

From Père Lachaise *Freud: Art and Psychoanalysis*



*My visitors come upon me,
not genial, but in a fit of weeping.
The Nazis now occupy Paris.*

1.

I'm sorry, but you catch me crying,
My Dears. I've softening of the brain...
Europe has once more gone insane!
Alas! It is so very trying.

Come, let us change the subject! Ask me
My views on anything at all.
Can mutes swans sing? Only in fall.
Come, Dears, don't be afraid to task me!

2.

I find them very interesting.
It sets itself a noble mission,
But shows a Faustian ambition,
'Analysis'. It's a good thing

For art and for the artist that
It is still in its infancy,
My Dears. For curiosity
Proverbially lets the cat

Out of the bag: this tends to kill
The cat, which much prefers to stay
Hidden inside, and keep at bay
The fell 'reality principle'.

She is a sort of inner Sphinx
Wrapped in the magic sack of sleep
With riddling secrets she would keep—
Or so at least the doctor thinks.

Perhaps the Sphinx has none to tell.
The mystery of Life is surface.
There are no shadows upon *her* face.
The social self is where we dwell.

Freud's theory comes down to this:
All higher forms of thought reprise
Old infantile anxieties
Except Psychoanalysis.

*I am asked my opinion of
Freud and his disciples.*

*Those of a scientific bent may be
put in mind here of Schrödinger's
famously indeterminate Cat. [Mr V]*

3.

And yet, perhaps, on second thought,
Artists need not feel so annoyed
Or threatened by the likes of Freud
And his odd theories. Has he not



Conceded that the poets were there
Before him? Though it's true, he does
Say elsewhere, too: *Where the Id was,*
The Ego shall be. Poets bare

The Unconscious because they themselves
Are dreamers dreaming in the mist,
And to the rational scientist
Seem merely childlike, gifted elves.

They only have their intuition,
Somnambulistic divination,
Whose truths need systematisation
And terminological precision.

There is a certain cannibalism
Involved. Psychology, as 'science',
Resents its lateness, its reliance
On Art. Ah, the antagonism

Runs deep! Poet or scientist:
Who is master, who contains whom?
For it appears one must subsume
The other. Who is ventriloquist

And who the wooden doll? Who plays
The intoxicated shaman, who
The sober interpreter of the true
Significance of what he says?

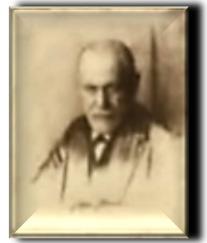
Is one the thinker, the other merely
The dreamer? Does not Shakespeare give us
More truth in masks than Freud delivers
In his unmaskings? Freud, too clearly,

Is but another allegorist
Compared with the enormous Poet.
That *is* enough! Before I know it,
I shall be seeing an Analyst!

The questioner neurotically persists.

4.

The Oedipus Complex? Dear, it isn't
Complex enough, this crude, triangled
Solution the Sphinx would have strangled
The doctor for, who should have listened



More closely to the pregnant riddle.
Freud's dark obsession with the phallus
Twists with exclusionary malice
A theory tending to belittle

The protean in us, and define
Who we are, whom and how we love,
Based on a binarism of
The sexes, building an iron Line

Around human identity
From which to enter any state
Outside it is to deviate.
But science's mission is to *free*.

(In this it much resembles Art.)
As gifted apes and angel-devils
And debauched martyrs in pain's revels
And what-not spring we from the heart

Of chance and cunning, all the toils
And ruses of identity,
The playing pitch of fantasy
Where love and hate fight for the spoils.

We play ourselves, but we audition
For other rôles, all versions of
The self. A child's mind is, above
All, open. And not by omission

But by inclusion in his growing
Repertoire of selves does the child
Become himself. There is a wild
Lust in the soul, a strong wind blowing,

That pushes it beyond confines
Of any sort, past father and mother
And spouse and nation to seek other
Worlds, to be elsewhere, as if lines

As you can see, Dears, I prefer Jung, red-faced, ham-fisted, clumsy man though he seemed to the Joyces, père and fille.

Jung somewhat crudely labelled Joyce a schizophrenic. 'Scherzophrenic' would have been a more accurate term.

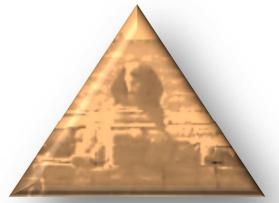
Were written to be crossed, erased,
Turned into circle, rhomboid, riddle
And poem. But social pressures whittle
Down childhood's giant dreams, we waste



Into a serviceable form
For social use, as the great oak
Becomes the pick with which we poke
Our teeth. The hero that rides the storm,

The pirate in the looking-glass,
The ballerina and the goddess—
The inborn poet—yield their bodies
With their souls to the levelling mass,

Extruded through the pyramid-
Shaped funnel of the Oedipus
Complex. There's so much more to us
Than ego, superego, id,



And that steam-engine pseudo-science
Of pleasure and un-pleasure! Still,
For what to Schopenhauer is 'Will',
He found new words, unleashed the lions

Of the Irrational in ways
That bar us ever from returning
To a denial of the burning
Desires and drives that form soul-space.

My waywardness was surely an over-
Determination; I forgot
Displacement. How it froze my thought,
The riddle of a hateful lover!

And, true, Freud briefly flirted with
The 'polymorphously perverse',
But then drew back, and laid the curse
On us of a pernicious myth,

That 'homosexuals' are failed
'Heterosexuals', somehow ploughed
At the Oedipal exam, too cowed
To 'phallicise', be fully 'maled'.

5. Wit and the Unconscious

Freud speaks of wit as socially
Acceptable aggression, 'fair'
Because expressed with verbal flair.
When violence itself is free



To make the social rules, destroyed
Is the economy of wit
That renders a society fit
To be called civilised, as Freud



Learned. All those witty Jews are gone.
Einstein has fled. So there can be
No wit in Nazi Germany.
Aggression's naked, raging on

The surface: Göring hears the word
Culture and reaches for his 'Browning'.
Book-burning, homicidal clowning
Of Brownshirts, monstrous and absurd:

That is the culture and *esprit*
Of the Third Reich. The Führer is,
As he must be, the *humourless*
Director of this dark travesty.

[Three Waffen-SS officers pass my tomb, making certain...remarks...]



Yes, it is humid. Strange, the Colonel
Pronounced *schwül* '*schwul*', to rhyme with 'fool'.
It's much like a free Berlitz school.
And they said something quite fraternal:

Schwül = humid; '*schwul*' is a derogatory term meaning 'homosexual'.
'Warmer Bruder' ('warm brother') is a slang term for a homosexual male.—[Mr V]

They called me *warmer Bruder*: warm
Brother. Yes, on these long July
Days we are all quite warm. How I
Admire these Nazis' sense of form!

6. The Graffiti on my Tomb is Discussed

I feel it every time it scrapes
Across the walls, the crayon or
The charcoal pencil, as they score
In stone the crude and hasty shapes

Of their graffiti, spelling words
Of love (I wear each like a badge),
Or sometimes hate, a nasty scratch
(But music needs its dissonant chords),

Like one a fellow we would call
A 'hardy' bothered to indite
Just yesterday. The spelling's quite
Vague, though the sentiment is all

Too clear. Perhaps you can enlighten
Me: Did he call me 'Queen' or 'Queer'?
In either case it would appear
There are still those whom I can frighten

Into illegible ecstasies
Of loathing, or what Freud would term
'Projection'. I still make them squirm.
They ease their sexual unease

By giving it the name of Wilde,
In turn a name for disease, or
For sin. I really should ignore
Them as one does a tedious child.

7. *The Immolated Angel*

Fetishists do such damage! Damn
The lot, they kill the thing they love!
Look at that Sphinx, the Angel of
My Doom. Perhaps I'm in, and *am*,

That angel. Step closer. Look o'er me
Carefully: note what is not there...
Isis has it, I hope, somewhere...
With it may she one day restore me!

Why must we murder to collect?
Why do we trade in broken parts
Of God? Osiris in our hearts
Is the One we must resurrect.



*Castration anxiety is now
mourning and melancholia.*

8. Brocken Spectre and Glory

*I looked down from a promontory
And with a nameless sense of awe
Stretched far across the clouds I saw
A shadow tall and crowned with glory.*



*He was the shadow my own light
Cast on the outer darkness like
The blessing of a match you strike
To spark the daylight out of night.*

*A dweller apart, in secret sector,
He seemed to my self, ego-ridden:
An unknown god in an egg hidden.
To him I seemed, and was, the Spectre.*

