
Freud's Contribution to Arthur Schnitzler's Prose Style

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Ein Tritt tausend Fäden regt,
Die Schifflein herüber, hinüber schießen,
Die Fäden ungesehen fließen,
Ein Schlag tausend Verbindungen schlägt.
(Goethe, *Faust* I.iv)

The question of Sigmund Freud's influence on Arthur Schnitzler has received extensive attention, particularly after the publication of their correspondence in 1955.¹ The most important piece of the whole collection is an uncanny letter dated 14 May 1922, in which Freud famously called Schnitzler his "Doppelgänger" (Freud, "Briefe" 97), thus handing down to posterity what has become a "catchword" of extraordinary success (Nehring 180). Despite the subsequent revival in studies of the links between the two men, critics have shown scant or marginal interest in a key literary element of this relationship: the contribution of Freudian ideas to the development of Schnitzler's prose style.

Some have deliberately set aside Schnitzler's literary production in order to pursue a fully-documented description of the contacts that Freud and Schnitzler did have, ranging from a common medical training, to a shared interest in hysteria and hypnosis, along with Schnitzler's intensive reading of Freud's works, all of which make his literary texts anything but purely intuitive. Foremost among these, Horst Thomé's illuminating edition of Schnitzler's medical writings (*Medizinische Schriften*) and the studies by Henry Hausner, Bernd Urban, Reinhard Urbach (Schnitzler, "Über Psychoanalyse"), Michael Worbs, and, more recently, Luigi Reitani and Ulrich Weinzierl, have shed light on the complex relationship between the two men by making use of Schnitzler's diaries, the few surviving letters from his correspondence with Freud and his acolytes, and Schnitzler's notes on psychoanalysis.

Many others have preferred to focus on the adoption of Freudian categories, topics and especially symbols in individual texts from Schnitzler's literary production. With few exceptions, such as Astrid Lange-Kirchheim's studies of *Fräulein Else*,² many scholars have been "confusing and overlapping Schnitzler's and Freud's

ideas” (Reitani, *Arthur Schnitzler* 92).³ More specifically, some regarded Schnitzler as an anticipator of Freud’s ideas: eminently, Beharriell’s studies of the aetiology and treatment of hysterics and especially Weiss, who called Schnitzler a “Freud-less Freudian” (378) by virtue of conclusions similar to, but independent of, Freud’s system. Unlike these, others saw in Schnitzler Freud’s imitator, or at least his close follower—thus ignoring and contradicting Schnitzler’s documented skepticism⁴—and have searched his texts for Freudian elements, especially symbols (e.g., Lawson, Sandberg). Interesting though these studies may undoubtedly be as an application of a Freudian interpretive method to Schnitzler’s work, they risk oversimplifying the affinity between Schnitzler and Freud. As early as 1977, Nehring raised this issue in his critique of Lawson’s 1962 analysis of *Leutnant Gustl* as a case study of the Oedipus complex, where “the desire to discover Freud in Schnitzler” led to interpretative oversimplification which “miss[es] Schnitzler’s world completely” (Nehring 190-191).

To redress this imbalance, we can show how the influence of Freud’s *Die Traumdeutung* (1900), *Studien über Hysterie* (1903), and *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse* (1917) contributed to the maturation of Schnitzler’s prose style. An analysis of Schnitzler’s narratives *Frau Berta Garlan* (1901), *Frau Beate und ihr Sohn* (1913), and *Fräulein Else* (1924) illustrates the chronological development in Schnitzler’s controversial reception of Freud, from his first attempts to apply Freud’s techniques to isolated sections of a narrative, to his later development of the use of symbols and their deployment within complex leitmotiv structures, and finally how it is precisely this leitmotiv structure which comes to dominate the narrative framework in an exemplary later narrative.⁵

Freud’s *Traumdeutung* influenced Schnitzler, but not to the degree that some critics have ascribed to it. We know from his diaries that Schnitzler read the *Traumdeutung* early in 1900.⁶ Attempts to establish its impact on Schnitzler have pointed out that he admitted to have learnt to dream “präziser” after reading Freud (Urban 221). However, a closer inspection of Schnitzler’s now accessible *Tagebücher* reveals that the expression occurs in a late entry that refers not to the *Traumdeutung*, but to the *Vorlesungen* of 1917.⁷ Others have regarded a certain “Freudsche Manier” in Schnitzler’s diary entries on dreams (Worbs 219) as the unquestionable sign of an impact of the *Traumdeutung*. “Freudian manner” is in fact a vague appellation that refers to the events of the past day as the alleged sources of the dream images. This was certainly theorised by Freud as “Tagesrest,” or residue of the day, but it was no novelty in Schnitzler’s diaries. It was already detectable in some scattered pages from the *Tagebücher* before 1900, some dating from as far back as 1875 (Perlmann 29).

What proves Freud's influence at this stage is the application of numerous mechanisms of the dreamwork. They have been meticulously analysed by Michaela Perlmann in her study of the representation of dreams in Schnitzler's literary corpus. Perlmann shows that, after he read the *Traumdeutung*, the residue of the day no longer appears as a solitary presence in Schnitzler's fiction. It is accompanied by other phenomena of the dream creation, such as condensation, displacement, and distortion (99-108). It is this complex of the mechanisms of the dreamwork—which includes the residue of the day but does not exhaust itself in it—that constitutes the true element of novelty in the first narrative analysed.⁸

Written between 1 January and 25 May 1900, whilst Schnitzler was reading Freud's *Traumdeutung*, *Frau Berta Garlan* (1901) has a simple plot. It presents the story of an unhappy widow who at the age of thirty already feels senescent. Following the example of her more adventurous neighbor, Frau Rupius, who has an extramarital affair in Vienna, Berta travels to the capital to meet Emil, an old flame. Now a celebrated violinist, he dismisses her after only one night of pleasure, upon which Berta goes back to the previous monotony of her provincial life.

After her first, exhausting trip to Vienna, Berta falls asleep in the train and has a dream. Its middle section is a surreal remixing of the protagonist's experiences of the past day. The oneiric setting is a railway station, where Frau Rupius urges Berta to hurry up ("es ist höchste Zeit!") and proffers a weighty tome in place of a ticket. Thereupon, Frau Rupius leaves Berta alone, seats herself on a platform bench, eating cherries and spitting their stones on the stationmaster, who seems to enjoy it (*Frau Berta* 423-424).

In this dream, various elements from Berta's trip to Vienna are reused to create a scene that globally expresses her longing for an erotic adventure. In the fictional reality prior to the dream, Berta arrives at the railway station and finds Frau Rupius eating cherries and throwing their stones out of the window. She reminds Berta that they still have ten minutes time before the train leaves, then, during the trip, Frau Rupius avoids conversation by reading a book (423, 411ff). In Berta's dream, the image of Frau Rupius despising all rules of etiquette and encouraging, as an initiator, the younger woman's "departure," embodies in visual (oneiric) form Berta's desire to begin an erotic adventure: hence, "es ist höchste Zeit."

In addition to "Tagesreste," other textual features appear as unmistakable Freudian traces. In an extensive analysis of the narrative in question, Perlmann embarks on a detailed listing of elements typical of dream distortion. Amongst these, some are particularly convincing and deserve to be mentioned. "Verdichtung," for instance, appears in the use of such "Mischfiguren" as the waiter who, at a restaurant that suddenly materializes in Berta's ever-changing dream topography, is abruptly identified

with her nephew Richard, “der selbstverständlich hier Kellnerjunge geworden war, statt zu studieren,” as Berta explains in her sleep (*Frau Berta* 423).

Also worth mentioning is the comparably important role that “Verschiebung” plays in a part of the dream, namely where a music motif is used as a harmless representation of sexual desires and activities that are felt to be illicit and therefore unnameable. An instance of this is Herr Rupius’ wilful blindness towards his wife’s extramarital love affairs. This is alluded to in the dream as his rare ability to have the experience “daß Militärkapellen spielen können, ohne daß man sie sieht” (424). Likewise, Berta’s sexual desires as well as her discomfort due to her abstinence are in this context also represented by musical activity. Berta finds herself in front of a piano which she hesitates to play, as “sie hat ja gewiß das Klavierspielen längst verlernt, sie wird lieber entfliehen, damit man sie nicht zwingt” (424).⁹

Perlmann has convincingly demonstrated that *Frau Berta Garlan* is the first text written by Schnitzler for which a direct influence of Freud’s writings can be proved. However, the aforementioned examples of Freudian borrowings may, despite their persuasiveness, easily lead to an overestimation of the magnitude of psychoanalytical influence at this stage. Perlmann’s analysis of Freud’s influence on Schnitzler has too, therefore, limits. The first limit concerns the object of her investigation. By focusing on the representation of dreams in Schnitzler’s works, Perlmann risks misconstruing the relative importance of the dream within the whole text. She does not stress enough, for example, that in such an early narrative as *Frau Berta Garlan*, the complex of Freudian elements derived from the *Traumdeutung* is still tentatively and modestly embedded as a small experiment (the limited narrative space devoted to the dream section) in a larger narrative framework. The story, as Rolf Allerdissen has pointed out, still follows traditional narrative construction principles (250) and the elements directly borrowed from Freud’s description of the dreamwork are like a ring’s sparkling yet minute gemstone: less than 2 out of the 123 pages of the whole narrative (*Frau Berta* 423-424).

The second limit is a consequence of the first and is of a bibliographical nature. A study of dreams comes to focus, naturally, on the influence of the *Traumdeutung*, thus neglecting Schnitzler’s contact with other Freudian works that are of equal, if not greater, importance. It is certainly true that “mit dem Einfluss Freuds hat der Charakter von Schnitzlers Traumdarstellungen an psychlogischer Genauigkeit gewonnen” (Perlmann 108). However, a deeper impact of Freud’s ideas, including the *Traumdeutung*, on Schnitzler’s writing style was to develop in later years, gradually pervading the whole narrative with a vast use of symbols tied into complex leitmotifs. For this to happen, not just Schnitzler’s reading of the *Traumdeutung* in 1900, but also other factors came into play: namely, conversations and at least another monograph.

After Schnitzler's reading of the *Traumdeutung* in 1900 and its inchoate influence on his style, Schnitzler read another book by Freud, his *Studien über Hysterie* in 1903 (Schnitzler, *Tagebücher* 6/2/1903). Its impact on Schnitzler is not, however, immediately detectable. This may be the reason why, with the exception of Timms' article, most studies on the convergence of Freud's *Studien* and Schnitzler's literary production focus on the later period, the 1920s; foremost among these are Lange-Kirchheim's works on *Fräulein Else*. A likely explanation for a belated impact of the *Studien* comes from Schnitzler's diaries: after that book, Schnitzler's contacts with Freud's works, as his sparse notes in his *Tagebücher* lead us to think, had been at best scant for a whole decade.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it can be convincingly argued that the *Studien* was to contribute significantly to the evolution of Schnitzler's style already before the 1920s. Its impact concerned especially Schnitzler's use of leitmotifs, inasmuch as it helped him develop more complex chains of association that increasingly pervade the whole narrative.

Every reaction needs a catalyst. In Schnitzler's case, it was a series of conversations he had with important Freudian scholars in 1912 and 1913, as a consequence of which a renewed interest stirred. Making use of the diaries and hitherto largely unpublished correspondence, Ulrich Weinzierl (89-130) has scrupulously documented the numerous meetings Schnitzler had in those years with the prominent Freudian acolytes Lou Andreas-Salomé, Baron Winterstein, Dr. Fritz Wittels, Rudolf von Urbantschitsch and, above all, Theodor Reik, "der gründlichste Kenner von Arthur Schnitzlers Oeuvre aus psychoanalytischer Sicht" (97). Schnitzler also read the psychoanalytic studies of literature—two of which on Schnitzler himself—written by Theodor Reik.¹¹ The conversation between them centered for two years on such topics as *Traumdeutung* and psychoanalysis. Schnitzler's resumed reading of Freud's works also took place in that context.¹² Letters and diaries elucidate Schnitzler's skepticism towards the hubris of psychoanalysis' sometimes rigid systematisations.¹³ They also, however, show that Schnitzler, most likely in connection with Reik's books and despite his skepticism, proves capable of reading his dreams with Freudian symbols at this stage.¹⁴ The above Freudian scholars mediated between the author and the progress of the Freudian School, both deepening Schnitzler's knowledge of the Freudian system and allowing him insight into the stylistic potential of Freudian symbolism. Those meetings and dialogues both retrospectively corroborated Schnitzler's reading of the *Traumdeutung*, revitalising his knowledge of symbols, and called his attention on the *Studien* and the symbolic leitmotifs that characterise their case histories. Thus, it is possibly not in spite, but rather because of, Schnitzler's increasingly critical attitude that his renewed interest finds its expression in a literary work of the period, the 1913 narrative *Frau Beate und ihr Sohn*.

Published over a decade after *Frau Berta Garlan*, *Frau Beate und ihr Sohn* bears clear signs of Freudian influence not only in its subject matter—the Jocastal attachment of Beate to her son Hugo—but also in what has been regarded as the “symbolic suggestiveness” with which the whole text is suffused (Timms 130), thanks to its richness of symbols and motifs, tentatively extended also outside the dream, and its treatment of time in overlapping levels.

Frau Beate und ihr Sohn is a story about the gradual development of a widow’s incestuous desire for her adolescent son. Her failed attempts to prevent a liaison between him and a young baroness, who seduces and mistreats him, and her yielding to the advances of her son’s friend, who later boasts of his sexual prowess with friends, gradually lead the story to its tragic end: incest between mother and son is consummated and finally sealed by their suicide.

The setting of the story is a mountain resort in the vicinity of a lake. It has been justly pointed out that unlike the pre-Freudian text *Sterben* of 1894, where its similar setting has a merely geographical value, here the lake becomes “the dark and womblike symbol of birth” (Timms 130), in which Beate and her son are reunited, and the mountains are explicitly used in connection with male attempts at sexual conquest. This last example is especially visible in the episode of Beate’s mountain trip with Doktor Bertram, who courts her. The symbolism which unites mountains and sexual advances climaxes when, in a moment of rest, the daring wooer infiltrates Beate’s incipient musing state with a dreamlike description of death by climbing and the assertion “daß es keinen schönern Tod gäbe als durch Absturz in die Tiefe” (*Frau Beate* 71).

With reference to this passage, it has been noted that falling, especially in connection with climbing, is in Freud an expression of the sexual act (Worbs 246) and that “at one point the rock or mountain is specifically associated with the male sexual organ” (Timms 134n). This sexually allusive mountain-climbing motif also sheds light on Schnitzler’s sources beyond the *Traumdeutung*. Although this symbol is certainly Freudian, a close inspection of Freud’s texts reveals its occurrence only from the 1911 edition of the *Traumdeutung* onwards, whereas Schnitzler had read the first edition of 1900.¹⁵ For the connection of climbing, mountains and the sexual act, Schnitzler must therefore have relied on the conversations with Reik and other Freudian acolytes in the years 1912 and 1913.

In addition to the use of symbols directly and indirectly absorbed from the *Traumdeutung*, the narrative is also characterized by symbolic leitmotifs that seem inspired by the case histories of the *Studien über Hysterie*. Schnitzler’s medical training, which was largely similar to Freud’s, meant that by 1903 he was well-versed in the field of hysteria studies.¹⁶ Bearing this in mind, it is easy to understand how Schnitzler

most likely saw the novelty of Freud's *Studien* not just in its topic, but rather in its style: its talking cure based on the study of recurring memory-symbols.

Let us consider, for example, the complex leitmotiv of "mouth, lips and kiss," which expresses not only the desire of Beate towards her son, but also a twofold link.¹⁷ It is, on the one hand, the link between this desire and Beate's memories of her dead husband, which the similarities of their mouths bring about,¹⁸ leading to the remembrance of the kisses that she had received from both and that are now dangerously conflated in her mind.¹⁹ On the other hand, the leitmotiv also establishes a further connection leading to Beate's carnal relation with Fritz, Hugo's equally youthful friend, who is absorbed into the network of associations by his recurring similarities to Beate's son and her husband from the moment when he takes Beate's hands and guides them to his lips at their first encounter. It is precisely the aforementioned network of connections that sheds light, and meaning, on why the young woman yields to Fritz's sexual advances, and why, at the moment of the incestuous embrace with Hugo on the lake "im verführerischen Vorgefühl der ewigen Nacht," she has the impression of embracing her groom (111).

Let us now look at the second element of this comparison, Freud's *Studien* and their concept of "Symbolisierung." Freud's assumption is that mnemonic processes function symbolically, and that recurring memory-symbols express traumas in disguise. For example, in the second of Freud's contributions to the volume on hysteria, the case study "Katharina," the symbol is in the grimacing face that haunts a country girl, and in the vision that accompanies her hysterical migraines. The recurring image is in fact the face of her uncle,²⁰ who was responsible for attempted rape years before. This obsessively recurring detail, whose reality is, at the moment of its pathological manifestation, merely psychological without becoming physical, is most closely akin to the aforementioned symbolic leitmotiv in *Frau Beate*, and is of comparable significance to the analogies in the time structure of the narrative.

Freud's, and Beate's, pursuit of the leitmotiv, produces an effect of symbolic density accompanied by overlapping chronological levels. Like Beate, who follows the connections between her son Hugo, Fritz, and her dead husband in a constant oscillation in time, Dr. Freud moves back and forth between the complex group of sequential narrative accounts and observes that part of the information could not be obtained directly, but required "supplementing."

In his study of design and intention in narrative, Peter Brooks has recently drawn attention to this technique of "supplementing." In Freud's *Studien*, the search for the chain of events leading from the initial trauma to the present symptoms follows an interpretive logic which, Brooks notes, moves Freud to an understanding that

“causation can work backward as well as forward,” and “events may gain traumatic significance by deferred action (‘Nachträglichkeit’), or retroaction, action working in reverse sequence to create a meaning that did not previously exist” (280).

Schnitzler seems to have been attracted by the use of leitmotifs and retroactive codetermination displayed by Freud in his studies on hysteria, and his use of the aforementioned visual motif of “mouth, lips and kiss” in *Frau Beate* serves as one example. This interest was to develop further in Schnitzler’s prose writing in the 1920s. In this period he wrote *Fräulein Else*.

The year 1922 was a particularly intense one for Schnitzler’s relationship with his putative double. On May 14th of that year Freud sent the now sixty-year-old author the famous *Doppelgänger* letter. In the two following years—as happened ten years earlier with Reik—Freud and Schnitzler met several times, conversed on psychoanalysis and the interpretation of dreams, and on one of these occasions Freud presented Schnitzler with a new edition of his *Vorlesungen* (*Tagebücher* 16/1/1922).

The developments undergone by Freud’s theories and culminating in the *Vorlesungen* exerted a double, seemingly contradictory influence on Schnitzler. On the one hand, they affected him *per negativum* in his diaries: i.e., when it came to applying the theories to real dreams. On the other, they were nevertheless well accepted in his fiction.

The *Vorlesungen* aimed to summarize Freud’s discoveries for a readership of laymen. Initially, Freud distanced himself from the “symbolische Traumdeutung”: i.e., the practice of attributing one significance to one specific symbol (*Traumdeutung* 117-118). He illustrated the idea underlying his early analytical method by comparing the “Knotenpunkt, in welchem... zahlreiche Gedankengänge zusammentreffen” (akin to the “memory-symbol” in the *Studien*) to the weaver’s work as described in Goethe’s *Faust*, where “Ein Tritt tausend Fäden regt” and “Ein Schlag tausend Verbindungen schlägt” (286).

From the 1911 edition onwards, however, Freud, mainly influenced, as he writes in his third preface, “durch die Arbeiten von W. Stekel” (25), increasingly comes to assert the validity of those rigid symbolic correspondences (“Abschnitt E,” 345ff)²¹ ultimately leading to the tenth *Vorlesung*, “Die Symbolik im Traum,” which accentuated the interpretive rigidity already present in later editions of the *Traumdeutung*.²² The Stekelian component, in its rigidity, is precisely what seems to irritate Schnitzler. So it is not surprising that his diaries contain such a reference to this author as “Psychoanalytiker, Größenwahnsinniger, und Schwadronneur” (*Tagebücher* 19/3/1918), which, as Weinzierl observes, “ist bloß die Ouvertüre zu einem umfänglichen Repertoire von Verbalinjuriën, über das der Tagebuchsreiber ab 1920 für Stekel verfügt” (Weinzierl 127).²³

With comparable vehemence, although mitigated by a sincere affection and esteem towards the man and the scientist, Schnitzler, in his diaries as well as in a series of posthumously published notes,²⁴ attacks several tenets of the positivistic “Determination,” the “Monomanisches” he saw in part of Freud’s thought on dream symbolism (*Tagebücher* 16/8/1922). Ernest Jones gives testimony of this when he notes that in the “many arguments” Schnitzler had “with Reik, Alfred von Winterstein, myself and other analysts,” he “would never...admit to agreeing with Freud’s main conclusions” (84). Schnitzler’s recently published diaries shed further light on his critical view of Freud and afford concrete examples of his criticism, especially around 1922. After one conversation with Freud, for example, he claims to have “allerlei Bedenken gegen die Traumdeutung (z.B. dass Wasser- und Badträume stets Geburtstraum bedeuten)” (*Tagebücher* 7/7/1922).

The skepticism recorded in his diaries, however, does not prevent Schnitzler from using Freudian symbols in his fiction. This justifies, if not fully, at least in part, analyses of *Else* and other texts in terms of Freudian symbolism, such as Oswald and Pinter, Bareikis, and, more recently, Sandberg.²⁵ We may now recall that the symbol of the mountain also occurs in *Fräulein Else* (1924), with the same meaning of sexual conquest. The way this symbol is used, however, has changed, because the complexity of the narrative mechanism has increased, due to a further influence of the leitmotiv structures inspired by the *Studien*. It has been convincingly demonstrated that *Else* relies heavily on Freud’s *Studien*: “schon der Titel” can be read “als Anspielung auf Freuds adoleszente Hysterikerinnen,...vor allem die ‘Katharina’-Geschichte” (Lange-Kirchheim, “Die Hysterikerin” 120; cf “Trauma” 119). Parallels in the use of leitmotifs are also evident. Lange-Kirchheim observes that “Schnitzler entwirft mittels der Leitmotivtechnik eine ähnliche Reihe ‘von erotischen Erlebnissen mit traumatischen Momenten’” (“Trauma” 120). On the basis of these observations, I argue that the interaction of enhanced symbolism and intensified leitmotiv structures adds to the sophistication of the textual mechanism to an extraordinary degree. Two examples illustrate this.

The setting of *Fräulein Else* is similar to that of *Frau Beate*. Else, the young protagonist and daughter of a renowned but profligate Viennese lawyer, is spending her holidays in the Italian Alps. Her carefree life and day-dreaming about her cousin Paul, with whom she is infatuated, is suddenly interrupted by a telegram with which she is informed of her father’s imminent bankruptcy and is exhorted to beseech the older Viscount von Dorsday, who visibly lusts after her, to grant him a loan. The recurrence of the mountain Cimone, mentioned repeatedly in the text, builds a fundamental symbolic hysotopy, which, as it is recounted from Else’s perspective, acts similar to a Freudian memory-symbol.

The mountain is first associated with Else's often expressed sexual desire for her cousin Paul. Upon leaving him after a tennis game, she perceives the erotically laden presence of the mountain as she notices "wie herrlich der Cimone in den Himmel ragt!" (*Fräulein Else* 324). The mountain symbol is also often linked with Paul himself, whenever Else recalls the expression he would use to describe the reddening sunset on its peak: "auf dem Cimone liegt ein roter Glanz; Paul würde sagen: Alpenglühen" (325). The syntagmatic proximity—on the printed page and in Else's psychic chain of associations—of her "jungfräuliches Bett," the mountain's red "Alpenglühen" and the memory of a recent walk in the woods during which Paul could have been "unternehmender" towards Else (328), reveals a nexus that expresses the whole erotic undertone of Else's associations orbiting around the image of the mountain.

However, after receipt of a telegram from Vienna, which implies a subjection (of unspecified nature) to Dorsday, something happens to the mountain symbol. Whilst still preserving its erotic connotation, it now gradually acquires a semantic layer of sexual threat. Precisely after Else reads the telegram, she perceives how "unheimlich, riesig der Cimone [ist], als wenn er auf mich herunterfallen wollte" (336). Soon, the mountain and Dorsday are linked. Not only is the Viscount, after his indecent proposal, described with the same adjective used for the mountain ("riesengroß ist sein Gesicht") (346), but even the hotel corridor that leads to his room is itself interspersed with the same symbols of climbing and hence of erotic aggression ("riesige Bergschuhe" are hanging at a door) (367). This associative chain climaxes in the final scene of the music room, where Else shows herself naked in front of all the guests, and Dorsday, surreally enormous and avidly gazing, appears to fall on her precisely like the previous image of the mountain (373).

A second leitmotiv that runs through the whole text, equally intersecting dream and fictional reality, is the lusting gaze, the idea of voyeurism and its counterpart, exhibitionism. There is a voyeuristic chain that connects Dorsday's look with his penetratory desires and Else's feeling of being violated. The eye of the avid aristocrat is repeatedly characterized as a penetrating object ("seine Augen werden sich in meinen Ausschnitt bohren") (333). It is metonymically captured in his monocle, which condenses his gaze ("er steht vor mir und bohrt mir das Monokel in die Stirn") (344). Finally, it is precisely this fixation on the image of a gazing Dorsday that brings us back to Else's unexpressed desire towards her cousin Paul, who in her imagination assumes the role of both object of desire and potential savior. This deserves a final articulation to lead our considerations to a conclusion.

The casual reference to Paul's manners as "nicht gerade ein Matador" (324) and the description of Dorsday's protruding eyes, which deliberately underlines their

bovine features (they are repeatedly called “Kalbsaugen”),²⁶ are gradually linked as the Viscount’s presence announces itself more and more as a threat. They converge in Else’s dream of the matador. Both the bovine traits attributed to Dorsday and the initial syllable of his name, “dor-,” co-define Paul’s role as a savior. The matador of her dream is a complex figure of overdetermination,²⁷ in which at least two characters coalesce. On the one hand, it is the potential “killer of the bull,” of the bovine eye, of Dorsday himself (which seems to suggest “mata-dor = kill Dor[sday]”). On the other, it is the deflowerer ushered in with the cry “Öffnen Sie das Tor, Herr Mata-dor” (353), in its ambiguity of desired and dreaded event. The matador, therefore, denotes both Paul and Dorsday himself, whose red monocle in the dream (red as the matador’s muleta), his waving the handkerchief like a matador (353), and his penetrating eye are the symbolic expression of a sexual threat of violent intercourse, which is finally sealed by the enraged exclamation Else uses for the Viscount: “Mörder” (378).²⁸ Thus, the two examples, of the mountain and the lusting gaze, clearly show an emphasis in the textual mechanism not on individual symbols alone, but on the complex chains of leitmotifs into which they are tied.

The development of Arthur Schnitzler’s prose style can be said to conform to these final examples. Like a leitmotiv whose occurrences change form but ultimately follow one and the same direction, from the beginning of the twentieth century until the author’s death thirty-one years later, his style varied, but in its overall evolution it kept the same direction towards increasing refinement and complexity. In this process, another great Viennese played a major role. The presence of Sigmund Freud, as an inspiring man and as a critic to criticize in return, exerted an unparalleled influence on Schnitzler the critical thinker and, in particular, Schnitzler the creative writer. Where the thinker could not accept certain tenets and the increasing dogmatism that gradually came to dominate Freud’s acolytes, the creative writer could nonetheless see the extraordinary potential that some of the ideas developed by Freud could have for his writing and, especially, for his style.

The present analysis of three phases in Schnitzler’s reception of Freud’s works sheds light on the ways in which Freud’s influence on the development of Schnitzler’s writing style manifest itself. The impact of the *Traumdeutung*, far from being the consequence of a once-and-for-all appropriation, went from small initial experiments with the mechanisms of the dreamwork in *Frau Berta Garlan* (1901), to the creation of symbolically dense narrative textures, profoundly suffused with Freudian suggestiveness, in *Frau Beate und ihr Sohn* (1912). Not just the *Traumdeutung*, but, in conjunction with it, other Freudian works had an impact on the refinement of Schnitzler’s prose style in later years. If the *Vorlesungen* revitalized Schnitzler’s knowledge of, and sometimes skepticism towards, Freudian symbols, the influence

of the *Studien über Hysterie* makes clear that Freud's impact did not exhaust itself in the deployment of symbolic references alone. In connection with the catalyzing effect of Schnitzler's conversations with Freudian acolytes, the *Studien* had a powerful impact on the development and intensification of symbolic leitmotiv structures and overlapping chronological levels into which individual symbols are tied. This resulted in a complexly refined narrative mechanism that greatly amplifies the resonance of its individual components, and is especially visible in *Fräulein Else* (1924). By incorporating some of Freud's ideas into the maturation of his own prose, Schnitzler, far from being a passive "Doppelgänger," proved a critically receptive author. The stylistic peak he achieved in some of his last writings is an extraordinarily rich prose which vibrates at every interpretive step; it is a literary world where—to conclude with two lines from *Faust*—"ein Tritt tausend Fäden regt" and "ein Schlag tausend Verbindungen schlägt." ✱

Notes

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those who contributed to the writing of this article. In particular, I owe thanks to Dr. Andrew Webber and Dr. Peter Hutchinson of Cambridge University, with whom I talked through some of the central issues I discuss here. I am also obliged to the editors of *The Rocky Mountain Review* for the meticulous attention with which they read my work. Their critical remarks helped me greatly to improve this article.

¹The 1995 edition of the correspondence, published by the poet's son, Heinrich Schnitzler, contained only Freud's letters to Schnitzler. Schnitzler's own letters were regarded as lost. In 1992, Luigi Reitani discovered Schnitzler's only surviving letter to Freud at Cambridge University Library's manuscript collection (Reitani, "Besser sublimiert").

²Other notable exceptions are Kenneth Segar and Wolfgang Nehring. In his study of *Traumnovelle*, Segar was the first to consider Schnitzler's notes on psychoanalysis and used them to discuss the writer's skepticism towards Freud's ideas, especially his division of conscious and unconscious (to which Schnitzler added a mid-conscious, or "Mittelbewusstsein") and his interpretation of dream symbology. Like Segar, Nehring underlined divergences in Schnitzler's and Freud's views, maintaining that, despite some undeniable affinities, "the works of both Schnitzler and Freud can subsist in their own right" (192).

³My translation.

⁴See also below in the article.

⁵The choice of three texts for Schnitzler relies on Worbs' painstakingly documented account of Schnitzler's extensive reading in Freud's major psychoanalytical works from 1900 onwards. Worbs determines three influential foci in the years 1900-1903, 1912-1913, and the mid-1920s (352-355). The present study is an attempt to document this influence in literary, especially stylistic, terms with regard to Schnitzler's prose.

⁶No precise date is to be found in the *Tagebücher* for when he started perusing this work. Nevertheless, the entry for 26/3/1900 indicates that Schnitzler was already reading it.

⁷“Lese die Vorlesungen von Freud, träume seither wieder mehr und präciser [sic]” (*Tagebücher* 23/4/1922).

⁸My choosing to open discussion with *Frau Berta Garlan* (1901) and all but omitting *Leutnant Gustl* (1900), a text often associated with Freud (esp. Worbs 237-242; Lange-Kirchheim, “Die Hysterikerin” 111), needs explanation. Research on the subject suggests that a direct influence of the *Traumdeutung* on *Leutnant Gustl* cannot be convincingly proved. The argument (e.g., Worbs 240) that the inner monologue used in *Gustl* may be based on Freud’s technique of free association is not substantiated by biographical facts or by Schnitzler himself. It has been observed that both Freud and Schnitzler may well have independently developed this technique from their shared interest in hypnosis, which dates back to their common medical background (Nehring 187). Also, Schnitzler himself, in a letter to his friend, the Danish literary critic Georg Brandes, stated explicitly that his model for *Gustl* was pre-Freudian: “Mir aber wurde der erste Anlaß zu der *Form* durch eine Geschichte von Dujardin gegeben, betitelt *Les lauriers sont coupés* [published in 1887]” (Schnitzler to Brandes, 11 June 1901; cf. Farese 83-84). As we know from his diaries, Schnitzler had read this novel on 2 October 1898 on a train trip to Berlin (Farese 75). Lastly, one may observe that there is no dream description at all in *Leutnant Gustl*. When Gustl falls asleep in the Viennese Prater, the narrative flow suddenly breaks only to be resumed after the lieutenant’s awakening with the exclamation: “Heiliger Himmel! Eingeschlafen bin ich!” (*Leutnant Gustl* 356). It would be impossible to explain this with an alleged influence of the *Traumdeutung* on this narrative.

⁹For a detailed list, see Perlmann 99-108.

¹⁰It is significant that an attempt at commencing a correspondence in this period ground to an immediate halt (Reitani, “Besser sublimiert”; cf. note 1). Also in line with my argument is the fact that it was resumed only six years later, on 14 May 1912, which is precisely the period under discussion in this section.

¹¹Schnitzler read Reik’s psychoanalytic studies of literature, particularly of Beer-Hofmann’s *Der Tod Georgs* (*Tagebücher* 5/3/1912), and of his own work, *Arthur Schnitzler vor dem Anatol* (1912). They also applied psychoanalytic interpretation to literature together, when, for example, they analysed Georg’s dream from Schnitzler’s *Der Weg ins Freie* (*Tagebücher* 17/9/1912). In 1913, Reik published a second psychoanalytic analysis of Schnitzler’s work that was destined to become famous, *Arthur Schnitzler als Psycholog*.

¹²The readings included *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* (1905) in 1912 (*Tagebücher* 30/12/1912), and *Totem und Tabu* (1912/1913) (Worbs 223n).

¹³In an entry of 27/6/1912, for example, he notes, with reference to a recent article by Reik on Schnitzler’s early works, how his “nicht uninteressante Studie” tends to lead to the “fixen psychoanalytischen Ideen.” One of these is the “Überschätzung des Ödipus-Komplexes von Seiten der Freud-Schule,” as Schnitzler notes with reference to a conversation with Reik on the *Traumdeutung* (*Tagebücher* 17/9/1912). Also, in a letter to Reik dated 31/12/1913 (Schnitzler, “Vier” 241) he accuses him of overstressing the unconscious, of the psychoanalyst’s urge “alzufrüh ins Schattenreich abbiegen zu müssen.”

¹⁴E.g., “Alberne Träume...Herr Askonas (der im Bernhardi den Bezirksarzt Feuermann probierte, dem eine Patientin verblutet!) will mir...das Bein rasieren (Die Freud-Schule könnte dies als einen verkappten Selbstmordwunschtraum deuten)” (*Tagebücher* 9/4/1913).

¹⁵The *Studienausgabe* of Freud's works (10 vols, 1969-1975) offers illuminating evidence in this respect, since it highlights the chronological strata present in the texts as a result of various editions and the incorporation of supplementary material into the original versions. For example, both Freud's well-known observation that "Stiegen, Leitern, Treppen, respektive das Steigen auf ihnen...sind symbolische Darstellungen des Geschlechtaktes" (*Traumdeutung* 349), and his gloss on the metaphorical use of related expressions in allusion to the sexual act—"man pflegt zu sagen, der Mann ist ein 'Steiger,' 'nachsteigen'" (349-350n) are from the third edition. Also, all chapters on the representation of genitals through acts of climbing and landscapes—e.g., "Darstellung des Genitales durch Gebäude, Stiegen, Schächte" (358f), "Ein Stiegentraum" (361f)—equally date from the 1911 version. For an overview of the historical blurring to which old editions of the *Traumdeutung* are subject, see *Traumdeutung* 13. It shows that between its first edition in 1900 (actually 1899) and Freud's death in 1939, the *Traumdeutung* underwent five revisions and substantial supplementations that altered the original text considerably.

¹⁶See Urban and Worbs for detailed documented accounts of Schnitzler's engagement with medical and psychoanalytical writings. More recent are also Thomé and Herzog.

¹⁷Timms lists twelve occurrences for the motif in the short narrative (134n).

¹⁸"...der volle rote, süße Kindermund,...den hatte sein Vater auch" (65).

¹⁹"Vorbei war die Zeit, da ihr Hugo ein Kind, ihr Kind gewesen war. Nun war er ein junger Mann...Nie mehr wird sie ihm die Wangen, die Haare streicheln, nie mehr die süßen Kinderlippen küssen können wie einst. Nun erst, da sie auch ihn verloren hatte, war sie allein" (79).

²⁰Actually her father, as Freud admitted in a footnote to the 1924 edition (*Studien* 153).

²¹On the "Abschnitt E" as "neben der...10. Vorlesung...[die] umfangreichste allgemeine Behandlung zum Thema Symbol," see *Vorlesungen* 159n.

²²Freud claims that these correspondences "gestatten uns unter Umständen, einen Traum zu deuten, ohne den Träumer zu befragen" (*Vorlesungen* 160-161).

²³The *Gesamtverzeichnis* of Schnitzler's *Tagebücher* (X 524) indicates over twenty references to Stekel, from 1912 to 1928. These are rarely neutral, and never laudatory. Rather, they either refer to his incompetence as a psychoanalyst (e.g., 12/9/1928: "psychoan[alitischer] Gauner"; on Stekel's whole family, 23/5/1928: "die psychoanalytischen Schwindler") or report with disdain on recent "intrigues" in his private life—e.g., 15/6/1926: "die hinterhältigen Versuche St[ekel]s, der die Geliebte loswerden...möchte"; 4/10/1922: "Bei Helene Binder. Sie erzählt mir die neuesten Schabigkeiten St[ekel]s.—(er geht zum Bruder seiner Geliebten (Tochter der Frau B.)—sie habe ihm in der Hypnose gestanden, dass der Bruder als Knabe mit ihr in geschlechtl. Verkehr gestanden!)."

²⁴Most of the posthumously published critical notes Schnitzler produced over the course of two decades, from 1904 until 1925, were written around 1922.

²⁵In light of Schnitzler's skepticism towards Freudian symbols, a systematic borrowing cannot be taken for granted. If an element can be found on Freud's lists of symbols, it does not necessarily follow that the same element in Schnitzler's text has precisely a Freudian meaning. For example, Sandberg, who conducts an otherwise interesting symbolic analysis of *Fräulein Else*, considers water to be necessarily a symbol of birth because Freud offers this interpreta-

tion (Sandberg 117). He does not, however, consider the passage from the diaries I mentioned above, in which Schnitzler explicitly questions “dass Wasser- und Badträume stets Geburtstraum bedeuten” (*Tagebücher* 7/7/1922).

²⁶“...was für Augen er macht. Kalbsaugen” (326), and again “was macht er denn für Kalbsaugen” (341).

²⁷It is not by chance that Else repeatedly thematizes its symbolic significance: “was habe ich denn nur geträumt? Von einem Matador?...Aber wer war der Matador?” (354, 356). Perlmann confirms the stress on the polyvalence of the matador, in which she sees a double connection with symbol of death and erotic components, quoting Freud’s symbol of the door-opening for defloration (123).

²⁸The matador has also been interpreted as Else’s incestuous father, whose debts have forced Else to prostitute herself to Dorsday. This does not, of course, detract from the cogency of the present argument on the ambiguity of the matador. For example, Lange-Kirchheim, who favours the hypothesis “matador = father,” recognizes that its essence is precisely ambiguity and concedes that the father appears “hinter den Verschiebungs- und Ersatzfiguren” of Dorsday and the “Filou” (“Trauma” 119).

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