in a woman's womb only to gather strength, he nourishes himself from this fusion, and then he rises and goes into the world, into his work, into battle, into art. He is not lonely. He is busy. The memory of the swim in amniotic fluid gives him energy, completion. [...] When man lies in her womb, she is fulfilled, each act of love is a taking of man within her, an act of birth and rebirth, of childbearing and man-bearing. Man lies in her womb and is reborn each time anew with a desire to act, to BE. But for woman, the climax is not in the birth, but in the moment when man rests inside of her.<sup>68</sup>

This theory of hers is quite parallel to Rank's opinion on the female fear of losing which is connected primarily to childbirth. Her incestuous relationship with her father can also be interpreted as a part of this attempt to get rid of the loneliness, which, in Nin's case, was initially created by her father. In *House of Incest*, one of the main themes is self-love through another, as she writes toward the end, "If only we could all escape from this house of incest, where we only love ourselves in the other if only I could save you all from yourselves."<sup>69</sup> As stated before, her relationship with her father could be interpreted as them loving themselves through each other, using each other as impossible mirrors. In *House of Incest* she shares a symbolic dream connected to her father, and its analysis as self-love:

Stumbling from room to room I came into the room of paintings, and there sat Lot with his hand upon his daughter's breast while the city burned behind them, cracking open and falling into the sea. [...] Joy of the father's hand upon the daughter's breast, the joy of the fear racking her. Her costume tightly pressed around her so that her breasts heave and swell under his fingers. [...] No cry of horror from Lot and his daughter but from the city in flames, from an unquenchable desire of father and daughter, of brother and sister mother and son.<sup>70</sup>

The importance of this dream lies in her portrayal of the joy of union, therefore lack of loneliness, through a relationship, a self-love that the rest of the world is against. Rank shows the connection between the age-old myths about incest and dreams, arguing that these myths originate in dreams, as Nin narrates from their sessions,

[h]e seemed to have such a love of creation, of invention, to understand my motivations coming from dreams. When I talked about my father, he related it immediately to the various myths in literature which stemmed from dreams. He said: "In folk tradition, handed down through fairy tales, there exists a type of story, similar all over the world, which contains the same elements. They are the mythological motifs which we see now guiding your life. [...] These elaborate stories with their dreamlike quality have been explained, mythologically that is, as symbolic representations of cosmic cycles, as myths of the Sun and the Moon which flee and meet each other alternatively. It must be admitted that such a cosmic explanation,

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<sup>68</sup> Nin, *The Diary of Anais Nin*, 127.

<sup>69</sup> Nin, *House of Incest*, 22.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

provided it is not carried too far into astronomic details, fits these adventurous happenings much better than the realistic interpretation of the psychoanalysts, who claim that these stories prove the human desire for incestuous union between parent and children.<sup>71</sup>

Ultimately, her understanding and experience of the dream realm were deeply connected to the close relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, and through Rank's guidance in the exploration of the depth of her relationship with her father, her femininity and creativity, she built a stronger "inner world" that she could rely on and base her imagination on.

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<sup>71</sup> Nin, *The Diary of Anais Nin*, 318.

## Chapter 3: Anna Kavan and *Sleep Has His House*

### 3.1. Meeting Psychoanalysis: Karl Theodor Bluth, Ludwig Binswanger and Asylum

Anna Kavan's relationship with psychoanalysis and therapy is more difficult and ambiguous compared to the enriching results Anais Nin and H.D. gained through their sessions. Throughout her life, she struggled with chronic depression, a sense of loneliness which haunted her until her death, and her heroin addiction. Comparably, her condition was much more severe in relation to Nin and H.D., therefore her experience with psychoanalysis did not stay limited to sessions only; her suicide attempt after the breakup of her second marriage led to her first stay at a Swiss clinic, which would later be followed by more stays for shorter periods, her life-long acquaintance with the psychiatrist Karl Theodor Bluth, and a brief treatment by Ludwig Binswanger. Her "madness", isolation, and addiction are the major points dominating all her writing, as well as her relation to her environment. All factors that contributed to her depression which no treatment helped are connected to her bereft and isolated childhood that formed her character. Her father's mysterious death, which is thought to have been suicide, her indifferent and controlling mother, and her stay at a boarding school could be considered as the primary causes of lifelong isolation.<sup>1</sup>

Her first encounter with psychiatry after her suicide attempt was a long stay at a Swiss clinic, which changed the course of her life quite drastically because afterward, she changed her name from Helen Ferguson to Anna Kavan, the name she gave to the protagonist of her previous novel *Let Me Alone*. Brian W. Aldiss interprets this transformation as "full of masochism and pride" and further comments: "It represented a transformation, the crossing of a frontier away from the real. [...] From now on, the realm of fantasy commanded her and she it."<sup>2</sup> She explored the extent of her "madness" and unconscious through being a patient of the institution, being on medicine, and experiencing a different kind of loneliness and hostility. *Asylum Piece*, which was inspired by the time she spent at the clinic, reveals her understanding of the unconscious at the time, which appears to be "a confining space,

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<sup>1</sup> Victoria Carborne Walker, "The Fiction of Anna Kavan" (PhD diss., Queen Mary University of London, 2012), 18.

<sup>2</sup> Brian W. Aldiss, "Kafka's Sister", *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 3.2 (1991): 16.

an institution, over which the inmate has no control and no means of escape except by self-destruction.”<sup>3</sup> Throughout the short stories collected in *Asylum Piece*, the dominant and repetitive delusion she had to deal with seems to be the idea of an enemy, a jailer, who is as close as a presence in her room at night sometimes, and who is only a possibility at other times. In the short story “There is No End”, she writes about the omnipresence of her enemy:

“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, even there thy hand shall lead me.” I can’t think properly these days, I find it difficult to remember, but I suppose those words were written about Jehovah, though they apply just as well to my enemy – if that is what I should call him. “If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.” That particular phrase rings in my brain with a horrid aptness: for certainly I have made my bed in hell and certainly he is here with me. He is near all the time although I do not see him.<sup>4</sup>

Walker points out the consistent theme of fractured selves throughout the stories, this enemy that is “close as a brother, turns out to be a manifestation of herself, a hostile double that torments and controls her.”<sup>5</sup> The protagonists of *Asylum Piece* inhabit their unconscious instead of the physical world in which they are exiled; however, the unconscious space does not provide safety. Instead, it reflects the confinement of the clinic and the feeling of being trapped.<sup>6</sup> The divided selves represent her experience of displacement, alienation, and “the pressures of social convention”<sup>7</sup>, which also divided her sense of reality and resulted in her difficulty distinguishing where her thoughts ended and the objective reality started, as she writes in “The Birds”, “That is the state of unreality in which I have been living now for some time. [...] one loses the sense of time as well as everything else in this wretched condition,”<sup>8</sup> and she further remarks the blurred lines between dream and reality in “Asylum Piece II”, “So many dreams are crowding upon me now that I can scarcely tell true from false: dreams like light imprisoned in bright mineral caves; hot, heavy dreams; ice-age dreams; dreams like machines in the head.”<sup>9</sup> It could be observed through the stories that her initial experience with psychiatry made her perceive the treatment as isolating and suppressing.

Being a patient at a clinic, however, was not the only experience related to psychoanalysis that Kavan made. Returning to England after traveling extensively during

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<sup>3</sup> Walker, “The Fiction of Anna Kavan,” 84.

<sup>4</sup> Anna Kavan, “There is No End”, *Asylum Piece* (London: Peter Owen Classics, 1940), 106.

<sup>5</sup> Walker, “The Fiction of Anna Kavan,” 96.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 100.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>8</sup> Kavan, “The Birds,” 25.

<sup>9</sup> Kavan, “Asylum Piece,” 65.

World War II, Kavan got involved with studying psychology and working with soldiers that were mentally affected by war. Her time at the Mill Hill Emergency Hospital where she was assisting in treating effort syndrome influenced her approach to psychoanalysis as well as her writing. The symptoms of this condition, first diagnosed as a cardiac disorder in soldiers, included fatigue, shortness of breath, as well as chest pain, and by World War II, it was considered that these physiological indications were without a physical cause and consequently were “identified as a psychosomatic disorder—a type of war neurosis.”<sup>10</sup> While previously her understanding of the permanent hospital staff and psychoanalysis itself was intensively determined by her own psychiatric treatment, being employed in “the opposite team” not only helped her go through major depression but also gained her a different perspective.<sup>11</sup> Her main role was to interview patients through a sort of questionnaire in order to determine a broad map of their personality and to trace the symptoms and development of effort syndrome, which required around two hours dedicated for each soldier and which was quite interesting and exhausting for her at the same time.<sup>12</sup> The different perspective she gained from this experience, however, did not make her feel closer to psychoanalytic methods but rather contributed to her skeptical view of their effectiveness, of a sort of hostility, as Walker emphasizes her negative depiction of psychiatry regardless of being in touch with the treatment and receiving even positive results at times:

In her depictions of psychiatric treatment here (as in ‘Bill Williams’ and elsewhere in her oeuvre), there is always some degree of antagonism between her patients and the psychiatric professional, and the concept of a ‘cure’ remains ambiguous at best. Kavan herself had recently experienced positive results from short-term psychoanalysis at the Tavistock Clinic, [...] Yet in her fiction, talking therapies are presented in the same brutal light as more invasive psychiatry. As both patient and writer, Kavan sought relief in the act of narration, but her soldier-protagonists achieve no respite from their psychological anguish in telling it. These characters are unwilling narrators, forced to testify to indifferent hearers.<sup>13</sup>

The resistance of her protagonists to psychiatric therapy demonstrates her interpretation of mental illness and its treatment as a social construct. Her article in *Horizon* magazine, “The Case of Bill Williams”, as well as some of the short stories in *I Am Lazarus*, illustrate characters that are reluctant to be cured. One of these stories, “The Face of My People,” focuses on the case of a soldier, referred to as Kling, whose role is to bury the dead. He ends

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<sup>10</sup> Victoria Walker, “Hearts and Minds: War Neurosis and the Politics of Madness in Anna Kavan’s *I Am Lazarus*”, *Women: A Cultural Review*, 4.28 (2017): 3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09574042.2017.1388585>

<sup>11</sup> Walker, “Hearts and Minds,” 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 15-6.

up feeling crushed under a growing sense of heaviness. Firstly, Kavan illustrates his case as a neglected, misunderstood one:

Ever since then the stone had been there inside him, and at first it had seemed a small stone, just a dead spot, a sort of numbness under the breastbone. He had told the M.O. about it and the M.O. had laughed, saying there was no stone or possibility of a stone, and after that he had not spoken of it again; never once.<sup>14</sup>

Later in the story toward the end, Kling is observed to be completely detached and resisting the doctor's questions aimed at making him speak. It is understood that his condition has got worse and the doctor's efforts are in vain, for not only is he too late to deal with "the stone", but Kling also actively resists the idea of talking therapy, holding on to his silence as the last thing he owns against "them" who could be considered as the hospital, the society, the war, although the pain is heavy and is pressing him to speak,

[h]e was very frightened with the strange sleep so near him, he wanted to call for help, it was hard for him to keep silent. But somewhere in the midst of fear existed the thought, They've taken everything; let them not take my silence.<sup>15</sup>

Walker comments on Kling's case as the most distinct one in representing effort syndrome and considers his symptoms of "the sensation of weight crushing his chest, [and] signs of excessive exertion disproportionate to his physical actions,"<sup>16</sup> as an alienating and painful mechanism of repression, which is a common characteristic in Kavan's soldier-protagonists.<sup>17</sup> In "The Case of Bill Williams", Kavan depicts another case of a soldier resisting therapy by situating the individual against society, and claiming that therapy is only aimed at recruiting the soldiers back to the army, as Walker specifies:

Kavan's suggestion that Williams' neurosis is a conscious resistance to social norms makes madness a political choice, albeit a difficult one. Anticipating the work of the anti-psychiatry movement, she uses the figure of Williams to propose that the category of mental illness is a social construct, and that its diagnosis and treatment are a form of social control. The medical profession's shifting understanding of effort syndrome—from cardiac disorder to neurosis—highlights the contingent classification of psychiatric diagnosis in the early twentieth century and beyond. In wartime, psychiatry's enforcement of social conformity becomes a political urgency.<sup>18</sup>

Here, she emphasizes "the antagonism between her patients and the psychiatric professional"<sup>19</sup> quite clearly. Another significant point concerning Kavan's depiction of soldier patients is the motif of the divided self, the tormenting double and enemy that is

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<sup>14</sup> Anna Kavan, "The Face of My People", *I am Lazarus* (London: Peter Owen, 1945), 56.

<sup>15</sup> Kavan, "The Face of My People," 61.

<sup>16</sup> Walker, "Hearts and Minds," 13.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

actually a part of oneself. For instance, Lennie in “Who Has Desired the Sea”, suffers from post-war trauma and has developed an obsession with searching for a man he cannot remember. It is understood that the man he looks for is himself, although Lennie stays unaware of the fact that he has become so detached from his past self that it is himself he so deliberately seeks, “he has become an automaton, functioning automatically and without feeling. Here, as in many of these stories, Kavan plays with idiomatic and metaphorical expressions of insanity.”<sup>20</sup> Lennie’s case parallels Kavan’s protagonist in *Asylum Piece*; they share the inability to recognize that the mysterious person they are obsessed with is actually themselves. In Lennie’s case, his obsession is based on seeking, he wants to find his lost self, in *Asylum Piece* on the other hand, the other part of the self that is unrecognisable is not sought for but is escaped from; it has become an evil and hostile force who sometimes so close and sometimes only its presence is known, as she details it in another story from *Asylum Piece*, “The Enemy”,

[s]omewhere in the world, I have an implacable enemy although I do not know his name. I do not know what he looks like, either. [...] Perhaps he is a stranger to me; but much more probably he is someone whom I know quite well – perhaps someone I see every day. [...] The time can’t be far off when I shall be taken away. It will be at night, probably, that they will come for me. There will be no revolvers, no handcuffs; everything will be quiet and orderly with two or three men in uniform, or white jackets, and one of them will carry a hypodermic syringe.<sup>21</sup>

It can be interpreted that here the protagonist predicts that the division of the self will end up in being put in an asylum forcefully, for the white jackets and the syringe emphasize medical suggestions. The division of the self is a significant point in Kavan’s experience and description of madness, for not only is it a dominant theme in her writing, but it also reveals more about her relationship with psychoanalysis. Her characters often suffer from fractured selves that are torn between social and private selves, as well as hateful and fearful ones. The recurrence of split personalities in her writing could be directly connected to R. D. Laing’s theory of the “divided self,” which he explains through two perspectives through which people define themselves<sup>22</sup>, the embodied and the unembodied as two extreme possibilities of existential settings, “The embodied person has a sense of being flesh and blood and bones, of being biologically alive and real: he knows himself to be substantial. To the extent that he is thoroughly ‘in’ his body, he is likely to have a sense of personal continuity in time.”<sup>23</sup> He

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 9-10.

<sup>21</sup> Kavan, “The Enemy,” 18-9.

<sup>22</sup> Walker, “Hearts and Minds,” 33.

<sup>23</sup> R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (London: Penguin Books, 1964), 67.

goes on to describe the unembodied person, whose extreme case would be schizophrenia, as follows:

In this position the individual experiences his self as being more or less divorced or detached from his body. The body is felt more as one object among other objects in the world than as the core of the individual's own being. Instead of being the core of his true self, the body is felt as the core of a false self, which a detached, disembodied, 'inner', 'true' self looks on at with tenderness, amusement, or hatred as the case may be.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, Kavan's interpretation of mental illness and its treatment as a social construct also corresponds to Laing's "privileging the voice of unreason and critiquing conventional-psychiatric treatment as a method of social control."<sup>25</sup> Kavan was acquainted with Laing's work through her therapist and lifelong friend Karl Theodor Bluth, thanks to whom she was treated by Ludwig Binswanger who was a close friend of Freud's as well as Laing's. Their sessions and friendship were significant for Kavan especially because he tolerated her heroin addiction, provided the drug for her, and produced artistic pieces inspired by Kavan's life, as Walker summarizes their therapist-patient relationship,

[t]heir relationship was sometimes turbulent, troubled by unpaid bills and 'negative transference', but their peculiar association would last until his death in 1964. The Kavan archives contain hundreds of Bluth's drawings and poems dedicated to her, many scrawled on the backs of envelopes and scraps of paper; these are almost the only correspondence she kept, cherished like love letters. The sketches are often overtly sexual, others refer to Kavan's drug use; doodles of phalluses and syringes appear amongst those of animals and faces, a visual testimony to their highly unconventional doctor/patient relationship. Despite these explicit drawings and ongoing tension between Kavan and Bluth's wife, there is no suggestion that their relationship was physical. Claims have been made in the two Kavan biographies about Bluth's administering her nightly heroin dose, and certainly he supplied her with the drug for many years.<sup>26</sup>

Bluth introduced Kavan to Binswanger who was an existentialist psychoanalyst like Laing. She was treated by him in his Bellevue clinic for a total of two months distributed over two years, although Bluth and Binswanger discussed her case prior to her stay at the clinic and she was flattered and surprised by his familiarity with her collections *Asylum Piece* as well as *I am Lazarus* which Binswanger read in order to gain more insight into her illness.<sup>27</sup>

Binswanger was admired by Bluth for his ability to treat and cure his patients by combining physical treatment with spiritual and psychological approach, which is a rather curious matter, for although Binswanger is known for his humanistic methods, at the same clinic Dr Hieronymous prescribed "electric shock treatment and narco-analysis under the influence of

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<sup>24</sup> Laing, *The Divided Self*, 69.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>26</sup> Walker, "The Fiction of Anna Kavan," 26.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 27.

sodium amytal” to his patients, rising questions about whether Kavan received the same treatment.<sup>28</sup>

Kavan’s experience in clinics and her relationship with psychoanalytical treatment is closely related to her drug addiction, as this was one of her two major struggles next to chronic depression. Except for Bluth’s tolerance of her addiction, all her treatments were mostly based on curing her of it, which could have been a determining factor in her closeness to antipsychiatry, placing psychiatry as opposed to the individual and depicting characters that are left even more distressed after their medical treatment. Her addiction was highly influential on her writing, for it often inspired her fiction. In “Julia and the Bazooka”, she describes the intimacy an addict feels towards the drug and traces the starting point of her addiction, depicting the drug as a useful addition to her life:

To improve her game the tennis professional gives her the syringe. He is joking kind of man and calls the syringe a bazooka. Julia calls it that too, the name sounds funny, it makes her laugh. Of course she knows all the sensational stories about drug addiction, but the word bazooka makes nonsense of them, makes the whole drug business seem not serious. Without the bazooka she might not have won the cup, which as a container will at last serve a useful purpose.<sup>29</sup>

A doctor who is very sympathetic to her addiction is described in the story as well, which can be interpreted as a depiction of Bluth:

Julia likes the doctor as soon as she meets him. He is understanding and kind like the father she has imagined but never known. He does not want to take her syringe away. He says, “You’ve used it for years already and you’re none the worse. In fact you’d be far worse off without it.” [...] He is sympathetic toward Julia whose personality has been damaged by no love in childhood so that she can’t make contact with people or feel at home in the world. In his opinion she is quite right to use the syringe, it is as essential to her as insulin to a diabetic.<sup>30</sup>

Kavan’s heroin use was so integral to her life, and she was so persistent with the dosage she would take that most of the people around her were not aware of her addiction. The drug enabled her to lead a “normal” life, as “[w]ithout it she could not lead a normal existence, her life would be a shambles, but with its support, she is conscientious and energetic, intelligent, friendly. She is most unlike the popular notion of a drug addict. Nobody could call her vicious.”<sup>31</sup> Indeed, even her friend and publisher Peter Owen did not know about her addiction until later in their acquaintance, as he writes in the preface of *Asylum Piece*, “It was some time before I realized that she was an incurable heroin addict; this was not evident

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>29</sup> Kavan, “Julia and the Bazooka,” *Julia and the Bazooka and Other Stories*, ed. Rhys Davies (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), 104.

<sup>30</sup> Kavan, “Julia and the Bazooka,” 106.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 106.

either in her behavior or in her smart appearance.”<sup>32</sup> Therefore, Kavan’s relationship with psychoanalysis was determined not only by her experience as a nurse, her sessions with existentialist psychoanalysts, and her time spent in clinics, but also by her addiction and the treatment’s restricting effects on it.

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<sup>32</sup> Peter Owen, “Prefatory Note,” *Asylum Piece* (London: Peter Owen Classics, 1940), 4.

### 3.2. “Does the night love her child?”: The Dream Medium as a Retreat into the Unconscious

Kavan’s experience in clinics and with significant psychoanalysts did not help her achieve mental stability, however, throughout her life, vastly restrained by her depression, she developed a particular relationship with her unconscious. In *Sleep Has His House*, she illustrates a life spent in the corners of her unconscious, which grew to be her reality, home, and safe place. The descriptions of the dark nightmares revealing the growing nighttime reality are accompanied by short passages tracing the protagonist’s daytime. Her work seems to be displaying the world of a drug addict reducing the nightmarish descriptions to hallucinations. Regardless of the effect of her drug addiction on her writing, interpreting *Sleep* as a drug addict’s visions would limit the world of the unconscious, its feminine characteristics of nurturing while preserving and accepting chaos, as well as the mother-daughter relationship it thematises. Walker opposes the interpretation of *Sleep* as a narration of an addict by pointing out that there is almost no point in the book that indicates the visions to be the product of a drug and by stressing the fact that protagonist B is not an adult but a child.<sup>33</sup> Kavan introduces *Sleep* by making it clear that it portrays the developing unconscious of a child: “*Sleep Has His House* describes in the night-time language certain stages in the development of one individual human being. No interpretation is needed of this language we have all spoken in childhood and in our dreams.”<sup>34</sup>

In *Sleep*, the unconscious primarily represents a hidden space where B, a neglected child growing up alone in a big house, somehow finds comfort in her nightmares regardless of how disturbing they can be. Her absent father, whom she can never reach, and her distant and depressed mother haunt the house she lives in, as well as her nightmares. Her relationship with her mother shapes her interaction with the world around her, as well as with herself. She starts her narrative with a brief description of the mother to whom she refers as A: “It is not easy to describe my mother. Remote and starry, her sad stranger’s grace did not concern the landscape of the day. Should I say that she was beautiful or that she did not love me? Have shadows beauty? Does the night love her child?”<sup>35</sup> This initial description is significant especially because Kavan connects the night with the mother figure from the very beginning. This text is considered to be largely autobiographical, with the major difference that while it

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<sup>33</sup> Walker, “The Fiction of Anna Kavan,” 92.

<sup>34</sup> Kavan, *Sleep Has His House*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

was Kavan's father who supposedly committed suicide in "reality", in *Sleep* it is the mother figure. As Walker stresses Kavan's relationship with her mother:

Kavan herself propagated a narrative of her lonely and neglected childhood and her relationship with her mother was clearly difficult at times. [...] she found her an invaluable support and their relationship appears to have been ambiguous and changeable, strained mostly by Kavan's financial dependency.<sup>36</sup>

A lives in their big house as lonely as B, it seems she does not have any source of love herself and her loneliness paints the whole house grey, and turns it into a hostile space for B:

Later we crossed the sea to a colder country where my mother was bored and sad. We lived in a house full of things kept brightly polished. [...] She was like a queen in the house—a princess in exile. All the shine of the house was quenched by my mother's sadness. It was not a gay house in spite of the bright things in it. No, the house was not really gay at all.<sup>37</sup>

The house they live in appears disturbing to B, conveying her mother's isolation and hostility towards B. The house plays an important symbolic role because there are two houses in which B lives; the one her mother inhabits and "quenches with her sadness", and the one B builds in her unconscious, nighttime world in her mind nurtured by her "real" mother, the night itself. The house haunted by A's presence is lonely and inhospitable, where B is not really recognized by anybody: "It was lonely in those rooms dark with my mother's sadness and with the rain on the windows. The rain shut off the house by itself in a lonely spell."<sup>38</sup> The house A dominates with her gloomy demeanor corresponds to B's consciousness which is occupied by her unrequited love for her mother and the distinct loneliness she feels, whereas the house at night would represent the safe space B creates for herself through dreams and the mother she made for herself out of the night. As Walker emphasizes the differences between the house in which B lives and the home she creates for herself,

[t]he house of B's childhood in which her living mother was so unhappy, is not a home. Its uniform conventionality dominates the novel and it is juxtaposed against the house of sleep, which B finds in the final section. This house is a retreat from the daytime world, a self-created reality. Its architectural features are fluid, it is constantly mutating to show new aspects of itself.<sup>39</sup>

In her short story, "A Changed Situation", Kavan describes a house that has turned into a monster hunting her, which could be read as what it would be like to live in the conscious space instead of the unconscious one she resides. She describes the house as follows,

[i]t is a house of no definite architectural design, half old, half new. [...] It is the old part which has grown up during my occupation that I fear and distrust. Lying peacefully curled up on a sunny day, the new house looks like a harmless grey animal that would eat out of your

<sup>36</sup> Walker, "The Fiction of Anna Kavan," 18-9.

<sup>37</sup> Kavan, *Sleep Has His House*, 15.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>39</sup> Walker, "The Fiction of Anna Kavan," 99.

hand; at night the old house opens its stony, inward-turning eyes and watches me with a hostility that can scarcely be borne. The old walls drape themselves with transparent curtains of hate.<sup>40</sup>

This description resembles the one regarding the house in which B lives, “It’s such a rambling old place, there are so many rooms, and all of them half-dark, that you can never be absolutely certain you’ve been into every one.” In *Sleep*, the house A dominates is limited, ruled by the daytime world, her husband, and the father of B. After her death, A gradually changes into something vaster, turning away from the patriarchal daytime to the matriarchal nighttime. Through B’s withdrawal from the world under the sun to the one under the moon, the house turns from a cold and unwelcoming space to a space where A does not simply occupy but transforms into. A makes this shift from “the exiled princess” to the house B lives in through her boredom and sadness still lingering after her death, as B narrates,

[m]y mother’s death made no difference to the house except that she herself was no longer in it. At least her outward presence had gone away. Her sadness and her boredom stayed in the quiet rooms where I lived alone with shadows. As if they felt lonely, these two ghosts attached themselves to me and entered my night-time world. Sometimes I thought they had taken me for my mother, and I felt nearer to her through their nearness.<sup>41</sup>

B’s desire to connect with her mother, especially after her death which makes it paradoxically more possible, results in her nocturnal retreat to the feminine night associated with “the irrational, the transgressive, and maternal signification” contrasting the masculine day described through “social convention, militaristic imagery, and linguistic control.”<sup>42</sup> Jane Garrity further demonstrates B’s withdrawal as follows:

Continually thwarted from interacting with him, B retreats not only from her literal father but from the world of paternal authority into her mother’s dreamy world of the unconscious. The novel takes as its departure a Freudian understanding of the unconscious that equates sleep with the reduction of the authority of the self, seeing this detachment from the external world not only as the opportunity to diminish self-censorship, but as the possibility for reconnection with one’s earliest childhood.<sup>43</sup>

The division between two different worlds B is palpable throughout the book; her inability to appear confidently as a physical body in the social environments she needs to be part of clashes with the comfort of residing in her unconscious space where she exists more as a ghost. This “dissociation between physical anatomy and consciousness”<sup>44</sup> that underlies the

<sup>40</sup> Kavan, “A Changed Situation,” *Asylum Piece*, (London: Peter Owen Modern Classics, 1940), 21-2.

<sup>41</sup> Kavan, *Sleep Has His House*, 36.

<sup>42</sup> Jane Garrity, “Nocturnal Transgressions in *The House of Sleep*: Anna Kavan’s Maternal Registers”, *Modern Fiction Studies* 40.2 (John Hopkins University Press, 1994): 255.

<sup>43</sup> Garrity, “Nocturnal Transgressions in *The House of Sleep*,” 260.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 261.

whole book is set from the beginning with the description of birth, illustrated not as a miracle but as a painful violence, as B narrates,

[w]hat a fearful thing it can be to wake suddenly in the deepest hours of the night. Blackness all round; everything formless; the dark pressing against the eyeballs; the darkness a black thumb pressed to the starting eyeballs distended with dread. At first I don't know what I am to become. I am like an embryo prematurely expelled from the womb. I remember nothing, know nothing: I haven't the least idea what is making me tremble all over like a person suffering the effect of shock. It happens to be the cruelest shock of all I am suffering from: the brutal violence of the birth shock.<sup>45</sup>

The fact that she describes birth as not at all glorious determines a crucial point in her relationship with her mother; it is as if she has started leading an existence full of agony as soon as her life has been initiated by her mother. Here, the way she feels about becoming alive through a human form is characterized by displacement,<sup>46</sup> which delineates all of her life.

Kavan uses sleep as a metaphor for the unconscious,<sup>47</sup> that is the maternal space she creates in order to make up for the motherly love she craves. The unconscious in *Sleep* is a feminine space that is characterized by irrationality, night, and dreams. Prioritizing the feminine unconscious means favoring the irrational over the rational, which can be read as challenging some of the Freudian norms including that one's active presence in society requires one to embrace the paternal, the consciousness, and not the maternal as well as an "understanding of the unconscious that equates sleep with the reduction of the authority of the self,"<sup>48</sup> since in *Sleep*, B functions as an individual only in her unconscious world. Her inhabitation of the unconscious is described as a necessity for her to survive, as B expresses: "Out of my urgent need I found the way of working a new night magic. Out of the night-time magic I built in my head a small room as a sanctuary from the day. Phantoms might be my guests there, but no human could enter."<sup>49</sup>

Alongside the safety it offers, the unconscious also provides a language that is secret, feminine, and peculiar to dreams, which connects irrationality to creativity. Notably, Kavan introduces *Sleep* by pointing out the significance of the "nighttime language" which the book is made of and by indicating that this language is indeed common: "No interpretation is needed of this language we have all spoken in childhood and in our dreams."<sup>50</sup> Building a

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<sup>45</sup> Kavan, *Sleep Has His House*, 8.

<sup>46</sup> Garrity, "Nocturnal Transgressions in *The House of Sleep*," 261.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 259.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 263.

<sup>49</sup> Kavan, *Sleep Has His House*, 63.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

home in the unconscious through her desire to reconnect with her mother, this “nighttime language”<sup>51</sup> is a secret, although known to all, and is made of an alphabet that consists of a female longing to exist outside of the paternal norms dominating the daytime world. Out of her need to be protected, she turns to the shelter of her creativity and uses the language of the irrational to connect with herself:

Working from my hidden base in the dark, I warily reconnoitered the territory of the light, and described what I found there. In all the chaotic violence under the sun, I saw only more cause for distrust and withdrawal. But now I was stimulated by danger, changing my anxiety into written words. I relied on what I wrote to build a bridge which could not be cut down. It was my own self in which I trusted, not seeing self as that last cell from which escape can only come too late.<sup>52</sup>

In *Asylum Piece*, the characters are lost trying to maintain sanity and meaning in the world of consciousness; they fail miserably, and they are seen as crushed under the reality in which they cannot participate. However, in *Sleep*, Kavan illustrates a character who frees herself from the struggle of trying to fit in by diving into the unconventional, and writing from there. Anais Nin, who was influenced by Kavan’s “house of sleep” as a maternal space with two indistinguishable female protagonists in writing her *House of Incest*,<sup>53</sup> suggests that Kavan’s exploration of dream language should be celebrated for how she manages to look at the rational world’s absurdity through irrational language instead of forcing a rational view which cannot decipher a deeper meaning that is revealed only through patterns and symbols of the unconscious.<sup>54</sup> She goes on to draw a difference between the characters of *Asylum Piece* and *Sleep* by pointing out that while in *Asylum* “the non-rational human being caught in a web of unreality still struggles to maintain a dialogue with those who cannot understand him”<sup>55</sup>, in her later books including *Sleep*, “the waking dreamers give up the struggle and simply tell of their adventures. They live in solitude with their shadows, hallucinations, prophecies.”<sup>56</sup>

It is significant to notice that while the language Kavan uses in *Sleep* to describe this dream reality bears the same grammar and syntax in both the daytime and nighttime sections, the descriptions of the dream reality are more challenging to follow for “there is, broadly speaking, no causality in this nocturnal world; instead, the reader is simply presented with a succession of images and sounds, which make up the various dream scenes.”<sup>57</sup> The absence

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>53</sup> Walker, *The Fiction of Anna Kavan*, 99.

<sup>54</sup> Nin, *Novel of the Future*, (Pennsylvania: Sky Blue Press, 2014), 183.

<sup>55</sup> Nin, *Novel of the Future*, 183.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 183.

<sup>57</sup> Hannah Van Hove, “Exploring the Realm of the Unconscious in Anna Kavan’s *Sleep Has His House*”, *Women: A Cultural Review* 28.4 (Routledge Press, 2017), 162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09574042.2017.1388584>

of characterization, plot, and chronological order builds the irrational quality of the dream sections since these factors would comply with the daytime world of rationality.<sup>58</sup> Not being able to track the dreams through the methods of everyday language makes the irrational nighttime world inaccessible and private. The isolation and privacy of the language B speaks and understands is most evident in one of her dreams, which is worth quoting at length:

With abrupt speed-up of clicks to one-second spacing the turning leaves distinguishable as college, hospital, government forms snowing into a pile. It is not possible to read what is on the forms (most of the printing is just a blur), but on one or two of them B's name is legible, on others single printed nouns appear as: AGE; QUALIFICATIONS; CLASS; DESTINATION; ATTITUDE TOWARDS; RESULT: with the beginning (indecipherable) of a written comment. Suddenly a precise disembodied voice asking coldly: Have you any statement to make at this stage? Followed, after slight hesitation, by the voice of invisible B; at first stammering, scarcely audible; gaining gradually force and tension until it breaks on an overtone of hysteria. By what judgment am I judged? What is the accusation against me? [...] Am I accused of the untranslated indictment against myself? Is it my fault that a charge has been laid secretly against me in a different language? [...] Immediately after B's voice fading, the metronome click speeding up to crazy haste, papers storming down in frantic acceleration; men's, women's voices (some with foreign accents), pedantic voices, affected, bourgeois, professional, authoritarian, etc., voices; speaking all together, [...] from which only a few phrases emerge with any comprehensibility or consecutiveness. As B does not concentrate ... Does not adapt ... Does not co-operate ... Does not compromise ... Not satisfactory ... unsatisfactory ... Does not ... Un ... Dis ... Does not ... Non ... Un ... Not ... Non ... No ...<sup>59</sup>

Here, it is stressed that B is a foreigner in the daytime world, implying that she cannot function day to day like others, and cannot feel integrated into daily activities, conversations, and responsibilities, as Garrity suggests, "The fact that B cannot 'read' the charges against her is evidence of her linguistic marginality, which is at odds with the kinds of institutionalized and authoritarian uses of language that structure the world of paternal logic."<sup>60</sup> At the end of the text, B is portrayed as completely lulled into the dream world, as content with the wonders the unconscious would offer, appreciating all its hidden nooks and crannies. Finally, she becomes completely identical to A: "I called my mother's face to the black glass in the way a fisherman draws a fish to the surface of the water. Then it was hard to tell which face was my own."<sup>61</sup> B prefers the feminine unconscious space where is reunited with her mother by becoming her and rejects the paternal conscious world where she is not welcome, where she does not speak the same language. *Sleep Has His House* can be read as a journey of leaving the physical human condition to become the irrational herself.

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<sup>58</sup> Hove, "Exploring the Realm of the Unconscious in Anna Kavan's *Sleep Has His House*," 163.

<sup>59</sup> Kavan, *Sleep Has His House*, 86-7.

<sup>60</sup> Garrity, "Nocturnal Transgressions in *The House of Sleep*," 270.

<sup>61</sup> Kavan, *Sleep Has His House*, 125.

*Sleep*'s emphasis on the nocturnal world of dreams can thus be understood as further exploring the influence of the subconscious in order to better understand an individual's psychology, as well as representing the sociological and psychological structure of British war-torn society.<sup>62</sup> B's nightmares of violent imagery cannot be associated with the war only, given that she maintains an awfully isolated existence since her childhood which results in producing frightening scenarios and the personal unconscious also plays an active role in dream symbolism.

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<sup>62</sup> Hove, "Exploring the Realm of the Unconscious in Anna Kavan's *Sleep Has His House*," 369.

### 3.3. Symbolism and Unity through Carl Jung

Kavan's dream narrative, her understanding of the unconscious, and the relationship between her experience of war and its recurrence in her dreams, all lead to another significant figure of psychoanalysis other than her analysts Binswanger and Bluth; a connection between Jung's theories and Kavan's writing could be traced through her works. Compared to H.D. and Anais Nin, Kavan may have been the least directly influenced by Freud, although she was undoubtedly knowledgeable in the Freudian vocabulary and concepts, given she intended to incorporate psychoanalytic notions into her writing.<sup>63</sup> It can be read through her work that Jung's approach to the unconscious, the psyche, and the interpretation of dreams was closer to her understanding of these matters, as well as her portrayal of them. Especially Jung's theory of the collective unconscious is quite useful for a further understanding of Kavan's characters. Jung divides the unconscious into two parts; a subjective and an objective one, which he analyses as follows:

A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. I call it the personal unconscious. But this personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer I call the collective unconscious. I have chosen the term "collective" because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behavior that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us.<sup>64</sup>

The personal unconscious strictly differs from the collective one in that while the personal unconscious is made up of first-hand experiences that belong specifically to each individual and have once been conscious, no content in the collective unconscious has been in the consciousness, meaning that it consists of mainly hereditary experiences and not individually acquired ones.<sup>65</sup> According to Jung, while it is common to base oneself on the personal consciousness with personal unconsciousness on the side, in fact, a universal, impersonal, and inherited psychic system highly determines one's existence with pre-existent forms and archetypes.<sup>66</sup> This theory of the collective unconscious suggests that individual consciousness, dreams, and daily lives are all affected by inherited knowledge of which one remains unaware. Jung states clearly that he does not deny Freud's theory of the unconscious

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<sup>63</sup> Garrity, "Nocturnal Transgressions in *The House of Sleep*," 259.

<sup>64</sup> Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, (New York: Princeton University Press, 1969), 3-4.

<sup>65</sup> Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, 42.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 43.

as a space of repressed wishes and dream symbolism as wish fulfilment,<sup>67</sup> however, he assigns a much stronger influence to the passing down of ancient and common knowledge concerning humanity upon the unconscious and to dreams. He especially diverges from Freud in his interpretation of dream images; while Freud defines them as “archaic remnants” meaning that they are psychic elements from a long time ago that aim to adjust themselves to our modern minds, Jung does not consider them as impractical “remnants” but as still functioning and possessing historical value.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, the dream interpretation Jung employs differs significantly from that of Freud. First of all, believing in the deeper inherited layer of the unconscious, Jung treats symbols more than indicators of repressed wishes but tries to interpret them as they appear in dreams. As he describes, “[a] term or image is symbolic when it means more than it denotes or expresses. It has a wider ‘unconscious’ aspect—an aspect that can never be precisely defined or fully explained.”<sup>69</sup> His understanding of symbols and their connection to the deeper level of the unconscious affects the way he interprets dreams altogether, differing distinctly from Freud’s free association. He explains his withdrawal from free association and focus on the dream itself:

I no longer followed associations that led far afield and away from the manifest dream-statement. I concentrated rather on the actual dream-text as the thing which was intended by the unconscious, and I began to circumambulate the dream itself, never letting it out of my sight, or as one turns an unknown object round and round in one’s hands to absorb every detail of it.<sup>70</sup>

Instead of treating dream symbolism as a guide to reveal what is repressed and hidden, he considers them significant just as they are and suggests that they do not need to be translated because their actual meaning can never be fully understood. This method of “circumambulating the dream itself” can be found in the nighttime sections of *Sleep*, for Kavan does not provide any interpretation for the dreams but rather is simply focused on giving detailed descriptions.<sup>71</sup> Suggesting that dreams are the main source of our knowledge about symbolism since they cannot be invented but could only happen to us,<sup>72</sup> Jung goes on to argue that giving up trying to translate dream symbolism is vital for tapping into the common mind:

The symbol-producing function of our dreams is an attempt to bring our original mind back to consciousness, where it has never been before, and where it has never undergone critical self-

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<sup>67</sup> Jung, *Undiscovered Self with Symbols and the Interpretation of Dreams*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 132.

<sup>68</sup> Jung, *Undiscovered Self with Symbols and the Interpretation of Dreams*, 167-8.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 126.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, 135.

<sup>71</sup> Hove, “Exploring the Realm of the Unconscious in Anna Kavan’s *Sleep Has His House*,” 370.

<sup>72</sup> Jung, *Undiscovered Self with Symbols and the Interpretation of Dreams*, 136.

reflection. We have been that mind, but we have never known it. We got rid of it before understanding it. It rose from its cradle, shedding its primitive characteristics like cumbersome and valueless husks. It looks as if the unconscious represented the deposit of these remnants. Dreams and their symbols continually refer to them, as if they intended to bring back all the old primitive things from which the mind freed itself in the course of its evolution: illusions, childish fantasies, archaic thought-forms, primitive instincts.<sup>73</sup>

It is highly unlikely that Kavan was unfamiliar with these theories of Jung's, not only thanks to her own reading but through Bluth's connection with Binswanger, who also preferred to focus on the manifest content of the dream instead of the latent dream thoughts as Freud did, "attending to the meaning of the symbols as experienced in the dream."<sup>74</sup> In *Sleep*, the contrast of daytime and nighttime sections, and the dominant war imagery are the major indicators of Jung's influence on Kavan's work. B retreats from the daytime world also because of how corrupted it is; the wartime is implied through descriptions of a violent world, as B narrates, "[i]n all the chaotic violence under the sun, I saw only more cause for distrust and withdrawal. But now I was stimulated by danger, changing my anxiety into written words."<sup>75</sup> However safe she feels in the nighttime world of her unconscious, and however isolated she maintains to live there, the violence leaks into her dreams, producing brutal images of war and torture, as Kavan describes a nightmare of this sort:

Drawing in somewhat, the scenes moderating to terrestrial proportions, but still uniformly disastrous, world-wars, ruinous sieges, plagues, famines, appalling contests of atomic weapons, vaporized and dissolving cities, whole continents exploding in flame, universal torture, destruction, death. [...] details of cracking, toppling masonry and structural damage so close as to resemble earthquake fissures; leading with more distant and now unequivocal view to the disintegration of a city after atomic bomb hit and to the presentation of the ultimate vaporizing preceded by its up-flinging a strange and fancy mushroom in the sky. Also establishing, beyond human destructiveness, the appalling blankness and the intense oppositional indifference of the cosmos.<sup>76</sup>

*Sleep's* emphasis on the nocturnal world of dreams can thus be understood as further exploring the influence of the subconscious in order to better understand an individual's psychology, as well as representing the sociological and psychological structure of British war-torn society.<sup>77</sup> The country went through both the First and the Second World Wars during Kavan's lifetime, which altered the British society profoundly, leaving scars of immense loss and poverty. Widespread poverty created political polarization, following women's service in the war which aggravated gender inequalities, and the Cold-War era

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 266.

<sup>74</sup> Hove, "Exploring the Realm of the Unconscious in Anna Kavan's *Sleep Has His House*," 368.

<sup>75</sup> Kavan, *Sleep Has His House*, 88.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>77</sup> Hove, "Exploring the Realm of the Unconscious in Anna Kavan's *Sleep Has His House*," 369.

created an atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety. Therefore, the collective psyche of British society was largely shaped by alienation, instability, and isolation. However, B's nightmares of violent imagery cannot be associated with the war only, given that she maintains an awfully isolated existence since her childhood which results in producing frightening scenarios and the personal unconscious also plays an active role in dream symbolism. However, the intensity of the war images increases as she grows up and becomes more clearly aware of the cruelty of the daytime. From this perspective, as Hove argues, *Sleep* "presents an extremely pessimistic view of the group soul of mid-twentieth-century Britain"<sup>78</sup> and draws the parallel between Kavan's primitive and cruel dream imagery and Jung's observation during World War I concerning the increasing war symbolism in his German patients.<sup>79</sup> The violence and the oppression of wartime are not only observed through the dream imagery but also through the language throughout *Sleep*, as Garrity emphasizes,

[t]he most insidious aspect of the day world's coercion is linguistic oppression, which is inextricably linked with the novel's representation of militarism. The militaristic, as well as technocratic, imagery not only indicts the devastating authoritarian impulses of modern society, but exposes the way that language reflects patriarchy's interest in control, unity of meaning, and certainty of entitlement.<sup>80</sup>

This oppression of the language, B's inability to understand it, and her status as a victim of her foreignness to this cruelty is quite conspicuous in her dream of being accused of some sort of crime while unable to understand or respond because of not speaking the language. Kavan was quite personally influenced by the war as well, although she was able to avoid its early years by traveling around the world, due to wartime travel restrictions she ended up stuck in London; she was unprepared for the dull cruelty of everyday life, the misery of the blackout, or the horrible atmosphere of fear.<sup>81</sup> In "Julia and the Bazooka", she describes her first-hand experience of being stuck under the rubble of a building after it was bombed, "The stairs have crumbled, the whole house is crumbling, collapsing, the world bursts and burns, while she falls through the dark. [...] How cold it is in the exploding world."<sup>82</sup> In connection to Jung's theories, Kavan's both personal and collective unconscious was occupied by the terrors of the war, which affected her writing immensely. She most clearly refers to identifying herself with the suffering around herself in her short story "There is No End" in *Asylum Piece*, describing her haunting enemy whom she assumes conspires to kill her:

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 369.

<sup>80</sup> Garrity, "Nocturnal Transgressions in *The House of Sleep*," 266.

<sup>81</sup> Walker, "Hearts and Minds," 4.

<sup>82</sup> Kavan, "Julia and the Bazooka," 107.

Somehow I have the impression from those vague glimpses I have caught of his face that it wears a look that is not vindictive, but kindred, almost as though he were related closely to me by some similarity of brain or blood. And of late the idea has come to me – fantastic enough, I admit – that possibly after all he is not my personal enemy, but a sort of projection of myself, an identification of myself with the cruelty and destructiveness of the world. On a planet where there is so much natural conflict may there not very well exist in certain individuals an overwhelming affinity with frustration and death? And may this not result in an actual materialization, a sort of eidolon moving about the world?<sup>83</sup>

The Jungian effect on her understanding of the unconscious is quite clear. Another point regarding which Kavan is in accord with Jung is the feminine quality of the unconscious. In *Sleep*, the unconscious out of which B makes a home is described as a feminine space that B builds around her longing for motherly love. B's deceased mother inhabits the mirrors and glasses by which B passes, and her "real" mother, the night from whom she receives the safety and love she lacks dominates every room, as she recounts, "strange, solitary; splendid with countless stars; my mother Night; mine, lovely, mine. My home."<sup>84</sup> Jung describes the unconscious with feminine qualities as well. He introduces the term *anima* in reference to an archetype that determines the qualities of the psyche:

The anima is [...] a natural archetype that satisfactorily sums up all the statements of the unconscious, of the primitive mind, of the history of language and religion. It is a "factor" in the proper sense of the word. Man cannot make it; on the contrary, it is always the a priori element in his moods, reactions, impulses, and whatever else is spontaneous in psychic life. It is something that lives of itself, that makes us live; it is a life behind consciousness that cannot be completely integrated with it, but from which, on the contrary, consciousness arises.<sup>85</sup>

He goes on to describe this determining archetype as a mother, a witch, and other female figures in connection to man:

For the son, the anima is hidden in the dominating power of the mother, and sometimes she leaves him with a sentimental attachment that lasts throughout life and seriously impairs the fate of the adult. On the other hand, she may spur him on to the highest flights. To the men of antiquity, the anima appeared as a goddess or a witch, while for medieval man the goddess was replaced by the Queen of Heaven and Mother Church.<sup>86</sup>

The unconscious Kavan describes in *Sleep* by means of the mother figure as its empress correlates with the archetype of anima, especially anima's description as the "life behind consciousness", and as the base of the psyche rather than an "attic" containing only what the consciousness represses is significant for in *Sleep* the unconscious is the main part of the mind. From the very beginning, Kavan connects the child to the unconscious and to the

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<sup>83</sup> Kavan, "There is No End," 107.

<sup>84</sup> Kavan, *Sleep Has His House*, 125.

<sup>85</sup> Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, 27.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

maternal body, “whose presence is implicitly invoked throughout in the watery descriptions.”<sup>87</sup> She describes this feminine core, this “anima,” as eternally changing, shifting, coming from and going back to the water:

Into the ephemeral images I dive, one after the other: sometimes one crystallizes into a brief sharpness—never to permanence. At last I dive with extraordinary accuracy into my own body, which I see laid out, high and dry, above the receding tide. I am lying there like a long white fish on a slab.<sup>88</sup>

In Jungian terms, water is not only a significant symbol but also a physical guidance for being able to reach the beginning of oneself, to tap into the unconscious. He posits water as the most popular symbol of the unconscious and suggests that it is water one turns to when one’s soul gets heavier and one should always follow the way of the water for it leads downwards, implying that it leads to the unconscious, as he emphasizes, “the way of the soul in search [...] leads to the water, to the dark mirror that reposes at its bottom.”<sup>89</sup> Therefore, Kavan’s portrayal of the unconscious by illustrating a feminine space, war imagery, and dream symbolism complements Jung’s understanding of the psyche as being based on a personal and collective unconscious, and dreams as the main indicators of a collective mind through their symbol-producing system.

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<sup>87</sup> Garrity, “Nocturnal Transgressions in *The House of Sleep*,” 261.

<sup>88</sup> Kavan, *Sleep Has His House*, 8.

<sup>89</sup> Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, 17.

## Conclusion

The role played by psychoanalysis in the discovery of the vastness of the mind, the hidden forces in the constant process of one's daily actions, decisions, and reflections is revolutionary and its development not only altered the understanding of dreams but also brought about a deeper insight into the gender dynamics. Throughout the works of H.D., Anais Nin, and Anna Kavan, psychoanalysis appears as a determining factor in their understanding of themselves and utilizing the dream-producing nature of their unconscious. But most significantly, the course of their analysis guided by the leading psychoanalysts, their struggle to make sense as well as the use of their creativity, and to make peace with the influence of their familial relationships are all coloured by psychoanalysis's controversial approach to woman and its division of male and female attributes.

H.D. posed a significant challenge to psychoanalysis in that her analysis was overseen by its founding father himself. Her account of their sessions portrays her high respect for him as he clearly interprets her dreams, visions, and creativity as signs of her condition of megalomania. Here the notion of female creativity is questioned, interpreted by Freud as a series of symptoms, while H.D., without attempting to launch into arguing with him, resists his assumptions rather silently and aims only at accepting those of his views that suit her; she is at peace with not agreeing with everything he suggests. It is noteworthy that H.D. actively needed to protect her own interpretations of her dreams and visions against Freud's account of them as indicating her desire to be a prophet. She only wanted to become the artist she was.

Nin is analysed under a different branch of psychoanalysis, the one that is some steps away from Freud's strict doctrines. Developing a divergent understanding of the psyche throughout the long years spent as a student of Freud, Otto Rank provides Nin with an insight that is profoundly beneficial towards creativity. Especially his theories concerning how woman must live in a world constructed by man, which is fulfilling for neither of them, provide Nin with an understanding of her nurturing "mother" self, as well as her wounded daughter self while helping her embrace the sort of writing that focuses primarily on female inwardness. Rank guided her through self-creation and aligning the artist and the woman in her which at times contrasted each other. Through Rank's theories, Nin was able to perceive the unconscious as the source of her hidden nature revealing itself through dreams.

When it comes to Kavan, it is arguable how much her sessions and interactions with several psychoanalysts improved her creativity or provided her with a more thorough self-understanding as in the case of H.D. and Nin. Compared to the other two, Kavan spent a lifetime of isolation and drug addiction and never really made peace with the lonely life she had to lead. In her case, both her consciousness and unconsciousness were troubled; her pain constructed a mind tormenting while both awake and asleep. However, she is strongly associated with C.G. Jung, one of Freud's major "rivals", who opposed him by introducing a deeper level of the unconscious and his tendency to the mystical and religious aspects of dream symbolism. Kavan seems to portray the unconscious troubled by the cruelty to which the world is exposed, which parallels Jung's theory of the collective unconscious that is inherited and contains age-old knowledge conveyed through archetypes. She especially complements Jungian concepts in her description of the unconscious as a feminine zone, basing its fundamental qualities on femininity, motherhood, and irrationality.

All three of these writers struggle and succeed in generating a sort of writing that portrays the female experience in relation to psychoanalysis and what it presents; repressing femininity for it favours the masculine view and reproduces ideals of masculinity.<sup>1</sup> From this viewpoint, basing their fiction almost completely on what psychoanalysis deems as the irrational, accepting the nightmares and the mythical dreams as they are, and accepting even the madness and the chaos they possess, it could be put forth that they were able to capture the "woman condition" in connection with psychoanalysis's sexist doctrines. Each in their own way thus participates in what H el ene Cixous' "The Laugh of Medusa" famously dealt with as the struggle of writing for women and the essential elements that make it distinctive:

If she is a whole, it's a whole composed of parts that are wholes, not simple partial objects but a moving, limitlessly changing ensemble, a cosmos tirelessly traversed by Eros, an immense astral space not organized around any one sun that's any more of a star than the others. [...] She alone dares and wishes to know from within, where she, the outcast, has never ceased to hear the resonance of fore-language. She lets the other language speak-the language of 1,000 tongues which knows neither enclosure nor death. To life she refuses nothing. Her language does not contain, it carries; it does not hold back, it makes possible. Write! and your self-seeking text will know itself better than flesh and blood, rising, insurrectionary dough kneading itself, with sonorous, perfumed ingredients, a lively combination of flying colors, leaves, and rivers plunging into the sea we feed.<sup>2</sup>

Just the act of writing itself, producing a work of art through words, was an issue to solve for these writers, as in patriarchal Western culture, "the text's author is a father, a progenitor, a

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<sup>1</sup> H el ene Cixous, Keith Cohen, and Paula Cohen, "The Laugh of the Medusa" *Signs* 1.4 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 884.

<sup>2</sup> Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa", 889.

procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis.”<sup>3</sup> H.D., Nin, and Kavan thus challenge patriarchal mythology’s image of woman that is by, for, and from man,<sup>4</sup> by rejecting the perfect image tailored for her through the history of literature and by portraying their selves merged with prophecies, nightmarish sensibilities, and ancient psychic energies reposed and reflected in symbols.

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<sup>3</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, “The Mad Woman in the Attic”, *The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, “The Mad Woman in the Attic,” 12.

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## English Abstract

This thesis aims to explore the works of three writers and their relations to their nighttime dreams as well as daydreaming and how the combination of their sessions with their psychoanalysts, their parental traumas, and their close approach to their dreams affect their creativity in developing their writing. The first writer to be dealt with is Hilda Doolittle or H.D. The main point of examining H.D.'s work *Tribute to Freud* will be her close account of the sessions she had with Sigmund Freud, the psychoanalyst's approach to H.D.'s creative side as well as her dreams and "visions", and the clash between her womanhood and Freud's ideas on the female inferiority complex and on her relationship with her mother. His interpretation of her writer's block, the nature of inspiration, and her struggle with artistic creativity along with his uneasy paternal role vis-à-vis H.D. will be dealt with in detail. Carl Jung's focus on the symbols and their connection to one's nature will be discussed as well for Doolittle's interpretation of her own dreams and visions can be considered in relation to him.

The second writer to be mentioned will be Anais Nin. Her work, *House of Incest* in which she collects her dreams. Mainly her nightmares will be taken as the main source of discussing her dreams and her relation to the importance of symbols as catalysts of creativity. Her relationship with Otto Rank will be detailed as the main influence on her conception of the importance of psychoanalysis, the unconscious, free association, the resemblance between a writer and a psychoanalyst and the resolving of her trouble with her father. Her approach to the symbolic nature of dreams will be linked to the ideas of Carl Jung who focuses on the dream symbols as keys to the hidden "nature" of one's self.

Finally, my reading of Anna Kavan's *Sleep Has His House* will focus on the descriptions of her dreams and her unconscious as the inner world she inhabits at the expense of the exterior "reality". Her exploration of the "nighttime language" through portraying her relation to her subconscious and her use of this level of the consciousness as an internal feminine space of escape as well as her problematic relationship with her mother will be covered in detail. Her relationship to psychoanalysis and psychiatry will be examined through her sessions with Ludwig Binswanger, and through the symbolic nature of her dream descriptions and their connection with the theories of Carl Jung concerning the collective unconscious as well as the focus on the manifest content of dreams instead of the latent dream content emphasized by Sigmund Freud.

## Abstrakt v češtině

Cílem této práce je prozkoumat život a dílo tří spisovatelek pokud jde o jejich vztah ke snům během spánku i snění ve dne, a jak kombinace sezení s psychoanalytiky, jejich traumata z dětství, jakož i jejich silné vnímání snů ovlivnilo kreativitu v jejich literárních dílech. První spisovatelkou, kterou se práce zabývá, je Hilda Doolittleová neboli H.D. Hlavním bodem zkoumání díla H.D. je *Tribute to Freud*, kde popisuje sezení se Sigmundem Freudem, psychoanalýzu tvůrčí stránky H. D., své sny a „vize“, střet svého ženství s Freudovými představami o ženském komplexu méněcennosti a svůj vztah s matkou. Práce se podrobně zabývá Freudovým výkladem H.D. spisovatelského bloku, povahou inspirace a jejím bojem s uměleckou tvořivostí spolu s jeho nelehkou otcovskou rolí vůči H. D.. Pojednává i o zaměření Carla Junga na symboly a jejich souvislost s povahou člověka, neboť v souvislosti s ním lze uvažovat o Doolittlové interpretaci vlastních snů a vizí.

Druhou spisovatelkou, kterou práce probírá, je Anais Ninová a její dílo *House of Incest*, v němž zapisovala vlastní sny. Hlavně její noční můry jsou brány jako hlavní zdroj pro pojednání o jejích snech a jejím vztahu k významu symbolů jako katalyzátorů tvořivosti. Podrobně se popisuje její vztah k Otto Rankovi, který měl hlavní vliv na její pojetí významu psychoanalýzy, nevědomí, volných asociací, podobnosti mezi spisovatelem a psychoanalytikem a řešení jejích potíží s otcem. Její přístup k symbolické povaze snů bude také propojen s myšlenkami Carla Junga, který se zaměřuje na symboly ve snech jako na klíč ke skryté „povaze“ člověka.

V neposlední řadě se práce zaměřuje na knihu Anny Kavanové *Sleep Has His House*, na popisy jejích snů a nevědomí jako vnitřního světa, který obývá na úkor vnější „skutečnosti“. Diplomová práce se podrobně bude věnovat jejímu zkoumání „nočního jazyka“ pomocí líčení jejího vztahu k podvědomí a tomu, jak využívá tuto úroveň vědomí jako vnitřního ženského prostoru úniku, jakož i jejímu problematickému vztahu s matkou. Její vztah k psychoanalýze a psychiatrii bude zkoumán prostřednictvím jejích sezení s Ludwigem Binswangerem a prostřednictvím symbolické povahy jejích popisů snů v souvislosti s teoriemi Carla Junga ohledně kolektivního nevědomí, jakož i zaměření na očividný obsah snů namísto skrytého obsahu snů, který zdůrazňoval Sigmund Freud.