

SZYMON WRÓBEL
Polish Academy of Sciences

Foucault Reads Freud: The Dialogue with Unreason and Enlightenment

Abstract: The title of the essay refers to the famous statement in Foucault's introduction to his *History of Madness* where he writes that "we have to do justice to Freud". The problem, however, is that Foucault's philosophy does not seem to do justice to Freud. Foucault's use of Freud is ambiguous: sometimes he uses him for purely instrumental purposes (when reconstructing the history of madness and sexuality), but sometimes—for anthropological purposes signaling Freud's role in redefining our common humanity and particularly our relation to language, life and work. The author confronts Foucault's ambiguous reading of Freud with the equally ambiguous reading of Foucault by Derrida. Derrida discusses Foucault twice. Once in the essay *Cogito* and *The History of Madness* in which Derrida takes on Foucault's understanding of Descartes and his role in the exclusion of madness from the realm of reason. The second time—in his essay *To Do Justice to Freud*. Here Derrida disagrees with Foucault whether Freud managed to reestablish the body's communication with reason which Descartes destroyed.

Keywords: dialogue; enlightenment; freedom; history; interpretation; justice; pleasure principle; reading; repressive hypothesis; sexuality; unreason; psychoanalysis.

We must do justice to Freud.

Michel Foucault (1965: 411)¹

Foucault speaks little of Freud in this book [*Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*].

Jacques Derrida (1994)

¹ Michel Foucault, 1965, p. 411. Foucault wrote in the book *in extenso*: "This is why we must do justice to Freud. Between Freud's *Five Case Histories* and Janet's scrupulous investigations of *Psychological Healing*, there is more than the density of a discovery; there is the sovereign violence of a return. Janet enumerated the elements of a division, drew up his inventory, annexed here and there, perhaps conquered. Freud went back to madness at the level of its language, reconstituted one of the essential elements of an experience reduced to silence by positivism; he did not make a major addition to the list of psychological treatments for madness; he restored, in medical thought, the possibility of a dialogue with unreason."

Foucault comes back also to the sentence in the *Preface* to *Madness and Civilization*: "One day we must do justice to Freud, he did not make *speak* a madness that had genuinely been a language for centuries [...] he dried it out; he forced its words back to their source, all the way back to that blank region of auto-implication where nothing is said" (Michel Foucault 1997, p. 102).

Presence of the Name

Michel Foucault has made substantial efforts to divert our attention from the sources of his inspiration which rested in Freud and were underpinning his lines of thinking. Instead, we were encouraged to investigate Nietzsche's influence. For reasons that remain unknown, Foucault preferred to be remembered as a nietzscheanist rather than freudist. However, Freud's name is always present in Foucault's writings and, as for the volume, it outbids Nietzsche by generous margin. Freud's name and the word "psychoanalysis" is constantly inflected in yet new ways, new context and in shifting histories. Similarly, Foucault is constantly shifting his position in relation to psychoanalysis, changing in his evaluations and granting it less or more importance.

Right here, I need to confess that it is not my intention to investigate this changeable nature of Foucault's ways to psychoanalysis—a rather futile endeavour considering Foucault's commitment to philosophy of discontinuation and intermittence. I would rather investigate these swings and sways separately, and see them as symptoms of our own uncertainty concerning the evaluation of Freud's work, knowing that the structure of his work—is no help either. I believe that this examination is significant, as it allows us to relate Foucault's ever changing diagnosis of psychoanalysis and his ever changing bid for the importance of psychoanalytic discourse. In our culture, we have so far been unable to decide what is the true value of psychoanalysis, and define role it has played.

Foucault's approach to psychoanalysis is ambivalent. Foucault hesitates whether to praise it or to condemn. While in the *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* the psychoanalytic theory of subject is employed to secretly break up the dialogue between insanity and unreason, the dialogue essential for the rational consciousness of the West, already in *Les Mots et les choses* Foucault makes of it a critical science, which releases desire from the bonds of human subjectivity. There is one passage in *Les Mots et les choses* which says: "all this knowledge, within which Western culture had given itself in one century a certain image of man, pivots on the work of Freud" (Foucault 1999). The author of *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* more than anyone else brings knowledge of man this close to the model of linguistics and philology, and is the first one to undertake a breakneck task of bridging the gap between the positive and the negative, the normal and the pathologic, understandable and the inexpressible, the meaning and the meaningless. Excerpt from *Les Mots et les choses*:

Psychoanalysis and ethnology occupy a privileged position in our knowledge—not because they have established the foundations of their positivity better than any other human science, and at last accomplished the old attempt to be truly scientific; but rather because, on the confines of all the branches of knowledge investigating man, they form an undoubted and inexhaustible treasure-hoard of experiences and concepts, and above all a perpetual principle of dissatisfaction, of calling into question, of criticism and contestation of what may seem, in other respects, to be established. Now, there is a reason for this that concerns the object they respectively give to one another, but concerns even more the position they occupy and function they perform within the general space of the *episteme* (Foucault 1992: 432).

In 1966, Foucault saw in psychoanalysis a critical science, directly addressing the issue of unconsciousness, that is directing our attention to a place by definition inaccessible to any other theoretical cognition, where we see three elements cross:

silent repetition of Death, naked openness of Desire, and language—the expression of Law. From the standpoint of a certain epistemological trihedron (life, work, and language, or biology, economy, and philology), the human sciences are seen to be at once inclusive and exclusive. As for this inclusive exclusion, Freud's work, to which Foucault unwaveringly assigns a model that is more philological than biological, occupies the place of the hinge. Foucault in fact speaks about the place and workings of a "pivot:" all this knowledge, within which Western culture had given itself in one century a certain image of man, pivots on the work of Freud, tough without, for all that, leaving its fundamental arrangement.

At the time of writing, Foucault was particularly interested in the analytic of finitude and started describing human figure by mixing in the discourses on work, language and life. In his own words, psychoanalysis is a discipline with a potential for revealing combination of the above discourses, also in its negative aspect, by uncovering death where previously only life was seen, exposing desires in place of desired work results, and declaring the mighty existence of words where others saw orderly work of grammar.

It was here in *Les Mots et les choses*, where psychoanalysis earned description of anti-science, side by side with ethnology. Foucault returns to this concept in his famous lectures at the Collège de France in 1976, published in a larger work: *Il faut défendre la société*. In these lectures Foucault compares psychoanalysis to Marxism, claiming that both types of discourse are rather suspicious forms of knowledge. Foucault turns our attention to the fact that the scientific knowledge of both Marxism and psychoanalysis were often questioned. So, is psychoanalysis a science at all?

Maybe we should reverse our traditional way of reasoning, and before we ask: to what extent Marxism or psychoanalysis resemble scientific practice—that is the rules by which we establish knowledge and the ways we investigate truth, and even before we ask about the scientific nature of psychoanalysis, we should perhaps analyse the sole ambition to possess knowledge, which is implied in all claims to science. Foucault says:

The question or questions that have to be asked are: What types of knowledge are you trying to disqualify when you say you are a science? What speaking subject, what discursive subject, what subject of experience and knowledge are you trying to minorize when you begin to say 'I speak this discourse, I am speaking a scientific discourse, and I am a scientist' (Foucault 2003: 23).

Foucault's point of view allows certain critique of psychoanalysis and Marxism, namely their pretence to become science, and their attempts to reach the level of scientific approval (no matter how it is defined). These efforts, made under the influence of the academic world in order to provide these forms of knowledge the framing of positive science, reveal only the will to adjust to the disciplinary regimes of knowledge and also, that the extensive discourses have internalized some kind of a reflected—mirrored self (also imposed on a self).

Let me put forward a daring thesis, that big names in human sciences of the 20th century—Freud, Lévi-Strauss, Chomsky, Foucault, but also Piaget, have become great names because all transgressed the limits of their native discipline—psychiatry,

anthropology, linguistics, history, psychology—and entered the territory of philosophy, the land of total discourse. It does not mean however, that discourses were non-scientific in nature; what it means, is that they were extensive enough to generate a dictionary for description of reality, which was no longer subjected to the traditional methods of verification and refutability.

All of the thinkers concerned, before they pioneered anti-sciences, had first subjected their cognitive efforts to discipline, and had first imposed new scientific methods in their primary disciplines. Reaching high level of cognitive intensity allowed for the exteriorisation (and extrapolation) of their discoveries, and sending them out into new research areas. In this way, they were designing their discourse as a philosophical undertaking. To say that all those triumphs of the humanities in the 20th Century are non-scientific, is to otherwise admit that all those accomplishments are in a sense philosophical. I am pleased to agree with this finding. But on one condition, by ‘philosophical’ character I understand: one intending to proceed beyond verifiable (falsifiable) empirical knowledge.

It makes damage to Freud to name him a psychologist or a therapist, as we do in fact know, his field was philosophical anthropology or critical hermeneutics of culture. Similarly, it makes damage to Lévi-Strauss to classify him as a structural anthropologist and to limit his achievements to working out few complicated systems of kinship. The more that we know how far reaching were the observations included in his major work: *La Pensée sauvage*. Chomsky’s influence on cognitive psychology was great, and so was the influence of Foucault on history, or Piaget’s on development psychology. Still, we know too well that Chomsky’s psycholinguistic project, Foucault’s archaeology (genealogy), and Piaget’s genetic epistemology, all these projects surpass fragmented research projects and their aspirations reach out higher. The novelty of their work was so intense and unexpected that at least at the beginning their projects were classified as anti-science and counter-science, which destabilised the system of established and institutional knowledge. At some point this counter-science receives academic recognition and is gradually assimilated into the system of academic knowledge. There are however some costs involved.

The tendency to make all systems of knowledge a positive science and the preponderance to tame counter-discourses relate to a withdrawal and elimination of those assertions which fall short of academic formula. Is it not the case with academic psychology, which makes Freud the central figure, yet it conceals the most fundamental and revolutionary idea included in the concept of the death drive? Is this not the case with cultural anthropology, which allows Lévi-Strauss to spin tales on the logics of myths, but silences his thesis, that “the final aim of human sciences is not to constitute a man, but to dismember him and find answer to the riddle he is”? (Lévi-Strauss 1996: 370). What about Foucault, who diagnosed death of a man, yet he is predominantly perceived as a historian pondering on unwanted and repressed micro-histories? Finally there is Piaget, whose ideas on accommodation and assimilation are widely shared in psychology classes, but whose ambitious project of saving unity of human cognition (genetic epistemology) is widely unknown. It seems, that the surplus meaning, the added value hidden in the work of the above authors is crucial

when it comes to assessing their greatness, but paradoxically, it is also distant to the disciplines which owe them a lot.

Freud in Foucault's Work: Critical Presence

So there we have Freud as the founder of anti-science calling itself “psychoanalysis.” However, Freud’s name is present in Foucault’s work in yet another form. This presence, let’s make it clear, is more critical towards the author of *Totem and Taboo*. This negative presence relates mainly to two extensive narrations by Foucault—one relating to insanity and second to sexuality. In both, Freud plays a key role, in a sense bringing to an end these discourses initiated by the Enlightenment. In *Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique*, insanity is deposed. Madness has changed into thoughtlessness, with its most primary and most obvious manifestation—stupidity. We no longer explore madness to find the excess meaning which is on its own the most wonderful source of authentic discourse, the source of double language which exists only in speech, capable of communicating itself only through a language system, the matrix of all languages. Instead, in madness today we hear mumbling and unwarranted excess, which—precisely speaking—says nothing. Madmen in the age of reason are incapable of generating grammatical speech, they are unable to work productively, and they are incapable of establishing a lasting family. The exclusion of the figure of madman from the network of social relations and medicalization of madness have opened the world to a monologue type of the civilisation of reason, where systematic rationalisation and normalisation set the new order of things.

In the final message of history of insanity Foucault suggested that psychology is possible either as a form of critique of modern man, and then it becomes psychiatry or its version—clinical psychology, or as a self-critique, making of it a methodology (science about science), but it no longer is psychology (science about man). According to Foucault, psychology using “language of alienation:”

Always and as of its nature is at the crossroads: It is either to follow a deepened negation of man up to the final point where love and death are almost inseparable, like day and night, in the eternal rush of passing seasons, to finish at the point of philosophical craziness, or it is to start once again and again to match subject and the object, the internal and the external, experience and cognition. It was necessary for psychology—as it appeared—to follow that second path, but that choice is now denied (Foucault 1965: 376).

Freud’s role in this exclusion and medicalisation is important, he is closing what Descartes started when he distanced himself from the threat of insanity.

Foucault’s accusation focuses on Freud’s exploitation of the role of a doctor, on the “exaggeration of doctor’s wonderful thaumaturgical nature,” granting a doctor “the status of almost a god,” making of a doctor the “exclusive subject” and the “absolute Vision,” making him “a judge, who punishes and rewards without the need to issue judgements,” and “a mirror, in which madness turns to itself in a slow motion, and turns away from itself” (Ibid: 458–459).

Freud’s listening to patients bridges speech and madness, the clue of the treatment is *talking cure*, even though he himself goes silent and “does not hear, cannot hear

the voice of unreason, and he cannot read the signs of nonsense”(ibid). He may be treating some forms of madness, but the sovereign work of unreason is inaccessible to him. Here, psychoanalysis is not seen as a critical science, contra-science, but an element of emerging disciplinary system, which will later—with the help of soft methods—control and pacify life and language of Enlightened man.

This accusatory tone will once again return in the first volume of the *Histoire de la sexualité*, where Foucault shall undertake analysis of ‘confession’—beginning from the rite known from the church and finishing at the doctor’s couch. Only this time Freud’s work will be placed in the context of the construction of sexual apparatus and the new biopolitical construction of power typical for the world, where life and intensification of life becomes more valuable than good and short life. With a special sentiment, Foucault attributes the so called repressive hypothesis to Freud. According to this hypothesis, as to the principle power performs repressive functions, suppressing human drives and forcing them to impose on themselves serious limitations (Marcuse 1966). From this perspective, we see that power is not masked, its work is not secret; in fact the opposite is true, as the power is dressed up in the costume of excessive and almighty Superego (*das Überich* in Freud’s terminology) which is the source of authority and law, brought into the individual’s focus by the figure of Father, and in the social context by the figure of the State.

According to repressive hypothesis: (1) The relation between power and sex is always negative; power uses rejection, exclusion, refusal, suppression, and rarely needs to mask itself anyhow. (2) Power is a legal factor in sex. Sex is subdued by the regime of legality and illegality, prohibition and consent. (3) There is only one provision law applies to sex—it is prohibition and censorship, aiming at the rejection of pleasure: Sex is supposed to denounce pleasure, and therefore denounce itself. (4) The influence of power on sex is similarly seen at all levels: at state and family level, from the princes to fathers, from priests to teachers. In all these places there is the same mechanics of power.

Foucault contrasts the so called *Reich hypothesis*—where the mechanism of power is repression, with *Nietzsche’s hypothesis*—the foundation of power is in the warring nature of the powers. Still, Foucault shares the assumption that both hypothesis are not necessarily contradictory. “Quite credibly—says Foucault—they even seem to merge: what is repression if not a political result of war, a little like oppression for classical theory of political rights, which was an abuse of sovereignty in the system of law” (Foucault 2003). Then, *Reich hypothesis* does not cancel out Nietzsche’s, and as a consequence, these two ways of reasoning are not in a state of war.

There are fragments of *Histoire de la sexualité: la volonté de savoir* which suggest it is not a novelty for Foucault that the history of western societies in the last couple of centuries does not reveal the repressive games of power. For example, Foucault says: “in fact, it is not a novelty that sex is not repressed. It has been confirmed long ago by psychoanalysts.” Without hesitation however, Foucault accuses psychoanalysts of contributing to the discoursification of sex on the West and exploitation of repressive hypothesis. In *Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique* Foucault suggests that “psychoanalysis, according to Freud’s own definition, is all about lifting prohibitions”(Foucault

1977: 97–104). Psychoanalysts knew very well, that the unconscious is to some extent constituted by power relations, and that to free unconscious language is to lift the logics of consciousness. Foucault swiftly goes by this “psychoanalytical discovery” straight to his repression thesis. He does not seem to be worried about the fact that what he says is probably what Freud and Reich had said long ago, knowing that his reference is the social body, not an individual.

All Foucault’s assertions relating to Freud may seem controversial to someone who knows the effort Freud had made to distinguish gender and sexuality. What relates to gender aims at procreation—says Freud. And what is sexual aims at pleasure. It is only thanks to this single differentiation that Freud grants himself the privilege of opening discourse of children’s sexuality. All Foucault’s insinuations concerning Freud may seem largely controversial for those who are aware of Freud’s intense decoding of power (relations) and complex relations between *Superego* and *Id*, pleasure principle and all our efforts that are at first glance beyond this principle.

It seems though, that Foucault uses the term “psychoanalysis” instrumentally and subjects interpretation of his work to his own conceptual construct. In this construction western culture suffers from a kind of hyper-developed sexuality discourse, theory of sexuality, that is the science of sexuality (*scientia sexualis*). On the other hand, the abundance of articles on sexuality finds its negative reflection in some kind of inhibition of the individual sexuality of every one of us. This inhibition became the core issue of Freud’s analysis, who begun his work with description of symptoms of hysteria; where one of the basic symptoms of disorder is forgetting of one’s self and one’s desires, which is all about sexuality. For Foucault, individual’s inability to perceive one’s desires and the general hyper-knowledge of sexuality in society are not contradictory trends: theoretical hyper-production in relation to sexuality in western societies was the effect of shunning sexuality, which has been made at the individual level, in the subject itself. And so, it opens a question: why for the centuries we Europeans were yearning for more truth about sex rather than increase of pleasure? (Foucault 1998: 158–159). This is what makes Freud so important. Freud colligated our will to knowledge with desire and acknowledged that it is the truth about one self and the truth about one’s sexuality which is the fundamental obsession of man in the West.

In the two final paragraphs of *Histoire de la sexualité: la volonté de savoir* Foucault ridicules our human need of freedom and our past reception of Freud’s work:

People will be amused at the reproach of pansexualism that was once aimed at Freud and psychoanalysis. But the ones who will appear to have been blind will perhaps be not so much those who formulated the objection as those who discounted it out of hand, as if it merely expressed the fears of an outmoded prudishness. For the first, after all, were only taken unawares by a process which had begun long before and by which, unbeknown to them, they were already surrounded on all sides; what they had attributed solely to the genius of Freud had already gone through a long stage of preparation; they had gotten their dates wrong as to the establishment, in our society, of a general deployment of sexuality. But the others were mistaken concerning the nature of the process; they believed that Freud had at last, through a sudden reversal, restored to sex the rightful share which it had been denied for so long; they had not seen how the good genius of Freud had placed it at one of the critical points marked out for it since the eighteenth century by the strategies of knowledge and power, how wonderfully effective he was—worthy of the greatest spiritual fathers and directors of the classical period—in giving a new impetus to the secular injunction to study sex and transform it into discourse (Foucault 1998: 139).

In these final pages of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, the accusation of pansexualism, which was often leveled against psychoanalysis, naturally comes up. Those most blind in this regard, says Foucault, were not those who denounced pansexualism out of prudishness. Their only error was to have attributed solely to the bad genius [*mauvais genie*] of Freud what had already gone through a long stage of preparation. The opposite error, the symmetrical lure, corresponds to a more serious mystification. It is the illusion that could be called emancipator, the aberration of the Enlightenment, the misguided notion on the part of those who believed that Freud, the good genius of Freud, had finally freed sex from its repression by power. The good genius of Freud would thus be worse than the bad one. It would have consisted in getting itself well placed, in spotting the best place in an old strategy of knowledge and power.

Freud is thus torn between the good and the bad spirit of Freud, even though Freud himself does only as much as is expected according to the common perception of the sexuality issue: he assigns any sex other than heterosexual to psychiatry, children's sexuality to pedagogics, marital sex to socialisation and female sex to hysteria. Our civilisation Freud equips with sex, and links knowledge of one's sexuality with the knowledge of one's identity. The truth about us lays in the truth about our sex.

Let me return to my main concern, who exactly is Freud and what exactly is his work? Is this work part of anti-science, which by methods of analysis and critique allows us to directly confront unconsciousness and to awaken it from anthropological snooze? Maybe it is rather kind of work directly related to, and even akin to modern apparatus of power, driving madness into the realm of normalization discourse in psychiatry, and sexuality into the biopolitical machinery invented upon a discovery power once made; that it no longer relates to people but a population. What about Freud in Foucault's work? Is he like Napoleon was to Hegel? A real life fulfilment of theoretical postulates? Or like Isaac Newton to Kant? A generalisation of certain local knowledge elevated to the level of the absolute knowledge?

In a short article *Nietzsche, Freud, Marx* (1990) Foucault claims that the authors of *Der Wille zur Macht*, *Das Kapital*, and *Die Traumdeutung* all construct new hermeneutics. We find there that: Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche profoundly modified the space of distribution in which signs can be signs. Moreover, they create a new figure of an interpreter, whose direction is opposite to the direction of the interpretation itself.² "For if the interpreter must go to the bottom himself, like an excavator, the movement of interpretation is, on the contrary, that of a projection [*surplomb*], of a more and more elevated projection, which always leaves depth above it to be displayed in more and more visible fashion; and depth is now restored as an absolutely superficial secret" (ibid.: 61). Are we supposed to believe this declaration pointing to yet another Freud, Freud—the interpreter, who had to turn into the "underground man," and like miners and gnomes do, dive into the "goldmine of meanings" in order to save the interpretation?

² Michel Foucault, *Nietzsche, Freud, Marx*, trans. Alan D. Schrift, in Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift (ed.), "Transforming the Hermeneutic Context From Nietzsche to Nancy." Albany: State University of New York Press, Albany, 1990, pp. 55–67.

Who Reads What?

It is not my intention to reprimand Foucault and reproach him for unjust reading of Freud, not much letter-bound as to what had really been said, and for using Freud's name for his own intellectual reasons. It is not my intention to reprimand Foucault—Jacques Derrida did it so much better in the paper “To Do Justice to Freud: The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis.” Here, he suggested that despite his claim that “we must do justice to Freud,” Foucault must have still felt temptation to do injustice to Freud, and to be little unfair to him. Foucault regularly attempts to objectify psychoanalysis and to reduce it to what of which he speaks rather than to what out of which he speaks.³ The title Derrida has proposed for the reflections about the history of madness in the age of psychoanalysis, clearly indicates his intentions. It is no longer a question of the age described by a *History of Madness*. It is no longer a question of an epoch or period, such as the classical age, that would, inasmuch as it is its very object, stand before that history of madness as Foucault writes it. It is a question today of the age to which the book itself belongs, the age out of which it takes place, the age that provides its situation; it is a question of the age that is describing rather than the age that is described. In the title, “the history of madness” must be in quotation marks since the title designates the age of book, the *History of Madness*—as a book—in the age of psychoanalysis and not the history of madness, of madness itself, in the age of psychoanalysis, Foucault regularly attempts to objectify psychoanalysis and to reduce it to that of which he speaks rather than to that out of which he speaks. What is special interesting for Derrida is the time and historical conditions in which the book is rooted, those that it takes as its point of departure, and not so much the time or historical conditions that it recounts and tries in a certain sense to objectify.

Derrida asks: would Foucault's project have been possible without psychoanalysis, with which it is contemporary and of which it speaks little and in such an equivocal

³ Jacques Derrida, (1994: 227–266). Derrida relates to *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* on two occasions. First, in a polemic article *Cogito and the History of Madness* (Jacques Derrida 1978). Here, the controversy between Foucault and Derrida relates to Descartes, and his role in the exclusion of madness from the space of reason. In another article, “*To Do Justice to Freud*”—originally designed as a speech commemorating the 20th anniversary of publication of *The History of Madness*—Derrida argues with Foucault about Freud, and whether Freud managed to rebuild communication with reason previously excluded by Descartes. What is noteworthy, is that the ‘joust’ between Derrida and Foucault related to the names and their role in destabilizing historical time. Derrida reading and questioning of Foucault's book gives rise to the question: what makes the history of madness possible? Such a question should have led him toward the situation of psychiatry and psychoanalysis rather than toward a questioning of a reading of Descartes. But if Derrida substituted Descartes for Freud, it was perhaps not only because of the significant and strategic place that Foucault confers upon the Cartesian moment in the interpretation of the Great Confinement and of the Classical age, at least implicitly, because of the role that the reference to a certain Descartes played in the thought of the time, in the early sixties, as close as possible to psychoanalysis, in the very element, in truth, of a certain psychoanalysis Lacanian theory. This theory developed around the question of the subject and the subject of science. Whether it was a question of anticipated certainty and logical time or of the role of the *cogito* and of the deceitful God in *La science et la vérité*, Lacan returned time and again to a certain unsurpassability of Descartes. In 1945, Lacan associated Descartes with Freud in his *Propos sur la causalité psychique* and concluded by saying that “neither Socrates, nor Descartes, nor Marx, nor Freud, can be surpassed insofar as they led their research with this passion for unveiling whose object is the truth” (Jacques Lacan, *Propos sur la causalité psychique* (1946), in: Jacques Lacan 1966: 193).

or ambivalent manner in the book? Does the project owe psychoanalysis anything? Would the debt, if it had been contracted, be essential? Or would it, on the contrary, define the very thing from which the project had to detach itself, in a critical fashion, in order to take shape? In a word, what is the situation of psychoanalysis at the moment of, and with respect to, Foucault's book? And how does this book situate its project with respect not only to psychoanalysis in general, but to a particular psychoanalysis, at a particular phase of its history, in one or another of its figures?

Indeed, Foucault does and does not want to situate Freud in a historical place that is stable, identifiable, and open to a univocal understanding. Sometimes Foucault wants to credit Freud, sometimes discredit him, unless he is doing both indiscernibly and at the same time. The Freudian place in the work of Foucault is not only the techno-historical apparatus, the artifact called hinge. Foucault does and does not want to situate Freud in a historical place that is stabilizable, identifiable, and open to a univocal understanding. The interpretation or topography of the Freudian moment with which he presents us is always uncertain, divided, mobile, some would say ambiguous, other ambivalent, confused, or contradictory.

Freud is going to be doubly situated, twice implicated in the chiasmus—the subject of Foucault' and Derrida's interest. On the one hand, Freud was immediately associated with Nietzsche, as a person who is able to reopen the dialogue with unreason that was in the West interrupted. On the other hand, in a more indirect way, to recall the necessity of taking into account a certain Evil Genius of Freud, namely, the presence of the demonic, the devil, the limping devil, and so on in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where psychoanalysis finds its greatest speculative power but also the place of greatest resistance to psychoanalysis (death drive, repetition compulsion, and so on and fort/da!).

Freud is reintegrated into the modernity out of which *The History of Madness* is written and from which he had been banished at regular intervals. It is by taking account of death as “the concrete a priori of medical experience” that “beginning of that fundamental relation that binds modern man to his originary finitude” comes about (Foucault 1997: 198–199). This modern man is also a “Freudian man:” the experience of individuality in modern culture is bound up with that of death: from Hölderlin's *Empedocles* to Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, an on to Freudian man, an obstinate relation to death prescribes to the universal its singular face, and lends to each individual the power of being heard forever” (ibid.: 199). Originary finitude is a finitude that no longer arises out of the infinity of a divine presence. It now unfolds “in the void left by the absence of the gods” (ibid.: 200). What we have here, than, is, in the name of death, so to speak, a reinscription of Freudian man into a “modern” grouping or whole from which he was sometimes excluded.

Freud himself will in fact take on the ambiguous figure of a doorman or doorkeeper. Derrida says:

Freud as the doorman of the today, the holder of the keys, of those that open as well as those that close the door, that is, the *huis*: onto the today [*l'aujourd'hui*] or onto madness. He [*lui*], Freud, is the double figure of the door or doorkeeper. He stands guard and usher in. Alternatively or simultaneously, he closes one epoch and opens another. And as we will see, this double possibility is not alien to an institution, to what is

called the analytic situation as a scene behind closed doors [*huis clos*]. That is why—and this would be the paradox of the serial law—Freud does and does not belong to different series in which Foucault inscribes him (Derrida 1994: 234).

Perhaps this is the reason why in same book, Freud is sometimes associated with and sometimes opposed to the great witnesses of madness and excess, these great witnesses like—Nietzsche, Artaud, Van Gogh, Nerval and Hölderlin, and sometimes he is associated with and sometimes he is opposed to the great doctors and psychiatrist like Pinel, Tuke, Janet, Brunschvicg. But suggesting injustice in Foucault's reading of Freud, we must still remember that the 20th Century got us used to unjust readings so much, that today we expect nothing else. We have already seen unjust reading of Plato by Nietzsche, unjust reading of Nietzsche by Heidegger, Heidegger's by Derrida. However, what Foucault does with Freud is truly unique and exceptional. Is this, what Foucault does with Freud, called reading at all? Did Foucault actually read Freud?

Anyhow, the resemblance of the two is striking. Both are fascinated with the entanglement of life and death, excess life and all-pervading death. In Freud, the controlling instance is directed at investigating driving forces of *das Es*, in Foucault the disciplines and inspections are related to birth and death, only that he goes beyond the individual level and refers to population. Both had a feeling that will do live is only a reading (translation) of the death drive. I think it is not a coincidence that both felt archaeologists at heart, that both put their cognitive activity to excavation work and to bringing to daylight mouldering monuments of the past. Those, at first sight, meaningless traces (scars), influence our actions, our speaking and living. Both shared detectivistic passion—obsessively searching for and archiving traces where no one would spot. It sometimes feels whereas Freud provides a method for investigating the internal workings of the psyche, Foucault seeks to show how the method itself is an ancient technique of self-fashioning that has over the centuries shaped the mind externally.⁴ Our conception of the psyche, Foucault contends, has been sculpted by

⁴ Patrick H. Hutton, *Foucault, Freud, and The Technologies of the Self*, in: *Technologies of the Self*, Ed. Luther Martin, Huck Gutman, Patrick H. Hutton, Massachusetts 1988, p. 121. The similarities between Foucault and Freud should not blur obvious differences between the two. All boil down to the following: (1) Psychoanalysis was the method that Freud invented to oblige the unconscious psyche to open its secret history, to reveal to the conscious psyche those unrequited desires or unresolved conflicts that unconsciously paralyze its actions. For Foucault our human nature is not a hidden reality to be discovered through self-analysis but the aggregate of the forms we have chosen to provide public definitions of who we are, so there is no such a thing as a human nature. (2) Freud believes that the knowledge of the self enhances one's power to cope more realistically with present problems. Knowledge drawn from the unconscious restores lost dimensions of *ego's* identity. Foucault rather believes that it is not knowledge of our sexuality (and the past) that gives us power over ourselves (as Freud taught) but our will to establish power over sexuality that incites our search for self-knowledge. (3) Foucault inverts Freud's proposition about the relationship between knowledge and power. Whereas Freud sought to explain how knowledge gives us power over the self, Foucault seeks to demonstrate how power shapes our knowledge of the self. (4) Freud is concerned with origins. He insists on the determining power of experience as a precedent for future behaviour. But if human nature for Freud is shaped by the recollection of past experiences, it is for Foucault constructed through humankind's activity as a maker of forms. We are beings that create form which ironically imprisons our creativity. (5) Freud would counter the psyche is a discrete reality which workings we can objectively understand, Our conception of the psyche may be limited by the images we employ to describe it. But the inadequacy of our theory does not diminish the reality of the object it seeks to define. Foucault, to the contrary, argues that the self is not an objective reality to be described by our theories but a concept that is actually constituted by them.

the techniques that we have devised to probe its secrets, to oblige it to give up hidden knowledge that will reveal to us the truth about who we are. Psychoanalysis is from a historical perspective a late addition to that enterprise, born of a long but erratic lineage of techniques for the care of the self.

The symmetry of interests and methods of research and the totalizing discourse is so evident, that it may provoke a question: which of the two thinkers created stronger and more spacious conceptual and interpretative apparatus? At first sight it seems it is Foucault who interprets the work of Freud, putting him in the context of emerging power games and to some extent exposing cultural role of psychoanalysis in the civilisation of reason, civilisation of the Enlightenment, which lost touch with unreason and equally well with sovereign, patriarchal power structures. It seems though, that the instrumental use of Freud's work, the pinnacle of which is *Histoire de la sexualité* by Foucault, is not the last word in this game of dependence and control. We could apply psychoanalysis to *Histoire de la sexualité* and see it as vain search for a place where the Master's discourse was replaced by plenitude of anonymous academic discourses which are shaped as truth, and where cognitive subject is lacking. *Histoire de la sexualité* for Jacques-Alain Miller does justice to psychoanalysis suggesting that Foucault got caught in the phantasmal loop in his search for the exact moment when western sexuality was arranged. Foucault deepens his search and leaves modernity behind, then finds this moment when ancient ethics of self concern disintegrates into Christian confession ethics. If we look closer at the last two volumes of the *Histoire de la sexualité: L'usage des plaisirs, Le souci de soi* which are devoted to pre-Christian ethics, we will see that they differ from the previous interference with the power, knowledge and sexuality complex—instead of micro-practices they provide a kind of history of ideas, which in itself is enough to deepen our worry, whether Foucault's Greece and Rome are not, by any chance, pure phantasms. If we followed that trace and employed psychoanalysis to look through the work of Foucault, we could possibly interpret it as a quest for father function in the world seemingly deprived of it.

Freedom and Psychoanalysis

As Julia Kristeva (1999) accurately remarked in the paper *Psychoanalysis and Freedom*: “freedom is not a psychoanalytic concept.” If we are to believe the Index to the *Standard Edition*, Freud employs the word very rarely—in *The Uncanny (Das Unheimliche)* (1919), and especially in *Civilization and Its Discontents (Das Unbehagen in der Kultur)* (1929)—to convey the sense of an instinctual urge shackled by the necessity for humans to live in communities. This libidinal urge proves to be profoundly ambivalent, always more or less taken up, or dominated, by the death instinct which civilization refuses to accept. In resuming and deepening the propositions in *Totem and Taboo (Totem und Tabu: Einige Übereinstimmungen im Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker)* (1913) on the founding myth of the murder of the father, Freud specifies the two conditions inherent in being human, which limit the absolute freedom Freud attributes to the individual: namely, the realization of his desires. On one hand,

there is the need to share satisfactions with the other members of the community on whom the individual depends, given his physical weakness and the inadequacy of his technological mastery of nature. On the other hand there is consciousness itself (or conscience), which is constituted at the origin, precisely through a limitation on the freedom of the drives imposed by repression and censorship, or, in other words, “civilization.” Through censorship, conscience transforms the reined-in desire into remorse and guilt, but also into self-destruction, in which aggression takes the ego as its target in masochism or melancholia.

Moral consciousness and its organ, the *super-ego*, thus impose, from the beginnings of primitive man, a renunciation of drive freedom, which Freud partly regrets but must eventually accept as a necessary compromise in the name of survival. Freud seems to begin with a naturalistic conception of pleasure: with the man of pleasure who wants to satisfy his drives naturally. Such concept is situated not far from a Greek idea of freedom as “I can,” as opposed to “I want,” which implies an objective state in the body, without a constraint emanating from a master or a physical force. For the Greeks, freedom (*éleutheria*) is essentially freedom of movement (Freud says *drang*). However, this freedom comes face to face with the fable of the “murder of the father,” implying another conception of freedom, which is consecutive to a commandment. The tyranny of the assimilated/introjected father becomes moral consciousness, the conscience or *super-ego*, which forbids: you should not sleep with your mother, and you should not kill your father. This biblical resurgence in Freudian thought, which structures the psychoanalytic conception of the psychic apparatus, is the starting point for what Jacques Lacan, (1992) reader of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, calls an ethic “beyond the notion of a command, beyond what offers itself with a sense of obligation.” This means that desire is not subordinated to a commandment exterior to it. To state this more positively, moral obligation is rooted in desire itself; it is the energy of desire that engenders its own censorship.

The human subject who recognizes himself there recognizes himself first as a subject of human plurality: concretely, the plurality of his family but also that of his analyst and of other analysands. Thus, with the help of the analyst, the helplessness of the end of my analysis, i.e., that I expect nothing from anyone is first felt as a shared fate, something in common with the suffering of others. But this community isn't really a community, for no institution will officially embrace this shared experience, this perception of the plurality of the “discarded.” Moreover, to the extent that my analysis is terminated but not finished, the suspension of the transference bond in which a portion of my drive life and my desires is left unelaborated and unsublimated incites me to turn my aggression against every unity, identity, norm, and value: in short, to make myself the subject of a perpetual rebellion, an incessant questioning, a perpetual analysand.

Ultimately, for this reason exactly—the liberation of my desire through its elaboration or sublimation—I am in a state of perpetual rebirth at the end of my analysis. Donald Winnicott says something new and incontrovertible on this subject. He seems to hold that birth already presupposes an autonomy of bio-psychological life, making it possible for the infant to withdraw from environmental impingement and to avoid

the traumatic violence of labour and delivery. This nuclear independence would be the precondition, in a way, of the later “internal world,” which Winnicott (1964) considers the most precious and mysterious freedom inherent in being human. Indeed, human being is here meant in the sense of being, as opposed to doing or acting. Winnicott rediscovers this freedom equally in the capacity to be alone and in the isolation of the secret ballot in the democratic voting booth. Better still, he finds it in the process of analytic treatment, in the undoing of the false self constructed as a defence against external impingement, and the recovery of that native interiority that, however, must always be recreated, and thus alone makes us free. Freedom thus becomes synonymous with an interiority to be recreated in relation to an external world to be internalised. This is not freedom in the sense of resisting the two tyrants of instinctual desire and external reality, as Freud thinks; but rather freedom as the interiorization of the outside, if and only if this outside (to begin with the mother) allows for play, and lets itself be played with.

In sum, at the end of an analysis terminated but still infinite, we are able to refine ourselves, and we rediscover ourselves, because we have unveiled the freedom-unto-death of our desires, not only as mortality, but as “natality”—to use Hannah Arendt’s (1978: 108–109) term in *The Life of the Mind*. This brings us to yet another perspective on freedom in psychoanalysis: far from the unrestraint of the one who will not give ground relative to her desire, freedom in psychoanalysis implies two kinds of issue that have already been encountered in philosophy. But psychoanalysis broaches each of them in a new way: the issue of *choice* and the issue of *beginning*.

In history of philosophy there has been elaborated two models of freedom: freedom as adaptation, and freedom as revelation. The first of these (freedom as adaptation) was announced by Immanuel Kant, along with the French Revolution, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*) (1781) and *Critique of Practical Reason* (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*) (1789). Echoing the *initium* of Augustine, Kant defines freedom for the first time, not negatively as the transgression of a limit or a constraint, but positively as a *self-beginning* (*Selbstanfang*) understanding as the capacity of each to undertake an action, to initiate an act from within. This is a magnificent idea of freedom, but we can already see the possible deviations contained within it: we are free to undertake within the terms of a preestablished logical order, the moral logic of a good, the economic logic of free enterprise, and globalization.

The second model of freedom was linked by Martin Heidegger, in his reading of Kant, to pre-Socratic thought prior to the establishment of logical categories and values. This other freedom has to do with the revelation of self in the presence of the other through speech. Here I am not concerned with making a point about the Christian connotations of pre-Socratic philosophy, or details about the deconstruction of metaphysics implied in Heidegger’s debate with Kant; and even less with the problem of political disengagement that Hannah Arendt tries to solve in her proposed philosophy of “judgement.” I would say only that if this freedom as revelation, as opposed to freedom as adaptation, has more than a speculative existence, it would be in the transference-countertransference experience that it is actualized. Free associating in the transference, the subject confronts both the unspeakability of the instinctual

drives, her/his desires, and their traumas, and also the injunction that is imposed by the very fact of language (the capacity to symbolize) as well as the place of the analyst. The subject constitutes her/himself within her/himself for the other, and in this sense she/he reveals her/himself: in the strong sense of the word, he/she frees herself.

Analytic discourse is a constant process of questioning. Questioning, or putting into question (which have nothing to do with posing questions or answering them) is the method *par excellence* of expression in psychoanalysis. Its eternal return puts us in the timelessness of the temporal frame of the session, which actualizes, through analytic speech, the timelessness of the unconscious. It challenges identities and values, but it also provisionally restructures the subject in a new rebirth, as enabled by his transference bond.

However, if this bond is itself undone by terminating the treatment, it does not mean that the patient is restructured once and for all by his/her analyst or a particular school of analysis. Rather, it means that he/she has achieved a psychic flexibility capable of traversing the repression barrier, of remobilizing drives, and thus of promoting creative adventure in his/her subsequent experiences of life as a subject. An aptitude for the renewal of relational bonds, links, and connections is thus established in the optimal conclusion of treatment. Of course, we all know how often we remain far from achieving this optimal result. Nevertheless, the implicit significance of it is obvious, insofar as it is true that the analyzed subject is an irreconcilable subject, a subject necessarily in revolt. To say that the analyzed individual discovers his/her irreconcilable conflictuality, the dramatic split that constitutes him/her and detaches him/her from any will toward control, power, or even unity, means that this freedom of which we have been speaking distances psychoanalysis from the moralistic or beatifying kind of humanism.

The Dialogue with Unreason and Enlightenment

Freud's Enlightenment is rather suspicious: all because at the same time it is murky, dark, sensual, and analytical. Freud's imagination is inhabited by both "murky" middle-class writers and "dark" denouncers thinking of truth as a "moving army of metaphors." According to Freud, only sublimation makes thoughts free from their erotic past possible, and transforms the drive without killing it. In a sense, thought is never truly free from its erotic past and always carries the stigma of wishful thinking. On the other hand, as we read in *Die Zukunft einer Illusion*, thought is slow, or better said: it is always late, persistently, and relentlessly when it comes to imposing discipline. We find the following in *Die Zukunft einer Illusion*:

We may insist as often as we like that man's intellect is powerless in comparison with his instinctual life, and we may be right in this. Nevertheless, there is something peculiar about this weakness. The voice of the intellect is a soft one, but it does not rest till it has gained a hearing. Finally, after a countless succession of rebuffs, it succeeds (Freud 1968: 150).

On one hand, the shaping of death drive as a prototype of all drives makes Freud a late cousin of Marquis de Sade. Was it not Freud who noted that death stands at the

very beginning of life, which may defend itself against death only with the economy of death, postponing it, repeating it, and resonating death. On the other hand, Freud's work on narcissism and psychology of human assemblage makes him akin to Hobbes, dark middle class writer. It is in Freud's writings on culture, especially in *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, that we find suggestion, that "The liberty of the individual is no gift of civilization. It was greatest before there was any civilization, though then, it is true, it had for the most part no value, since the individual was scarcely in a position to defend it" (Freud 1968: 42). The studies on sublimation and children's eroticism in turn make Freud a distant relative of Schiller and Kierkegaard, sharing the legacy of anthropology of "man the player." It seems that Freud finds connection between representation and libido in early symbolic games of a child, the one in which a child—just after his/her mother left, starts playing a game of coming and leaving with a spool and a string. Freud decodes and deciphers the *Vor und Da* game and later finds it to be the prototype of effective release of a trauma. And finally there is Freud's early imagining of unconsciousness as optical apparatus, a typewriter or a copying machine—which he has never gone beyond, and which relates him to the linkage of rationality, determinism, and even positivism. Freud, with his most scientific projects, appears to be the prisoner of methodology of natural sciences which he cannot transcend—unlike Galileo described by Husserl in *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie*. One again the short quotation from *Die Zukunft einer Illusion*: "No, our science is no illusion. But an illusion it would be to suppose that what science cannot give us we can get elsewhere" (Freud 1968: 123).

Beyond eighteenth century psychology and, very broadly, beyond the psychological modernity of the nineteenth century, beyond the positivist institution of psychology, does it not seem as if Freud were joining back up with a certain classical age or at least with whatever in this age does not determine madness as a psychical illness but as unreason, that is, as something that has to do with reason? In the classical age, if such a thing exists (a hypothesis of Foucault that I take here, in this context, as such, as if it were not debatable), unreason is no doubt reduced to silence; one does not speak with it. One interrupts or forbids dialogue, and this suspension or interdiction would have received from the Cartesian *cogito* the violent form of a sentence. For Freud too madness would be unreason (and in this sense, at least, there would be a neo-Cartesian logic at work in psychoanalysis). But this time one should resume speaking with it: one would reestablish a dialogue with unreason and lift the Cartesian interdiction.

What else, if not these ambiguities, trap psychoanalytical discourse in between restitution of subjectivity and its rapid disintegration? Doesn't it provide inspiration to both anti-humanistic extremists who focus their attention on human grave as well as neo-humanists who are calling for restoration of humanity? The ambiguities also seem to allow many to speak on Freud and feel justified in their comments. So maybe we use and abuse Freud for our own reasons? Maybe even as refined analytic as Foucault fell victim to this ambiguity in the following stages of his work?

It is probably not such a good idea to follow Habermas (1968: 214) and to reproach Freud with his incorrect and flawed self-understanding: his ontological naturalism

explicitly incoherent with his ostentatious methodological anti-naturalism. It is not a good idea to follow Paul Ricoeur (1970), and justify Freud claiming that psychoanalysis has yet to work out mixed language, combining dictionaries of dynamics, energetic and even hydraulics of the impulses with the vocabulary of the exegesis. Those mixed concepts do not prove mistakes in the conceptual system of psychoanalysis, but quite opposite, they correctly identify space where discourse appears, the tangle of power and meaning, impulse and discourse, energetic and semantics. Similarly, it's a bad idea call Freud for support or fierce critique of the Enlightenment. It is bad idea at all to provide evidence material in his own work to support this or that thesis. The thing about Freud is above all to honour his work in its complexity, it is about refusal of 'blackmail of the Enlightenment'—in Foucault's (1984: 48) own words: one has to be 'for' or 'against' the Enlightenment. I suppose that in that way and only in the way, we do really justice to Freud.

Freud, as one of the few 20th Century writers presents us with a suggestion, that thinking can be passion: a passion which does not subordinate nor oppress other passions and talents, but brings in some order and overcomes them. We have so much got used to the opposition of reason and passion, spirit and life, that a new found idea of passionate thinking still catches us unaware and disturbs a lot, after we have only regained balance. We have so much got used to these oppositions, that the sole idea of intellectual erotica (or erotic intelligence) leaves us astounded. Living and thinking, as presented by Freud, have not much to do with the Buddhist self-renunciation, nor it is Georges Bataille's movement of transgression—it is more about controlled erotic life hoping for something unconsciously sought for: truth and gratification. Sometimes, there's no difference between. This said, we have perhaps argument supporting Foucault's diagnosis which is this time not in contradiction with Freud basic insight: we are part of a society with sex and we see no other gratification than that which life under spell of pleasure principle may ever bring.

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Biographical Note: Szymon Wróbel is Professor of Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw and at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies "Artes Liberales" (IBI AL) at the University of Warsaw. He is a psychologist and philosopher interested in the contemporary social theory and philosophy of language and mind. His main spheres of scientific interest are: theory of social power, contemporary linguistics and the reception of psychoanalytic ideas in political theory. From 2003 he is involved in a research project of British Academy of Sciences and Polish Academy of Sciences: *Post-Structuralism. Psychoanalysis. Politics*. He is currently working on a new book: *Grammar. Mind. Evolution. Essays on theory of knowledge and cognitive sciences*. Szymon Wróbel has published 4 books and over 70 articles in academic journals. Books (in Polish): *The Limits of the Political*. Warszawa: Aletheia 2008; *Power and Reason. The Reflective Stages of the Critical Social Theory*, Poznań: University Press 2002; *The Galaxies, Libraries, Ashes. The Cartography of Monstrous Literature*. Kraków: Universitas Press 2001; *The Discovery of the Unconscious or Destruction of the Cartesian Concept of Mind?*. Warszawa: Foundation for the Polish Science 1997.

Address: wrobelisz@gmail.com