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[CT]A New Naturalism: On the Origins of Psychoanalysis as a Social Theory of Subjectivity (published in C. Bainbridge et al. (eds) *Culture and the Unconscious*, Palgrave Macmillan 2007)

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Naturalism is a complex idea, which overlaps empiricism, materialism and realism (see Garland and Garland, 1986; Robertson, 1970; Williams, 1983). I am concerned with a current in naturalism in the early days of psychoanalysis. It attended to what could be studied by close observation, but, more particularly, it extended beyond what could be observed or depicted in a representational mode (as in a landscape painting) to the elements from which observable phenomena arose, including subjectivity.

Psychoanalysis probes the depths of the psyche within a naturalistic framework. It holds subjectivity in tension with the objectivity necessary to describe it. It sees the psyche as inherently social, rather than unitary; as ephemeral; as driven by forces, yet still a subject and an agent. This capacity of psychoanalysis systematically to study the psyche as subject–object and as social has created a depth psychology of the individual that also offers social scientists a way of exploring the social world. They, too, confront the need naturalistically to analyse phenomena that are both subjective and objective. They, too, seek a naturalistic ‘social realism’ (on social realism, see Sayer, 2000).

My study will focus on the cultural environment in which this naturalism developed. It will argue not only that psychoanalysis informed this culture with its

capacity for the systematic study of subjectivity, but also that psychoanalysis was the social institution through which this new naturalism was formulated. For the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion, ‘psycho-analysis, the thing itself, existed. It remained for Freud to reveal the formulation embedded in it’ (1970, p. 117). Thus Freud articulated what was immanent, and in doing so, set out the theory and methodology systematically to study it.

Three prominent figures in Freud’s time – Ernst Mach, Robert Musil and Arthur Schnitzler – will serve to depict this naturalistic urge.¹ Arthur Schnitzler, a prominent Viennese author and playwright, brings out this theme clearly. In 1922, Freud wrote him:

[ext]

I think I have avoided you from a kind of balking at my own double [*Doppelgängerscheu*]. Not that I would otherwise be inclined to identify so easily with an other, or that I would set aside the difference of endowment, which separates me from you, but again and again, when I am absorbed in your splendid works, I believe I find beneath their poetic form [*poetischem schein*] the very same presuppositions, interests, and conclusions that I knew to be my own [determinism, scepticism, the truths of the unconscious, dissection of cultural-conventional certainties, drives, polarity of life and death].²

[ext end]

Freud confided that he had found in Schnitzler’s fiction a view of the human condition that matched his own. But why did he avoid him? His letter suggests that he had drawn Schnitzler into the intimacy of his own psyche, carrying on an internal conversation with his own unconscious through him, now both inside and outside. He recognized the

uncanniness – the peculiar strangeness but also familiarity – of the unconscious, itself an interlocutor to consciousness (Freud, 1919). It was ‘other’, like another person, yet familiar – an identification with another person. His relationship to Schnitzler infused emotional immediacy into his theories of the unconscious and of psychic processes. In that emotional immediacy, he recognized his theories as experiential realities.

Freud’s reassurance, that he was not prone to identify with others, supports this interpretation. His expression for ‘Not that I would otherwise (be inclined to identify ...)’ was ‘*Nicht etwa, das Ich sonst so leicht geneigt wäre ...*’, which suggests that he (we) would be surprised or unsettled at the thought, therefore, surely, we do not have it. Psychoanalytically speaking, it is a negation (Freud, 1925): the ‘not’ allows the very thought into consciousness. So, while he admired Schnitzler’s insight into the same realm into which he himself researched, we can guess that he sensed in his admiration an actual immersion into Schnitzler’s mind, which was simultaneously an immersion into his own unconscious.³ In Schnitzler he found someone who, like him, believed that this realm could be known by bringing it under observation within a naturalistic framework; but in Schnitzler, he also found that to explore this realm was to be pulled into it, compelled to do it from the inside, while trying to remain objective.⁴

Freud reassured himself and Schnitzler that he was not drawn into Schnitzler’s evocation of this strange realm, or into Schnitzler’s mind, by saying he was not prone to identify with others. But his reassurance reveals a tension between, on the one hand, including the psyche within a general naturalistic framework, along with science and all other forms of representation (painting, sculpture, literature) and, on the other, a deep, internal understanding of the psyche. The former sought conscious control, while the

latter threatened to overwhelm its objectivity. The idea that psychic elements were simultaneously internal and external, and could not be reduced either to feelings or to matter, was a current of thinking in Freud's time, which constituted a new form of empirical approach to the representation of nature. Psychoanalysis was, in social and cultural terms, the theoretical and methodological expression of the attempt to bind these two currents into a new naturalism.⁵

The object of inquiry – the psyche – could only be observed simultaneously from the inside and the outside. An outside approach on its own desiccated the object, turning it into a specimen. An inside approach on its own caught the observer up in a morass of feelings and thoughts. In his theories of, for example, projection, introjection, negation, the uncanny and the internal structure of the psyche, Freud sought to bring under outside observation what was inside; but in his outside experiences, as in his relationship to Schnitzler, he was also forced into himself. Schnitzler's similar interests confirmed him in his naturalistic quest, but also pulled him into dreadful inside experiences. He sought a naturalism of subjectivity through which the elusive, transient, unique expressions of self would be empirically studied, but in establishing it, he found himself inside this very territory. A new naturalism would have to include this inside/outside territory on its own terms.

Freud's confession to Schnitzler suggests that his naturalism had little to do with what books he read, what circles he travelled in, what philosophers, artists, scientists he consciously knew. It had more to do with an unconscious theme. One could say that he shared it with other figures of his time.⁶ Together, without consciously banding together, they sought to demonstrate the existence of psychic objects, elements of psychic life,

which were impersonal, yet which drove the unique, personal lives of individuals. They sought a way to observe them; a way to look through the personal into an impersonal depth; a way to undo the idea that animate and inanimate, psyche and matter, subject and object, were separate spheres, leaving the life of the soul either beyond research or reduced to matter in motion.

Freud's relationship to Schnitzler gave experiential reality to his theories. In this realm, the familiarity of the external world – of objects, of the continuity of experience and of narrative – dissolved into emotion-laded bizarre perceptions and thoughts. Psychic elements were simultaneously internal and external, knowable only through internal and external means. A new form of description was needed. The work of Ernst Mach, Robert Musil and Arthur Schnitzler shows a common recognition of this impersonal elemental level in the personal, and the urge to observe it and describe it. Mach was among the most prominent scientists and philosophers of his time. Musil was a philosopher, writer, journalist and editor of a leading cultural journal, the *Neue Deutsche Rundschau*. Schnitzler was a doctor, playwright and writer, most brilliantly a writer of novellas. Musil and Schnitzler saw the novella as the literary form most apt for portraying the depths of the psyche.

Mach tried to show that scientific method could dispense with metaphysical ideas, and base itself on the factual foundation of observation, ultimately the sense data that were the elements of observation. He was, in this respect, an important figure in the positivist tradition generally and in the background of the Vienna Circle specifically. His work was known in psychoanalytic circles, and I will make use of two papers on him by one of Freud's inner circle, Sandor Ferenczi.⁷

Mach set out to show that scientific theories could be recast in terms of the most economic formulation of experience. He argued that techniques for managing external reality and for making things had grown up over countless ages, and that this experience-based knowledge could be trimmed of metaphysics, and put into an abstract, preferably mathematical, form. Anything other than an economic formulation was excess to the function of theory, and bred fantasies about the nature of forces, objects and their causal connections, creating a world of metaphysics. These lean scientific formulae would contain humankind's collective memory of its experiences of engaging with the world.

Mach thought we could recover these earlier experiences, and reconstruct the path of their evolution into our current technology and science. We could 'get near to the instinctive origins of all contrivances such as tools, weapons, and machines', making 'possible an incomparable increase in our knowledge of the primitive history of mechanism, and ... the founding of a general genetic technology' (From Mach, 1883, quoted in Ferenczi. 1919, p. 385). For example, the earthen bowl probably evolved by an association of cupped hands, for drinking, with hollow stones filled with water, an association realized through working in clay, as a plastic material.

These evolutionary pathways, with their elements of experience, have fallen into unconsciousness, but we can reconstruct the elements and their evolution through a dream-like openness to childhood memories, which ultimately regress and shade into the collective memories from which our current knowledge has arisen:

[ext]

If we think and dream ... about these things of long vanished ages, then, like illusions, old memories of experiences and feelings waken in us, and, sinking back

into our once childish world of sensations, we dimly apprehend and await the manifold developments and means of discovery of these contrivances of such immeasurable range.

(Mach, 1883, quoted in Ferenczi, 1919, p. 387; Mach connects these unconscious ideas with Freud and Breuer; see Ferenczi, 1920, p. 395).

[ext end]

The elements of a naturalistic analysis, for Mach, comprised this kind of unity of internal and external; indeed, Mach aimed to recast the way we think, so that we would no longer break the phenomenal world into a dualism that kept subject and object separate. Dualism was a metaphysical structure imposed on the world of experience. By contrast, he wanted to create a new naturalism, one that would not distort nature by imposing metaphysical notions upon it – even fundamental notions such as causality, space or time. Instead, he would build up concepts of nature from experience.

Take the example of the technology of making an earthen bowl. It rested on the association of two observations, in which each observation was simultaneously external and internal: a perception and a meaning or intention. The first was the sensation of cupping the hands to hold water, along with sensing in the water the fulfilment of an urge to drink. The other was seeing a stone with water in it, which one might mistakenly take to be simply an observation of an external object. To see the stone, by association, as cupped hands, infused this observation of an external object with an observation of an internal process, that of fulfilling the urge to drink. It projected the internal process into the external world of the stone. The bowl combined the sensation of wanting to drink, the seeing of a stone and the fashioning of an object in clay.

Mach's project, in which science would simply gather the cumulative experience of nature in the most economic form of functional relationships (such as Boyle's Law) was critically examined by Robert Musil, in his PhD dissertation in Philosophy (1908). Musil is known as a literary figure, but he was also an engineer and philosopher, and he aimed to bring the precision that he respected in science into understanding the psyche (Luft, 1980, p. 187). At the same time, Musil thought that the way science comprehended the world could not reveal the elemental processes of the psyche, which, though impersonal and universal – like the forces elsewhere in nature – had to be analysed into elements appropriate to the psyche: units of thought and feeling, not of matter and motion. His work shows a continuous tension between wanting to bring the crisp, logical, lawful thinking of science into the hazy, feeling-infused realm of psychology; and wanting to escape from imprisonment inside a rational apparatus that could not reveal the deep layers and processes of the psyche. He thought the exact sciences would provide the way forward in understanding the psyche. 'We will not learn from Göthe, Hebbel, Hölderline, but from Mach, Lorentz, Einstein, Minkowski, von Couturat, Russell, Peano ... (1912, p. 1318; my translation). Yet he appreciated the strides made by psychoanalysis in dethroning rationality and giving a place to affect (he also rebuked it for not going far enough, claiming it withheld the support of psychology from poetry; Musil, 1955, pp. 398, 431, 583).

Like Mach, Musil sought a new naturalism, one that would bridge science and art, thinking and feeling, what he called 'ratoïd' and 'non-ratoïd' thinking. Ratoïd thinking comprehends systematically, scientifically, in terms of laws, rules and a repetition, and combination of 'a certain monotony of facts'. Non-ratoïd thinking does not comprehend:

‘[I]n the non-ratioïd area, one can never have a sufficiently concrete conception of a fact such as the content of the simple sentence, “He wanted it,” without having to add to it endlessly’, as in interpretation (Musil, 1918, p. 62; the analogy with the psychoanalytic process of transference analysis through continuing interpretation is striking). Musil wondered whether a genuinely psychological literature was possible.

The new naturalism had to reach to the depths of experience, to the level at which the individual dissolves into ideas, impersonal forces that intersected in individuals and moved them. For Musil, the novella, in contrast to the novel, was ‘the most effective form for the presentation of the *Erlebnis*, of those moments which break through the normal condition of being, not into a new world, but into a new relationship to the same world’ (Luft, 1980, p. 179). Musil sought, in the novella, the analytical tool and the mode of representation for a naturalistic – in *this* world, as it is – account of the psyche.

Musil drafted a preface (1911a) for two novellas, *The Perfecting of Love* and *The Temptation of Quiet Veronica*, which were published together as *Unions (Vereinigungen)*; (1911b). He tried to crystallize the peculiar power of this literary form. He saw the plot and biographical development of character in the novel as defences against a breakdown of individual consciousness at a deeper, elemental level. In foregoing them, the novella incisively revealed the combination of forces beneath. What Musil sought was a way to represent this elemental experiential process that underlay and generated conscious character with its sense of individuality. At this level, biography vanishes:

[ext]

Right on the surface are characters, temperaments. A little deeper, honest people have specks of rascality, rascals have specks of honesty, the great have moments of

stupidity, etc. This is the sphere of the great epics, and of the depiction of great people in the drama ... A little deeper still, and people dissolve in futility ... One has the feeling that here nothing is left of oneself; there are only ideas, general relations that do not have the inclination or the capacity to form an individual. This is the sphere in which these novellas take place ... that innermost sphere in which ... the individual is only the transitory point of reflection

(Musil, 1911a, p. 9).

[ext end]

In the two novellas, the characters are fused and yet utterly alone, aching for completion in the other. 'Somewhere there are two voices. Perhaps they lie side by side on the pages of a diary, now side by side, now intertwining ... the woman's ... enclosed by [the] voice of the man, and the man's ... like a thing unfinished. Or perhaps not even that. Or perhaps after all there is, somewhere in the world, a point towards which these two voices ... dart like two rays of light, there at last to mingle' (Musil, 1911b, p. 68). But this transient union of man and woman is also an individual, who may be a unity in ephemeral moments, but conscious of an emptiness at the core, rather than a biographical self. The self is a moment at which elements compose themselves into an apprehension of unity. In the novella, Musil concentrated 'on small facts, which suddenly gained an influence, on conditions under which the known was altered' (Corino, 2003, p. 368; my translation). Psychoanalysis, in his view, shared a similar aim, but did not go far enough.

In deflecting the analytical gaze away from the psychology of character to the unconscious sensory elements of character, Musil sought a literary form that would express the elemental forces of life and consciousness, which coalesced into an

individuality that was gained and lost and gained. There could be no narrator of the life of an individual, because that would presuppose a stable existence of what was transient, in which passing-away was imminent in coming-into-being, and coming-into-being was imminent in passing-away. No psychology, as ratioïd knowledge, could comprehend this process.

What is striking in Musil's and in Schnitzler's novellas is their concise portrayal of situations as psychic realities, detached from biographical development in a whole personality. They are more like dreams in their disregard for the sense of being a person. In Schnitzler's novella, *The Stranger* (1902), a woman lives in a dream, in which she seems to have fallen in love, through his statue, with a German hero, Theodoric the Great, who had become part of German folklore; and this dream relationship is lived through her actual relationships. The power of this thrall pushes out from the mere eight pages of the novella. There are many examples of this sort in the novellas, but note that Mach, too, thought that the dream opened a channel to the deep levels of the psyche, in which the history of the experience of the world, internal and external, was laid down. The early, primitive forms of this relationship with the world confused wishing, doing and thinking. They satisfied wishes through action in the external world, producing primitive technologies that were also primitive theories; and on this base, improvements were built. The logic of science was the most abstract and economical formulation of these experiences.

Musil was at one with Mach; and if, with Musil, we take the novella to be the literary form that at this time sought to reveal this elemental level, then we have elicited the meaning of the well-known programmatic statement by Freud:

[ext]

[I]t still strikes me ... as strange that the case histories I write should read like novellas and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of science ... The fact is that ... a detailed description of mental processes such as we are accustomed to find in the works of imaginative writers enables me, with the use of a few psychological formulas, to obtain at least some kind of insight into the course of [hysteria].

(Freud and Breuer, 1895, p. 160).

[ext end]

The novella, as developed by Schnitzler and Musil, was organized around a core contradiction, which broke out in dramatic compulsive action. Freud did think of neurosis as living in a fiction, certainly from the time that he saw in hysteria a romance instead of an actuality (Frankland, 2000, pp. 135–9), but I am referring here more directly to his case histories as novellas; that is, as drawing the reader/observer into a form of knowledge of core conflict that organizes the neurosis.⁸ For Freud, the creative writer, like the psychoanalyst, could promote the lifting of repression, bringing people to see to the core of their psyches (pp. 73–88). I am inclined to call it ‘knowledge into’, to stress the immediacy of understanding of the moment at which the self is composed and composing, thus the moment of subjectivity and objectivity.

Bearing in mind that Freud absorbed himself in the writings of Arthur Schnitzler, I want to turn to two of Schnitzler’s novellas, to show this fragmenting analysis of the self into elements that, ultimately, are sensations. In *The Son* (1892), Schnitzler ponders on the construction of the very core of the self from the earliest impressions, which form the

self before there is an agentic consciousness that could assimilate or react to them. *The Son* captures starkly the confusion between one's experience of oneself and an other's experience of oneself, which is absorbed as one's own.

In *The Son*, a doctor is called to the bed of a woman who lies unconscious on bloody sheets, having been attacked with an axe by her son. The woman comes around, and urgently presses her story upon the doctor. She is not Mrs Eberlein, but Miss Aberlein. She was abandoned by the father of her child, and when he was born, she tried to smother him. But in the morning, when she removed the bedclothes from him, he breathed and whined; and from that moment bore an unwavering grievance from which he would never for a moment release her. All her efforts to make good her crime of the first night were in vain, and later he seemed to exploit it, withholding from her any respite from her guilt, any moment of redemption. Now she wants to die, and she wants the doctor to intercede on behalf of her son, for whose innocence she now pleads. The doctor ponders the situation. No judge would accept the mother's error as a mitigating circumstance for such a crime. But maybe ... He continues his thinking:

[ext]

Do confused memories remain from even the first hours of our existence, which we cannot interpret and which do not disappear without trace? – Is perhaps a ray of sun, which falls through the window, the ultimate source of a feeling of satisfaction? – And if mother's first glance embraces us with unending love, does it not shimmer back sweetly and unforgettably in the blue eyes of the child? – If, however, this first glance is a look of despair and hate, does it not burn with devastating power into the soul of the child, which absorbs thousands of

impressions long before it is able to untangle them? And what can come to pass in the sensibility of a child whose first night of life passes in horrible unconscious death-anxiety? Never has a man known how to say anything of his first hours of life, – and none of you – I could actually say to the judges – can know what of the good and bad, which he carries in himself, he owes to the first breath of air, to the first ray of sun, to his mother’s first glance!

(Schnitzler, 1961–62, p. 97; my translation).

[ext end]

The entire story is told from inside the doctor’s mind. It begins: ‘Around midnight, I am still sitting at my desk ... I am thinking ... Someone known to me ... “Please”, said the woman ... “You must free him ...” ’ (pp. 90–3). And so it continues. There is no narrative *about*, only an internal rumination; no biographical development – only the stark conjunction of the first moments of life, a hardened grievance and a murder many years later. The son is tormented by his badness, which invaded him in the form of sensations, and tore into his goodness, which also entered him as sensations, in the form of feelings bound to external reality.

The second novella is *Fräulein Else* (1924), which Schnitzler sent Freud as a gift.⁹ It begins with Else, a young woman of 21, staying at a hotel for the summer. She is just leaving a tennis match, which she was playing with her cousin, Paul, and a female friend, Cissy. As she leaves, she denies that she is jealous of them. Her perception is also an affective state of mind, governed by negation.

She receives a letter from her mother, pleading with her to ask Herr Dorsday, a wealthy businessman, also staying at the hotel, urgently to lend her father 30,000 guilders

to pay off gambling debts. She ruminates over what to do. Her thinking is a continuous internal drama. There is no narrator outside the maelstrom of her internal world, and even when she is spoken to, the voice seems to be her experience of it.

She asks Herr Dorsday for the loan, and he agrees, but on condition that he see her naked. She is torn between, on the one hand, humiliation and anger at her father for putting her in this situation, and, on the other hand, her wish to help and her belief that she could help. Her internal conflict grows in intensity. In a feverish state, she decides to accept Dorsday's terms, but simultaneously to deprive him of his secret pleasure by exposing herself publicly to all the hotel guests. She does so, falls unconscious and is taken to her room. In her unconscious state, she hears all that is said, including Paul and Cissy's passion for each other. She also appears to see everything, though her eyes are closed and she is unconscious. Finally, having been harassed and allured by suicidal thoughts the whole time, she takes Veronal and dies.

Her unconscious, dream-like perceptions bring the reader into her mind, in which forces, sometimes coalescing, sometimes fragmenting, compose her. She is repelled and attracted by the situation. Before she approaches Dorsday, she says to herself: 'A wealthy catch. If I could only make up my mind to it. I'm really quite beautiful tonight ... who are they intended for, these splendid shoulders? I'm sure I could make some man happy' (p. 151).

Back in her room, 'I'm utterly alone ... Good evening, lovely lady in the mirror, remember me kindly, won't you, farewell ... Why am I locking the door? ... Wonder whether Cissy leaves her door unlocked at night? Or does she wait and unlock it when he knocks?' (p. 152).

When Dorsday alludes to his condition for the loan, she says to herself, ‘Shouldn’t I simply have slapped him in the face ... So you want to see me naked? You’re not the only one. I’m beautiful naked ... Am I spellbound by his gaze?’ (p. 160). ‘... The gentleman at the edge of the wood there evidently finds me most appealing. Yes, my good sir, and naked I am even more beautiful, and the price is ridiculous, thirty thousand guilders’ (p. 162). ‘... Don’t put on airs, Fräulein Else, I could tell tales about you ... what was all that about ... on the balcony ... the two young gentlemen in the boat who were staring at you? ... And it gave me pleasure ... Ah, more than pleasure. I was intoxicated ... No doubt Cissy too lies naked, while Paul steals along the hotel corridors to her, as I tonight will steal across to Herr von Dorsday’ (p. 163).

Later, after she has exposed herself and fallen unconscious – presumably in a hysterical episode – she is, nonetheless, highly attuned to the outside world through her own internal perception. ‘Paul and Cissy are still standing at the door. Ha. She’s kissing him. She’s kissing him. And here I am naked under the blanket ... Cissy is posing in front of the mirror. What do you think you are doing there in front of the mirror? It’s my mirror. Doesn’t it still contain my image? ... I can feel Cissy’s gaze. She’s looking at me out of the mirror. What is she after’ (p. 188)?

Fräulein Else lives in an intensely charged internal world, buffeted by a maelstrom of feelings and impressions, and scrutinized minutely. She identifies with Cissy, in Cissy’s relationship with Paul. It is an intruding, usurping identification – projective identification in current psychoanalytic terminology – which aims to appropriate the inside of the object through looking. Else looks into others and, reciprocally, feels looked into, and appropriated. When Cissy looks into Else’s mirror, Else feels that Cissy has

replaced her image with Cissy's own: she steals Else's self, as Else stole hers, by identification. When Else looks at herself, she sees Cissy instead. Her internal world is scrutinized and harassed, and it is confused with the external world, which she perceives as filtered through her internal world, or even identical to it.¹⁰ Individuals do not exist as substantive, self-identical realities, but as the nexus of forces that intersect, as people fuse with and separate from each other in their relationships.

Let us come back to Mach, and review two points. First, for Mach as for Musil, Schnitzler and Freud, the self was not a substantial entity, but a composite of sensations, which were units comprising internal and external events: elements of the psyche. These elements were the elements of all knowledge, and science was the condensed, abstracted, economically efficient codification of the human experience of living in, engaging with and making use of nature. Second, Mach implied that there was a force that drove this human engagement. For Ferenczi, Mach was near to the psychoanalytic concept of libido.

Libido bonds the observation of a hollow stone with the malleability of clay with the cupping of the hands, filled with water. Libido drives the association by transforming cupped hands into an urge to drink, and transforming the malleability of clay into an object to be fashioned to express its urges. Then, by the projection of these urges into the observation of a stone, the stone appears to the libidinal unconscious, not as just an object, but as the capacity to fulfil a libidinous urge. For Mach, scientific development comprised an unconscious memory of ever-better relating to external reality and an unconscious urge to do better. So it did not take much for Ferenczi to see an immanent psychoanalytic core in Mach's thinking.

All these writers sought a naturalism, but one that properly revealed and portrayed its object. Its object was human beings in their world, describable neither as mechanisms nor as souls, but as moments in a natural process, where ‘moment’ meant a transient suspension of a continuous movement, a vortex in the midst of a flow, which had a shape and solidity of its own; and a moment of force, as in physics, a component of a set of forces, whose contribution could be conceptually isolated and measured.

It would be difficult to claim that there was a consciously shared project to promote this naturalism. Yet we see in Freud’s shying away from Schnitzler an unconscious acknowledgement of Schnitzler’s profound impact on him, as well as a conscious acknowledgement of the similarity of their findings. Musil seemed to repudiate psychoanalysis, yet he clearly read Freud and made scattered references to him and to psychoanalysis (Musil, 1955, pp. 398, 431, 583). For the Musil scholar, Karl Corino:

[ext]

Direct influence in any case is not to be demonstrated, but, nonetheless, wise contemporaries such as Harry Graf Kessler saw a kinship to psychoanalysis without causal connections: as [in the case of] motives [that] would emerge from the unconscious, intertwine, grow past each other, until the realisation burgeoned, totally extraordinary and to this moment unique. One could also, therefore, give no representation of it, and could rightly compare it with nothing.¹¹

(2003, p. 254; my translation)

[ext end]

Musil, Schnitzler, Mach, Freud shared a commonality of intention and outlook. Psyche and the material world belonged together in a naturalistic account. They sought a new

naturalism, not a polarization of science and art, rationality and romanticism (Musil, 1921, p. 149). What sought expression in this naturalism was subjectivity, which was as unique as the experience of being a self and as lawful as anything in *this* world: indeed, '*this worldly*' would have been a good definition of naturalism.

Corino uses Kessler to formulate what was in the atmosphere of Freud's time. As psychoanalysis was formulating the processes whereby the unique individual emerged from the unconscious, it was giving a systematic account of what writers such as Musil were depicting, without there being a causal connection between them. The psychoanalytic formulations of the relationships between conscious and unconscious, act and motive were instances of the relationship between psychoanalysis and its culture. They were attempts at systematic descriptions of what happens in the psyche, as if these unrepresentable occurrences could be represented, using theory to help to see them (motives, wishes, fantasies, emotions, thoughts). Self-reflection brought these elements under observation, in order to formulate what it is to be a self. Psychoanalysis was the attempt to formulate self-reflection, the self looking into the elements of its own structure. It was also the social invention of a method to carry out this task systematically.¹²

Freud began that process of formulation by presenting frameworks and methods that introduced a structure into self-reflection, both individual and social. Mach, Musil and Schnitzler did so as well, but Freud also proposed a scientific method and a discipline, in the sense both of a field and of systematic investigation. Depending on our point of view, we might therefore see the new naturalism of Mach, Musil and Schnitzler as the social and cultural context in which psychoanalysis developed, or we might see

psychoanalysis as the process through which this naturalism was formulated with increasing precision through a systematic methodology – or both.

[A]Notes

¹ This chapter originally included Hermann Bahr, a literary critic, novelist and playwright, relevant here for his *Overcoming Naturalism* (1891), which supports the thesis that there was a cultural shift towards a new naturalism.

² Beharriell discusses Schnitzler's presaging Freud, as well as Freud's influence on him. I have modified Beharriell's translation (1962, p. 723). I have used 'balking at a double', for *Doppelgängerscheu*, rather than 'fear', to express a frightened shying, as when a horse balks. Freud knew he had come upon an internal source of dread, and he converted it into a fear attributed to an external object (Schnitzler) that he could control or avoid, as in his theory of projection (1915, p. 136). I have used 'poetic form' for *poetischem Schein*, rather than fictional exterior, to convey the likelihood that Freud was 'aware', at some level, of the currents in literature, which sought to express the essence of nature in a way that was neither superficially like a photograph nor maudlin in its idealization (for Freud's letters to Schnitzler, with notes, see H. Schnitzler, 1955).

³ There is evidence that Freud was unsettled by doubles, apart from Schnitzler, for example, in his relationship with Victor Tausk, who took up his thinking very rapidly, seeming even to pre-empt him (Roazen, 1973, pp. 54–5, 77, 80, 87, 186). Similarly, Freud felt essentially, even mystically, Jewish, intrinsically united with other Jews; but just as he implied it would have been surprising to think him prone to identify with

Schnitzler, so, ‘in some place in [his] soul, in a very hidden corner, [he was] a fanatical Jew’, and he was ‘very much astonished to discover [himself] as such in spite of all efforts to be unprejudiced and impartial’ (Frosh, 2005, pp. 21–9; quotation on p. 27 from a letter to the Chief Rabbi of Vienna in 1931).

⁴ The processes by which one psyche seems to infiltrate another psyche and feel infiltrated itself would later be formulated by Melanie Klein as ‘projective identification’ (Hinshelwood, 1991), but Freud had already adumbrated it with the idea that the ego was projected into the outside world (1915, p. 136 and, reciprocally, that it was composed of identifications with abandoned objects (1923, p. 29).

⁵ Although it lies outside the scope of this paper, it should be mentioned that the evolution of the analysis of the transference – the ephemeral movement of unconscious interaction – as the basis of psychoanalysis could be seen as an ever more precise method and formulation of this urge to portray the territory of the unconscious ‘other’, which Schnitzler and, as we shall see, Musil tried to do.

⁶ An Austrian bookseller and publisher, Hugo Heller, asked several distinguished people for their choice of ‘ten good books’, and he published the letters of a selection of these figures (Eisler, 1951; Heller, 1907). Here was a catalogue of an intellectual elite, a group of people seen to be leaders, mediators or interpreters of culture, whether or not they would have grouped themselves together. Heller included Bahr, Freud, Mach and Schnitzler.

⁷ It is difficult to say whether Freud and Mach knew each other or saw themselves as part of a new movement. Freud wrote to Ferenczi in 1915 that Mach had asked him for a copy

of the *Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud and Ferenczi, 1996, no. 579). Ferenczi had sent Freud his critical review of Mach's works on mechanics and on heat, which was published several years later in *Imago* (vol. 5, 1919), edited by Freud. Freud and Mach were both members of the Society for Positive Philosophy, for which Freud signed a fund-raising appeal in 1911, along with other scientific luminaries of the time, including Einstein, Hilbert and Tönnies; and Freud placed an advert for his *Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse* in two issues of the new *Zeitschrift für positivistische Philosophie* (Cheshire and Thomä, 1991, pp. 436–7, 451; Hecht, 1991, pp. 227–8). Freud also had Mach in his library (Freud library catalogue, Freud Museum, London).

⁸ Timms has made a persuasive case for the novella – and not just a story – as a model for Freud's case histories.

[ext]

For the psychoanalyst, the Novelle is a particularly suggestive literary form because it organizes experience in a coherent manner around a symbolic centre. The mode of formal organization is not seen by Freud as a mere artifice. For the literary device gives manifest expression to symbolic tendencies inherent within the psyche. Such symbols (in life as in art) form the nodal points around which experience gathers.

(1983, p. 119)

[ext end]

Timms goes into the history of the novella, including its emphasis on a turning point, a novel moment that contains a ‘cathartic moment of truth’ (p. 121). The drama contains, in actions, a hidden trauma which cannot come to light, yet is expressed in the drama. On Musil’s novella, *Tonka*, see Lahme-Gronostaj (1991).

⁹ Freud’s son, Ernst, identified one of Freud’s letters as referring specifically to *Fräulein Else*, a copy of which, with a hand-written inscription, Freud had in his library (see Ernst Freud’s letter to Henry Schnitzler, March 3, 1954, in the Sigmund Freud Collection, University of Essex, file Y300).

¹⁰ Schnitzler invented this device, usually called ‘stream of consciousness’ (letter of November 6, 1924, to Stephen Zweig; Zweig, 1987, p. 420; see also Garland and Garland, 1986, pp. 216, 439).

¹¹ Harry Graf Kessler (1868–1937) was a prominent cultural figure: a diplomat, an author, biographer, diarist and journal editor, who knew and supported many contemporary painters and writers.

¹² Self-reflection is the core of psychoanalysis, beginning with Freud’s self-analysis (Anzieu, 1986). The psyche is an internal society and society is externalized from the psyche and internalized into the psyche. It would be a vast project to trace this theme in Freud (the theme is clear in Freud, 1914; also see Brunner, 2001).

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