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THE HYSTERIC IN FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the theoretical consequences of Freud's renunciation of the seduction theory. The dissertation defends the thesis that the seduction theory was shaped as much by Freud's adherence to the nomonological model as by the empirical evidence of child sexual abuse. A renunciation of the seduction theory was inevitable, not because the accounts of the daughters were lies, but because the methodology was inappropriate. The nomonological model obscured the emotional structure of the nuclear family in which the structure itself, through which sexuality emerged, directed the girl's entrance into womanhood and caused the woman's dis-ease. Freud's methodology forced him to isolate an event as cause of an illness and to attribute the event to an agent. The universal perversity of the Victorian father thus became the central theme around which an explanation of a female disease was built. When this theme became theoretically untenable, Freud renounced the seduction theory and, still using the nomonological model, built up the construct of the Oedipus complex in which the father was vindicated. In order to exonerate the father, the transactions through which the child's libido developed were represented as originating in inherent tendencies. As a result, the hierarchical nature of the interaction between parent and child was distorted, and this led to the formulation of the distinction between real events and fantasies as a basic premise on which the difference between the pleasure principle and the reality principle rests. This formulation gave rise to the sharp duality between fantasy and reality which eventually compelled him to separate psychic reality and social reality. The theoretical structure built on this duality could not but fuse hysteria, masochism and "normal" femininity into an explanation of the female state,

and obscure the essential social relations between men and women which were structured in terms of dominance and submission.

The thesis traces the journey from the perverted father as cause of a female disease, hysteria, to the theoretical conjunction of masochism and hysteria. It comes to the conclusion that Freud's model is unable to explain the self-mutilation of the hysteric; nor is it capable of explaining the hysteric's refusal to participate in the circuit of symbolic exchanges which constituted Victorian society.

The study further attempts to understand hysteria in terms of the complex interlacing of fact and fantasy and tries to show that fantasy was rooted in the facts of Victorian culture.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis will be based on the assertion that psychology has, for many years, obscured the nature of the relationship between psychological distress and oppressive social systems. By its inability to move from the intrapsychic to an ecological interaction between psyche, settings and systems, it has participated in and legitimised existing social formations. The seminal interest of the thesis is a specification of the decisive theoretical moment in psychological history in which concrete practice was shaped by a blunted critical understanding of the individual psyche. The assumption will be made that such a decisive alignment issued from Freud's rejection of the seduction theory in favour of an analysis of neurosis which rooted itself in the realm of fantasy. It is proposed here that that theoretical shift articulated a complement of theory and practice which could not but distrust the pre-eminence of social reality over psychic reality.

Although Freud's successors in psychology chipped away at the boundaries of his theoretical constructions, the nerve centre, the assertion of the inner over the outer, has seldom been challenged in a systematic attempt to change not only theory but practice. Ironically his opponents, the neo- and-post-Freudians, the phenomenologists and behaviourists, have, in the name of progress and humaneness, only succeeded in further blunting the critical edge that ultimately defines psychoanalysis, and have burrowed deeper into the chartered terrain of the psyche, or as is the case with behaviourism, into the symptom told by the body.

Phenomenology, in its attempt to reclaim "the things themselves", has unfortunately been trapped by "the things", and has shown itself unable to move from a convoluted description of the particular to an understanding of the whole. Opposition to Freud has been achieved at the expense of a critical understanding of the interaction between psyche and setting, and at the expense of formulating an appropriate practice which takes seriously the collective as well as the individual.

The assumption here is that both theory and practice in psychology were derived from Freud's thesis that it was impossible to distinguish between truth and fantasy in the unconscious (Freud, 1925; 1961; 1962; 1953; 1977). Subsequent theories were built horizontally on the central assertion that the psyche drifts in its own webs of fantasy and distorted reality, thereby using psychological expertise increasingly as a distancing wedge between individual and social reality rather than as a resource for understanding and re-shaping reality. The concern has always rested on how reality is worked into inner life, and by equating unconscious life with a personal inner vision of reality, psychology has absolved itself of any responsibility for the social surround that is entrenched and reproduced in and by the unconscious.

Freud's repudiation of the seduction theory has recently come under attack by Jeffrey Masson (1985), Marianne Krüll (1987), and other revisionists. They see the shift from external to internal as a deliberate, albeit unconscious (in that Freud might not have consciously articulated the true reasons to himself), renunciation of reality and history. Krüll and Masson, although differing in their approach to the subject, both agree

that the Oedipus theory was a direct result of Freud's retreat from reality. Throughout her discussion Krüll (1987) refers to the Oedipus theory as the "Oedipus compromise". At great length Masson (1985) proves to his audience that Anna Freud and her colleagues who were responsible for the publication of Freud's collected works, deliberately omitted material that supported the seduction hypothesis because, as Anna Freud admitted, a belief in the seduction theory negates the Oedipus complex: "There would have been no psychoanalysis afterwards" (cited in Masson, p.113). This assumption seems to be almost universally held by psychoanalysts, and as a result the seduction theory is dismissed as a phase of development that exists outside the parameters of psychoanalysis. As Malcolm (1986) puts it: "When Freud dropped the seduction theory and introduced the theories of infantile sexuality and the Oedipus complex, he transformed psychoanalysis from a form of social psychiatry into a depth psychology" (p.76).

The implicit assumption in this thesis is that, although it is true that the focal point of psychoanalysis was shifted from the real to the fantasy, from the pathogenic effect of memories born in distorted interactions and repressed because reality skewed the ideal, the Oedipus theory is nevertheless the prototypical example of a science methodologically able to analyse psychological distress within the context of settings and systems. With the formulation of Oedipus, the family becomes the nexus of the individual experience where the individual is decomposed into his/her essential but unconscious family relationships. Malcolm (1986), representing the psychoanalytic view that Oedipus would not have been possible without a renunciation of the seduction hypothesis, asserts that:

the theories of infantile sexuality and the Oedipus complex were elements in a radical and quite fantastical conception of human nature which says we are ruled (and sometimes unhinged) by events that we only imagined as small children - and that, moreover, we were unconscious, and remain unconscious, of having imagined (p.77).

I want to argue however, that the fundamental principle in Oedipus is the realisation Freud came to that the structure of the mind is built up, that the psyche is constituted in the family where the males rule the females and where parents rule children. It was Freud's recurrent and systematic misrepresentation and distortion of the exchanges between family members that polarized reality and fantasy, and situated the workings of the unconscious in the realm of the imaginary. On the basis of this distorted representation of the fundamentally hierarchical reciprocity of family communications, the science of psychoanalysis has formulated its complement of theory and practice in which it assumes that the patient largely fashions his/her own torture. However, in spite of this misrepresentation, Freud's observations document the discontinuities which patriarchy forces on children in the nuclear family, and confirm that early childhood suffering is preserved in the adult's unconscious. As such, Oedipus is an extension and not a repudiation of the earlier theory. It is my belief that an understanding of the way in which society enters the individual as the individual enters the world may facilitate the construction of a theory in which Oedipus and the seduction theory co-exist. Such a theory has to grow out of a science that recognises a reality that is told in the symbolic language of symptoms, and understands that the symbolic structures in which the individual is enmeshed and by which she/he is directed, is itself the history of humanity.

The revisionists, in their attempt to focus psychology in the realm of actuality by revising the seduction theory, isolate Freud, in his struggle with his personal history, relationships, and the constraints of his time and place, as the centre of their investigation. Krüll attempts to prove that the repudiation of the seduction theory, and the subsequent formulation of the female Oedipus complex were closely tied to Freud's relationship with his father. Freud's father instilled in him an awareness of the magnitude of Jewish patriarchy, which drove Freud to reenact the strengths of Jewish history in an emancipated form. To accuse the father would be to dishonour Jewish patriarchy. She also tries to prove that Freud's own family was not free of incestuous relations, but for him to explore the power structures and incestuous relations in the nuclear family would have implicated and disclosed, to Freud himself, the intimacies and secrets of his own family. By analysing dreams and personal letters, Krüll attempts to show that Freud frequently came to the brink of remembering his own early history but that his self-analysis eventually threatened the very fabric of his personal and ethnic value system. The renunciation of the seduction theory was a renunciation of his own personal history. Masson (1985) on the other hand, based his analysis on the belief that the abandonment of the seduction theory resulted from Freud's inability to pursue an objective truth and that ultimately it was his failure of courage that led him to repudiate the seduction hypothesis. Whether or not this is true is on the whole irrelevant to the theme of this thesis. What is of importance though is that Freud's methodology obscured to a large extent the sexually charged relations between family members. Firmly rooted in the medical model, Freud searched for a cause of a disease. His methodology forced him to

isolate an event (seduction) and to attribute the event to an agent. The methodology made it impossible to explore an emotional structure (in which individual agents cannot be analytically isolated), which represents a social structure in which sex can only appear in an indirect and repressed form. His methodology forced concepts like the universal perversity of fathers as a cause into an analysis of a disease, and made an understanding of hysteria as a woman's story in patriarchal culture impossible. But by polarizing individual psychic life into reality and fantasy with the renunciation of the seduction theory, he inexorably moved towards a theoretical structure which had to link hysteria and masochism, and thereby obscured the essential social relations between men and women which are structured in terms of dominance and submission.

This thesis will trace the journey from the perverted father as cause of the female dis-ease, hysteria, to the theoretical conjunction of masochism and hysteria. An attempt will be made to understand hysteria in terms of the complex interlacing of fact and fantasy that comprises sexual politics in both the individual and in the culture, and that informs interpretation. A second component will be the attempt to analyse psychological distress within the context of settings and systems. This will comprise a critique of the assumptions implicit in Freudian analysis where cause and effect in a conditional relationship are definable without reference to one another. The issue of reality and fantasy will be discussed within the framework of the inability of the nomonological method to incorporate the possibility that the interaction of units in wholes may generate complexities. The inability of the method to accommodate the complex interplay of units-in-process inevitably leads to a limited understanding of the interplay of reality and fantasy in which fantasy may differ from reality, but at the

same time reflects the reality of the component parts. As a result, this reflection cannot be worked into its theoretical constructs. This section will be based principally on Lacanian (1977) insights of the workings of the unconscious in conjunction with De Boer's (1974) attempt to formulate a critical science which is the science of the human being in his/her everyday life.

Because the science of psychoanalysis is based on Freud's clinical experience with hysterical patients, it can justifiably be claimed that hysteria forms the bedrock of psychoanalysis. The development of the internal structure of ideas that constitutes psychoanalysis is, for the purpose of this thesis, contained within the parameters of the concepts that deal with hysteria as a female dis-ease prevalent in Victorian society. Three aspects of this development will be isolated for discussion:

- 1) The seduction hypothesis.
- 2) The Oedipus theory.
- 3) The conjunction of hysteria and masochism.

The assumption is that these three aspects, signifying a development of a theory, are inextricably linked in an internal structural continuity.

An important component of this thesis is the attempt to understand the interplay between fantasy and reality. The context in which hysteria as a female dis-ease was experienced will thus be investigated, and throughout theory will be juxtaposed against its social and historical backdrop.

1. THE TEXTURE OF VICTORIAN CULTURE

Spiritually and morally...to devote so much time and enterprise to material ends might not be progress but retrogression - the first step in a reversion from civilisation to barbarism (Stone, 1977, p.428).

1.1 Material and Scientific progress

Victorian society was multi-faceted and diverse. On the one hand it was a time of brilliant scientific achievements, while on the other, the child-rearing methods used by middleclass society can only be called barbaric. Duty became the password for redemption. Women lived their lives in frigid conformity - they were not only emotionally bound by custom and duty, but were also physically forced by their clothes to be passively dependent on fathers, smelling salts, husbands, and eventually, sons. However, the themes that dominated Victorian development of science, the non-humanitarian philosophy, the pious repression of women and children, and the cult of the father, were all informed by an ideology which eventually lead humanity into two world wars.

The material progress of the nineteenth century, with its focus on scientific development seemed at first glance to have resulted in a society that had become vastly more progressive and enlightened than any century preceding it. Famine, plague and disease were impressively diminished; superior agricultural methods produced a greater abundance of food, more skilful medical practices guaranteed a longer life span and better health;

revolutionised transport ensured mobility. Vast numbers of people moved into the middleclass bracket, and within a single lifetime families became healthier and better fed, cleaner and better housed, more literate and better informed, and, most importantly, more mobile. Scientific, geographic and philosophic explorations and discoveries were the order of the day (Thomson, 1966).

There were feats of mechanical engineering and the beginnings of aeronautics. Exploration of the earth's surface gave rise to a new mythology which focused on the men who discovered the unknown. New experimental and theoretical hypotheses were advanced which enabled men to conquer their physical environment. A new theory of atomic structure was developed. Mathematical theories challenged both Euclidean geometry and Newtonian mechanics and made the precision of modern engineering possible. Not surprisingly, the doctrine of the superman developed out of Nietzsche's philosophy which combined, with equal emphasis, a masterful will with an evolutionary doctrine of eternal struggle to dominate both environment and rival wills. His concept of the will to power as the driving force of history justified the rivalry between states for wealth and territory, and this coupled with the impending notions of relativity ultimately exonerated from culpability the relentlessly scientific, materially based male quest to dominate his physical and emotional environment, as well as his women and children. The opposing tide of Marxism, with its exclusive focus on materialism and its inability to incorporate an analysis of the position of women in terms of the emotional power structure that divided the sexes, combined with the anti-intellectualist revival of Nietzsche's and Chamberlain's paganism, resulted in Sorel's theory of violence as the only medium for change (Stone, 1977). This violence did not only pertain to

the violent overthrow of the state, but grew out of the fabric of a society which subjugated all its sections which did not belong to the white, male, intellectual and business aristocracy. The cult of aestheticism in art insisted that art be separated from political and social interests (Thomson, 1966). These themes formed the texture against which women lived out their house-bound, un-glorious lives, against which male children strived to attain the ideal embodied in the father and girl children grew up to be hysterics.

1.2 Women - "that sad and well-nigh universal blot on civilization" (Longford, 1981, p.7).

The Victorian era was not only defined by its material progress, but also by its pious celebration of the ideal woman. Artists and writers rejoiced in the swooning, pure virgin. The virtues of the devoted, religious mother and the deferential wife, were proclaimed from pulpits all over Europe. The apotheosis of this ideal was borne out by the extraordinary success of Hannah More's "Coelebs in search of a wife", which, published in 1809 maintained its status throughout the nineteenth century as the ultimate statement of what womanhood should be, and what it should not be (Stone, 1977). The ideal woman is personified in the character of 'Lucilla Stanley, who is "devoted to domestic duties, religious, modest in dress, silent unless spoken to, deferential to men, and devoted to good works" (ibid, p.668). Her antithesis was Amelia Rattle, "a mass of accomplishments without one particle of mind, one ray of common sense, or one shade of delicacy" (ibid, p.672). This Amelia Rattle had much to answer for. Not only did she assume indecorous postures (not quite

specified) but she also insisted on making her opinion known on everything under the sun, and moreover, tended to dominate all conversations. She enjoyed parties and dances hugely, which might still have been excusable to some extent, in a very young girl, if it were not for the fact that she equally enjoyed the pursuit of all kinds of scholarly interests. There was no doubt as to which woman eventually won the protection of Coelebs. The women of the time dutifully read the book and learned the lesson. To strive towards the ideal of womanhood meant total abnegation. The erasing of any trace of independence or the unconventional resulted in obedience to first father and then husband as representatives of God and the state and thus the spoken and unspoken rules of the society. But tightly cocooned in her corset, and blushing and virtuous and sheltered, the ideal woman existed as an antithesis to the "other", the prostitute, the bluestocking, the old maid, and the indecorous reject. But the line between the virgin, the mother and the wife on the one hand, and the polluter on the other, was so thin that the boundary was crossed a hundred times a day from light into shadow - never from shadow into light.

Nowhere was this demonstrated more clearly than in the Contagious Disease Acts that were passed by the British Parliament in 1864, 1866 and 1869 in an effort to control the spread of venereal disease. These Acts provided the metropolitan police with broad discretionary powers. Women could be identified as prostitutes by any policeman and subjected to fortnightly internal examinations. If found to be suffering from gonorrhoea or syphilis, she would be interned in a certified, locked hospital. When approached by a policeman, a woman had to submit to police and medical registration, or she was brought before the local magistrate. If brought to trial, a woman bore the onus of providing proof of her virtuousness

(Walkowitz, 1980).

There were a number of points relating to this legislation which are relevant to the main thrust of this thesis. In the first place the definition of prostitute was vague; it was accepted that a prostitute could be identified immediately and on sight (ibid). It was thus imperative for women, who did not belong to the profession of prostitution, to dress and behave in ways that would set them apart unmistakably from prostitutes. The quest to prove virtue and to demonstrate a non-sisterhood with the polluting, garishly dressed women who walked the streets of Europe, dictated constraints of its own. It prohibited walking the streets alone; it decreed isolation in a house under the protection of husband, father or son; a compliance to swoon at the first suggestion of a coarse word or gesture. Clothing was demure as befitted a female member of the respectable caste - corsetting so tight that the Victorian woman became the all-time symbol of female passivity.

The picture for males was radically different. In Britain at least, doctors colluded with gonorrhoeal patients who continued to have sexual intercourse with their wives. According to William Sinclair (Walkowitz, 1980), British doctors frequently acted as accomplices for diseased husbands, helping them to camouflage their gonorrhoeal discharge. This attitude is best summed up in the rather arch writings of Diday, a French venereologist who assisted young men soon to be married who suffered from gonorrhoea (Walkowitz, 1980). As there usually was no time for a cure before the wedding day, Diday could think of only one solution:

In these embarrassing circumstances (he wrote) one

sovereign remedy remains, only one...injections of nitrate of silver...suppose one employs a medium dose of the solution in an hour and a half...after the infection there appears a discharge, the simple effect of traumatism, accompanied by a little smarting. This slight inflammation lasts five or six hours. But then, precious result, the canal becomes dry...and this persists for 18 or 24 hours - quite sufficient for the bridegroom to seek his nuptial couch (cited in Walkowitz, p.56).

The point of importance is not that women were discriminated against since Victorian society was based on this discrimination. The point of importance here is that no consideration was given to the possibility of male infecting female, because it was believed that the female, even the virtuous female, stimulated gonorrhoeal inflammation in men. Despite the ideological association of disease and sinful habits, the vaginal discharge of even the most virtuous of women was believed to generate disease in men. William Cobbett, the radical Tory guru, in his "Advice to Young Men" (Longford, 1981) condensed this attitude in a few prudent words to young men of the upper caste. He warned them against falling in love because women made their lover forget duty, work and reason and drove them to becoming like the women themselves, "a little maddish". They should look out for chastity, he admonished, for sobriety and cleanliness, as "there will never be love of long duration towards...a filthy mate" (cited in Longford, 1981, p.34). ALL women were thereby designated as potential polluters of men and reservoirs of infection. The insistence on the sanctified nature of the virtuous woman, opposing the shadow, must be interpreted as an ideologically informed dogma that protected male vested interests.

1.3 The family

The key institution upon which this new moral puritanism was concentrated was the family. "Home is the first and most important school of character", remarked Samuel Smiles, a view strongly reinforced by the existence in Victoria and Albert of what Bagehot called "a family on the throne".... The driving force behind this movement was the spread of evangelical piety. God was again seen as directly controlling day-to-day events within the household, in which capacity he was a severe and pitiless masculine figure. His representative on earth was the husband and father, who now acquired a new and significant title: the Paterfamilias", the man who by the 1840's once more led the family prayers three times a day. It was constantly emphasised that the will of the parent was the will of God.... The more religious a father was, the more likely was he to make this confusion between his own inclinations and the divine purpose (Stone, 1977, p.312).

Family structures, in their relation to patterns of domination already constructed in wider society, not only represent, but also reinforce hierarchies of age and sex existing outside the immediate family. As such, patterns of behaviour, custom, social and religious doctrines are reproduced through the process of socialisation in the immediate family which carries with it, as an historical type, a specific and unique emotional structure, which together with the economic and authority structures, prepare the child for her/his desired position in society at large. The social and psychic structures that characterised Victorian bourgeois family life mirrored wider Victorian society, crystallising in the emotional patterns that promoted the interests of the dominant class and reinforced conflicts of sex and age. New forms of the oppression of women and children developed from specific patterns of authority and love that were developed in direct lines of class interests (Poster, 1978).

Relations within the bourgeois family were characterised by strict sex-role divisions. The husband was the dominant person in the house. He derived his authority from the fact that he provided for his family and, in addition, his authority was empowered by the organs of social control present in any society, such as the church, educational and philosophical ethics, the medical profession, parliamentary legislation, etc. The wife, considered mentally and physically incapable of any form of mental exertion, concerned herself exclusively with the domestic realm; cleaning, cooking and prettifying the house according to the husband's status. The man was an autonomous being, inspired by the great strides that were made in the material and scientific spheres, to assert his autonomy and develop his creativity in a society which gave him enormous scope for influence and power. The woman's status and material conditions were dependent on either father or husband. Once she married, her ordained task was to tend to the children whom she was to raise with the utmost attention, and with a degree of devotion new in family history. An intimacy and emotional depth characterised the relationship between mother and children. This intimacy was deepened considerably by the fact that the bourgeois home was seen as a sanctioned, isolated unit in which father, mother and children functioned as an autonomous entity. Bourgeois children of pre-school age would often encounter no other children and few adults beside their parents, with the result that the degree of dependency of children on parents, and wife and children on father, increased dramatically (Aries, 1973).

The privacy of the bourgeois family depended, however, on capitalist economy, which, in turn, depended on the division of roles within the family. In quest for profit, for scientific and material achievement, the bourgeois man had to have a workplace that was separate and functionally

different from home. In order to be productive in the economic, administrative, educational and scientific spheres and, at the same time to produce an heir to carry the family name, he needed someone to care for the domestic realm, someone who would be completely faithful so that no doubt as to the legitimacy of the heir would exist. The wife, isolated at home, fulfilled this function; while the ideology of male supremacy sanctified her role, the sanctity of the nuclear family lost her the support of the community, thus ensuring her dependence and faithfulness. Community tradition no longer provided the context for the norms of family relations. Women's networks no longer operated and no youth groups existed to function as points of reference for youngsters in the bourgeois family, so women and children were completely at the mercy of the husband. It was in this emotional hothouse, marked by increasing authoritarianism, a renewed stress on the pre-eminence of the father and the subordination of the children, with relations between parents and children growing increasingly more intrusive, that the emotional structure of the family developed. An emotional structure that was unique to the middle class Victorian family and which gave rise to the sharply differentiated emotional configuration of gender psyches which marked the era (Poster, 1978).

It does not fall within the scope of this thesis to analyse the family structures of the time in detail. What is important though, and relevant to my main argument, is the emotional ambivalence that characterised the feelings of the child toward its parents. This ambivalence was derived from the conflicting attitudes towards the child during its different periods of development and became the central emotional context for the bourgeois child (ibid). On the one hand, the child was enveloped in

parental warmth and affection as never before in history. It knew complete sensual and emotional gratification during the oral stage, so that the first year of life bound the child to its mother with strong ties of trust and affection. Constant attention marked the anal phase, but this was combined with harsh denial of anal-erotic pleasure, an insistence, moreover, that the child viewed his/her own body with disgust, as a container and producer of filth. During the genital phase the emotional burden on the child of severe bodily denial was increased. The child faced the difficult choice between acceptance of and pleasure in his/her body, and the disapproval and the withdrawal of love by the beloved parent. Because of the child's lack of love-objects outside the immediate family, the complete dependence on the parent, and the strong love-ties linking him/her to the parent, combined with severe bodily threats, the child could not but obey the parent and turn against its instinctive feelings of pleasure in the body (ibid). One must assume that the restrictions imposed on the child generated aggressive feelings towards the parents, while the threats of bodily injury, i.e. threats of castration, must have caused feelings of deep and permanent insecurity. In this context, where anger could not be acted out because the person towards whom the anger is directed is also deeply loved and provides the child's only source of identification, a deeply internalised pattern of behaviour resulted, different for the two sexes, which cloned the authority-love relationship with the parents.

For the boy who learned, at an early age, the power symbolised by the penis, the threat of castration could generate only deeply hostile feelings, which, because they could not be expressed, were internalised. In the strictly gender-segregated family of the time, identification with

the all powerful father figure gave the boy the chance to displace his aggression into an achievement orientation in the external world. For the girl, there was no such right to displace aggression onto any activity in the outside world. With only the passively obedient and powerless mother figure to identify with, who discouraged aggression of any sort, she was at the mercy of the powerful male figures in her world whom it was her duty to love and respect. Hysteria might, therefore, have been the only way out of a dilemma in which her loving obedience had trapped her.

2. THE AETIOLOGY OF HYSTERIA

I regard hysteria as a clinical picture which has been empirically discovered and is based on observation, in just the same way as tubercular pulmonary phthisis. Clinical pictures of this kind that have been arrived at empirically are made more precise, deeper and clearer by the progress of our knowledge; but they ought not to be and cannot be disrupted by it. Aetiological research has shown that the various constituent processes of pulmonary phthisis have various causes: the tubercle is due to bacillus Kochii, and the disintegration of tissue, the formation of cavities and the septic fever are due to other microbes. In spite of this, tubercular phthisis remains a clinical unity and it would be wrong to break it up by attributing to it only the 'specific tubercular' modifications of tissue caused by Koch's bacillus and by detaching the other modifications from it. In the same way hysteria must remain a clinical unity even if it turns out that its phenomena are determined by various causes, and that some of them are brought about by a psychical mechanism and others without it (Freud and Breuer, 1974, p.261).

2.1 Historical Perspective

It was in this imploded, sexually repressed, patriarchally dominated, personal sphere in which women were either saints or sinners, unblemished or vile, mothers or prostitutes that hysterics at the turn of the century lived their nether-lives. Neither saints nor sinners but all the same at the mercy of men; their twilight existence was lived against the incestuous marriage between brilliant achievements in science and the philosophies of evolutionary struggle, of the superman, the superrace. In this time of house-bound, polluting women and brilliant men, Freud met his first hysteric, and from this developed the aetiology of hysteria which constituted the wellhead of psychoanalysis. But hysteria has a long

history in which the diagnosis of female sexual disorder has been consistently made; one, moreover, in which the cure has throughout the ages been submission to a patriarchal system of values. Egypt provides us with the oldest surviving medical papyrus, dating from around 1900 B.C. in which specific mention of hysteria is made (Bernheimer, C and Kahane, C., 1985). The cause for the curious behavioural disorders affecting women, which we now recognise as hysterical symptoms, is ascribed to the flight of the womb. The female sexual parts were treated with the appropriate substances to attract the migratory uterus back to its proper place. These therapeutic measures were subsequently incorporated into Greek medical literature, but Hippocrates, Freud's precursor in matters of sexuality and women, went one step further, and made the link between hysterical symptoms and female deprivation of sexual relations. Plato (Bernheimer et al, 1985) prescribed the cure:

The womb is an animal that longs to generate children. When it remains barren too long after puberty, it is distressed and sorely disturbed, and straying about in the body and cutting off the passages of breath, it impedes respiration and brings the sufferer into the extremest anguish and provokes all manner of diseases besides (cited in Bernheimer et al, p.3).

Plato, like Hippocrates, saw only one solution to the problem of the wandering womb - submission to the male.

However, Egyptian and Greek interpretations of hysterical symptoms were mild in comparison with the medieval interpretation and treatment of the unfortunate hysterical woman. Although the Greek woman's horizons were extremely limited (and the consequences of those limitations on a powerful

and intelligent woman are well depicted in Euripides' characterisations of women), the hysterical woman was, at the very least, not hounded and killed as a witch. Augustine's (ibid) obsessive belief in witchcraft and demonic possession spiralled into a theory of the hysteric as a woman either wilfully evil, in conspiracy with the devil, or a victim of witchcraft. The virulent hunt for witches which was without doubt inspired by misogyny, was authoritatively expounded by Dominican monks in "Malleus Maleficarum". "What else is woman", was asked

but a foe to friendship, an inescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil of nature, painted with fair colours (cited in Bernheimer et al, 1985).

This view of women could not but conclude in the belief that women were the natural allies of the devil, and the poor hysteric, with her convulsions, anasthesia, her strange, almost awesome inability, or refusal to come to grips with life, with her role, with herself or others, could not but be seen as either an active protagonist of the values of the underworld, or a victim of the demonic powers. In both cases she would land up in the courts of the Inquisition.

In the seventeenth century, the uterine explanation of hysteria was questioned, and a mental origin was suggested by Thomas Willis and Thomas Sydenham (Bernheimer et al, 1985). This suggestion was not taken up with great alacrity, but since this view of hysteria, as having a mental cause, had its counterpart in the moral and ethical values of the time, and as those values were informed by a patriarchal society, it is worth briefly

looking at.

In the scientific metaphor of the time, mental capacity and brain were synonymous with each other and brain was viewed as a harbour for "animal spirits" which, when out of balance, would move through the body and attack the bodily organ which was most vulnerable at the moment. The more solid and dense the body, the less vulnerable it would be to attack from the animal spirits. Understandably, the man would be virtually inviolate of such attack, and the woman the natural victim. Because, as Sydenham writes

...they have a more delicate, less firm constitution, because they lead a softer life, and because they are accustomed to the luxuries and commodities of life and not to suffering (cited in Bernheimer et al, 1985, p.5).

The statement that women were "accustomed to the luxuries and commodities of life and not to suffering" is blatantly untrue in the light of the range of gynaecological diseases that ravaged the female body, the repeated and painful childbirths that sapped the strength of even the most energetic of women, and the passive and powerless role that was demanded of women, (in combination with the massive amount of domestic care that was expected). One can only conclude that such a statement was ideologically informed. The conception of internal density was derived from the concept of the superiority of male morality, (a concept which Freud sophisticated in the theoretical construct of the Oedipus complex) and hysteria was ultimately understood as a consequence of female inferiority and weakness in the realms of morality and ethics.

The eighteenth century development on this theme chose to focus on the concept of "sympathies", rather than on "animal spirits", but the moral underpinnings remained the same (Bernheimer et al, 1985). The explanation now became essentially psychological. Because of the insubstantial nature of her nervous disposition, the sympathies, transmitted through the nervous system, were, in the case of women, excessive. The moral capacity of the soul was thus overcharged. Women as a group, as the "other", weak, self-indulgent, and given to excesses, were thus totally to blame for their morally deprived state, which was what hysteria was all about.

It is thus clear that the bedrock of the understanding of hysteria had, throughout the ages been the moral inferiority, the sexual vice or sexual abstinence of its victims. The cure had always been submission to the patriarchal systems of values prevalent in all societies since the dawn of history. Even Philippe Pinel, the father of humane psychiatry, who saw all mental disorders as moral diseases, associated hysteria with deviant sexual conduct such as masturbation, prurient stimulation by pornography, irregular menstruation, etc., and the cure "Marriage, the Family, and productive Work" (cited in Bernheimer et al, p.5).

It is important to remember that it was against the background of moral condemnation by professional men of the church and the medical profession of the female victim, that Freud developed his aetiology of hysteria. Even Charcot, who opposed the accepted notion that only females suffered from hysteria, created an atmosphere at his famous clinical seances at the Salpetriere which was very much reminiscent of the Inquisition, where male professionals gaped at and judged the woman who was almost demonically out

of control. Freud, against this backdrop, vindicated the woman, and in so doing condemned the patriarchal society as being at the root of her disease. He believed the testimonies of his female patients and against strong opposition from the professional and religious world, he retold (albeit with many evasions and half-truths) those accounts to a society in which the rule of the father was stronger and more articulately sanctioned than ever before in history.

Why then did he change so radically, rejecting the testimonies of the daughters, and making it his life-long quest to vindicate the father?

Freud was not a man without courage. His struggle against conventional, professional notions of the psyche bears witness to that. One cannot thus ascribe his failure to carry the seduction theory through as simply a failure of nerve, as Masson (1985) would have it. One can only come to the conclusion that the method used to understand the plight of the daughters presupposed a specific image of reality, and that the method contained an implicit ontology which obscured the reality of the daughter's experience. In the exposition of Freud's analysis of hysteria the postulates that consistently prevented such an understanding from taking place will be pointed out. In the conclusion, (section 6.1) the foundations and implications of Freud's method will be analysed.

2.2 The Aetiology of Hysteria: Sigmund Freud

Freud's long journey towards an understanding of hysteria was guided by five milestones in his professional career.

First of these was the unhappy and highly intelligent Anna O., the patient with whom Breuer developed not only the "talking cure" but also the intimate and highly charged emotional relationship that would come to characterise the interaction between hysteric and therapist (Freud and Breuer, 1974). The details of this case, and to a greater extent the therapeutic cure, made a deep impression on Freud long before he achieved a structured understanding of hysteria. One can only assume that it was the story of the intelligent, crippled Anna O., as related by Breuer, that first awakened his interest in hysteria. It was with the details of this case fresh in his mind that Freud went to study under Charcot, who landmarked the second phase in his professional development (Jones, 1956).

Charcot justified Freud's belief that hysteria was more than just a disreputable female malady, and fogged Freud's intuitive understanding of hysteria as a disease that could be cured. Charcot's systematic study of hysteria made its diagnosis not only more comprehensive, but removed it from the nether-world of demons and wandering wombs. His insistence that hysteria was a congenital degeneration of the brain, placed hysteria as a disease of the nervous system. It became a respectable disease which, albeit not curable, was still worthy of serious medical attention (ibid). Most important, classified as a disease of the nervous system, hysteria in males could be recognised. Many disorders otherwise attributed were thenceforth shown to be really of a hysterical nature. To some extent this removed the professional moral disdain towards the disorder and paved the way towards a scientific exploration of hysteria (ibid). However, Charcot's understanding of hysteria was inextricably bound to the use of hypnotism. In his public demonstrations, he showed that hypnotism could elicit, in suitable subjects, hysterical symptoms - paralysis, tremors,

anesthesias, etc. - that were in the smallest detail identical with those of spontaneous hysteria. Although Charcot did not use hypotism as a method of treatment and certainly did not believe that a cure for hysteria was possible, the use of hypnotism demonstrated that, whatever the neurological basis for hysteria might be, the symptoms had a psychogenic origin, and therefore could be treated and even cured by ideas alone. Freud's quest had always been to fuse the medical with the psychological, and in the field of hysteria, as revealed by Charcot, he saw his chance to treat the neurological disorder with methods that belonged exclusively to the realm of ideas. However, revolutionary though this concept was, it was at that stage tied to the use of hypnotism and the eradication of the ideas that caused the disorder (ibid). It would take Freud years to understand that it was not the abolishment of ideas but the recognition and acknowledgement of memories that would prove to be inextricably tied to the malady.

Freud gave his first public lecture on hysteria on October 15, 1886 in Vienna (Jones, 1956). The paper was entitled "On Male Hysteria", and was based on Charcot's assertion that there was no connection between the disease and genital organs, nor any difference between its manifestation in male and female (ibid). He grouped hysterical symptoms into four stage seizures: the typical visual, sensory and motor disturbances, and the hysterogenetic zones. Any type of hysteria could thus be classified in terms of this approximation to a standard type - a system of classification which challenged the entrenched conception that hysteria was a vague, malingering disease. This paper was received with disdain and a certain amount of mockery by the eminent physicians of the day. Freud was asked

whether he was not aware of the fact that the word "hysteria" originated from the Greek word for womb, "hysteron", a fact that by definition excluded the male sex. He was challenged to produce a case of male hysteria with the typical Charcot symptoms - a challenge Freud took up with alacrity. A case was produced, and demonstrated before the Medical Society on November 26, 1886. This time there was some applause but no discussion (ibid). The medical world, confronted with the evidence of male hysteria, chose to ignore the field of hysteria altogether, rather than to explore the medical, psychological and philosophical ramifications of the new concept.

Freud, however, continued to work in the field of hysteria. In August 1888 he finished a brilliant little study on the distinction between hysterical and cerebral paralysis. He isolated three cardinal differences between the two kinds of paralysis. In the first place, a hysterical paralysis frequently affects only one part of the body, while other parts remain unaffected. A cerebral paralysis, when intense, is always extensive in distribution. In the second place, sensory changes are particularly pronounced in hysterical paralysis while motor paralysis is more pronounced in the cerebral type. Thirdly, and most importantly, cerebral paralysis is patterned on brain anatomy while the distribution in hysteria is purely ideational. This paper was, however, only published in "Archives de Neurologie" five years after completion and went almost unnoticed by the medical world (Jones, 1956).

Of importance during these years was Freud's development of therapeutic method. Although he rejected the concept of hysteria as incurable, Charcot's dismissive attitude towards Breuer's cathartic method prevented

Freud from exploring and using the "talking cure". During the whole of 1886 he used orthodox electro-therapy for his hysterical patients, and it was only in December 1887 that he turned to hypnotic suggestion (Freud et al, 1974). He persevered for about eighteen months with this method as it brought some degree of short-term success. The type of success it brought is very clear in the case histories presented in "Studies of Hysteria" (1974), the combined effort of Freud and Breuer to convince the world once again of the importance of hysteria as a psychological category. Freud simply hypnotised symptoms away, without any real understanding of their cause or of the consequences of his therapeutic interventions. New symptoms replacing the old ones were likewise hypnotised away. In the case of Frau Emmy (Freud et al, 1974), the first patient on whom he used the method, he used the following procedure. A symptom would be traced to a traumatic experience linked in the patient's mind to the origin of the symptom. The patient would then be hypnotised and told to forget the original traumatic experience. The memory was then extinguished. The efficacy of this method was manifested in the general improvement of the patient's condition. However, the patient also lost her past. Past events were either completely erased from memory or retained without affect. Moreover, although the symptoms which crippled her mentally and physically disappeared, they were replaced by other symptoms, perhaps not as severe but which still prevented Frau Emmy from living an anxiety-free life.

I have dwelled on the method of hypnosis, not only because it was an important stage in Freud's development as a psychotherapist, but also because it is my opinion that he eventually returned to this method of

treatment after his rejection of the seduction theory. I do not mean that he returned to the method of hypnosis as such, but his therapeutic method, albeit infinitely more sophisticated, ultimately functioned as an eraser of reality, blunting the reality of the lived experience to the memory of an unfulfilled wish.

During the years 1892 and 1896, Freud slowly became aware of the limitations of the cathartic method and, equally slowly, started developing his "free association" method, which marked the third phase in his development, and was eventually to lay the groundwork for psychoanalytic practice. He realised that the cathartic method could not affect the underlying causes of hysteria and, therefore, could not prevent fresh symptoms from taking the place of the ones which had been eradicated. He also understood that therapeutic improvement, if it did occur, was dependent on a positive, supportive, sustained personal relationship between the patient and physician. His next step was what he called a "concentration technique", which was eventually developed into a method. The patient was required to concentrate on a symptom while recalling any thoughts or memories associated with the symptom. The flow of thoughts and memories were then structured and interpreted by Freud and the patient and, in this way, a chain of associations was forged back to an original trauma (Jones, 1956, p.272).

Freud finally renounced hypnotism as a therapeutic method in 1896. It was the year that he, building on Charcot's conviction that external, real traumas lay at the heart of hysteria, made public his belief that the trauma could be traced back to the sexual abuse and violence children were subjected to in their own families (Masson, 1985). His theory was first

made public in the French journal "Revue Neurologique", (March 30, 1896) (ibid). He supported his theory of sexual abuse with empirical research findings which involved 13 cases of hysteria on which a complete psychoanalysis was carried out, and asserted:

In none of these cases was an event of the kind above (seduction in childhood) missing. It was represented either by a brutal assault committed by an adult or by a seduction less rapid and less repulsive, but reaching the same conclusion (cited in Masson, p.90).

Fully aware that his findings were published for an audience steeped in literature on deceitful children, he addressed the ever present possibility that his patients could be fabricating, but dismissed it in emotive terms. He maintained:

The memory must be extracted from them piece by piece, and while it is being awakened in their consciousness they become prey to an emotion which it would be hard to counterfeit (cited in Masson 1985, p.91).

The fourth milestone in his understanding of hysteria was introduced into the medical establishment in 1896 when he gave his lecture to the "Verein für Psychiatrie und Neurologie" (Jones, 1956). This lecture, in which he stressed infantile sexual trauma as the root-cause of hysteria, was not much of a success. In an unpublished letter to Fliess, Freud wrote that "the donkeys gave it an icy reception" (ibid, p.325), and that according to Krafft-Ebbing, who was in the chair, it sounded like a scientific fairy tale. This response was hardly surprising. Not only did his increasing tendency to prefer psychological to neurological explanations come to the

fore in this lecture, but in a matter of fact way, using the stylised scientific language of his day, he inverted the conceptual base on which the moral power of the ruling professional sex was built. Implicit in his assumption that hysteria was caused by infantile sexual traumas was a moral critique of a class of people who, up to that point, had taken their moral and intellectual superiority over women as a God-given right; a superiority which was to a large extent derived from the inferior nature of women whose dis-ease was based on an inherent weakness, a feebleness of the physical, mental and moral capacities.

I believe that Freud's views, as put forward in this lecture, could have built the foundation of a critical psychology equipped with the means of understanding the interaction between fantasy and reality, language and memory, rooted in the processes by which thought and memory express the pathological nature of social formations. His emphasis on the trauma of physical sexual abuse, to the exclusion of any other type of abuse, and his training as a scientist, prevented him from conceptualising and articulating the possibility that women might formulate, in concrete terms, an awareness of psychic abuse (i.e. embody the psychic), of being at the mercy of deception and persecution sanctioned by a social value system, a religious doctrine and legislative devices which codified male power over them and their children. But in his exposition of the analytic process, Freud uncovered the nature of stratified and coagulated memories criss-crossing the real consequences as well as the possible consequences (as expressed in fantasies) of power. Freud used a method to uncover the specific experience of trauma in childhood, and the experience for him proved to be the end of the line. However, if that method, and the

intellectual understanding of the intricacies, the distortions and the shape of memories and thoughts from which the method was derived, were committed to an exploration of hysteria as the internalised lived reality of the norms and practices of society, he may never have needed to renounce the seduction theory.

It is Freud's journey from symptom to trauma that interests me most here. Because it is my contention in this thesis that Freud's renunciation of the seduction theory (which was constructed on an intuitively critical understanding of the sediments of experience that constitute a life) galvanised psychology into a complement of theory and practice that denied the lived experience of settings and systems, I will discuss this lecture in some detail.

In his lecture Freud echoed Breuer's conviction that the traumatic experience in the patient's life was physically reproduced in symptomatic form, which in itself was symbolic of the original trauma that was suffered. Like Breuer, he believed it to be imperative that the patient be led back to the scene in which and through which the symptoms arose, and that, once the original traumatic scene had been uncovered, the symptom would disappear. However Freud, building on Breuer's original insight, determined that tracing an hysterical symptom back to a traumatic scene did not necessarily explain the symptom nor did it assist in erasing the symptom. As shown above, the cathartic method taught him that although a traumatic scene associated with the symptom could be uncovered easily through hypnosis and the memory thus erased, there could be no guarantee that the symptom would not re-appear in a slightly different form. Moreover, the severity of the symptom and even the symptom itself could

frequently not be explained by the proffered traumatic scene as understood by the patient. Freud concluded that an explanation of the symptom only became possible if the uncovered traumatic scene possessed the necessary force, and in addition the suitability to generate symptoms of severity. For example, analysis is frequently able to retrace a crippling behavioural disorder (such as hysterical vomiting) to a scene which produced disgust, and the acerbity of the past experience then validates the assumption that the hysterical symptom is derived from the uncovered trauma. However, if analysis is only able to retrace the behavioural disorder to a scene which produced anxiety or a certain amount of distrust/fear/unhappiness or uncertainty, then the scene lacks suitability in that it is unable to explain the severity of hysterical vomiting. On the other hand, still using the example of hysterical vomiting, a scene may be uncovered in analysis which may be tentatively linked to vomiting, for example being expected to eat rotten meat. Such a scene clearly lacks the necessary force to produce a symptom of such lasting vehemence (Jones, 1956).

It was probably the frequency with which the traumatic scene from which the symptom was understood to be originating, lacked the two requirements of suitability and force that persuaded Breuer, and Freud initially, that an experience, rather innocuous in itself, could produce the baffling and lasting symptoms of hysteria. The content of the trauma which gave rise to the symptom more often than not bore no relation to the content of the symptom, or otherwise, although in content a relationship between symptom and trauma did exist, the experience in itself could not produce a traumatic effect in a person of "normal sensibilities" (Freud et al, 1974). Breuer, of course, did not see the insignificance of the traumatic scene as

problematic. He assumed, following Charcot, that even the most insignificant experience could develop into a trauma, with a momentum and force of its own, if it occurs during a time when a subject was in a hypnoid state. (Such an assumption implies a predilection to hypnoid states). Freud eventually rejected both the assumption and the implication contained in the assumption. He asserted that there were very slender grounds for presupposing the existence of such hypnoid states, and furthermore, that the theory of hypnoid states contributed nothing to a solution of the problem of why traumatic scenes so often lacked suitability as determinants. A predisposition to hysteria lay, for Freud, in the external event, and not in the constitution of the person. Early experiences, with or without heredity combined, constituted the predisposition and concepts like normal and abnormal were of very little help in the understanding of behaviour (Freud, 1962).

The most important single factor determining Freud's rejection of the uncovered traumatic scene as the root-cause of the hysterical symptom was, however, the disturbing fact that in spite of the progress made by analysis, the symptoms remained on the whole unaltered. Despite the laborious process of analysing the symptom back to the memory of the traumatic experience in which it originated, no therapeutic gains were made, and the expectations based on the newly discovered "talking cure" as the solution to the behavioural problem were not met. Freud could either discard the new method or develop it further in terms of its theoretical and practical scope. He chose to do the latter. Regarding the memory of the first uncovered traumatic experience as a connecting link in a chain of associations, he viewed each memory which did not bring about the desired therapeutic effect as a link in an interconnected chain of memories deeply

repressed. The associative thread inevitably leads to the truly operative traumatic scene buried in an analogous memory connatural. This memory connatural, though sometimes misleading, is always relevant. His therapeutic work brought him to the conclusion that

no hysterical symptom can arise from a real experience alone, but that in every case the memory of earlier experiences awakened in association to it plays a part in causing the symptom (Freud, 1962, p.197).

Hysterical symptoms are thus embedded in memories which arise from a chain of associative memories, and the symptom carries the inscape of the stratified colloid of memories. The symptom IS the memory (ibid).

Freud commented on the curious nature of the hysterical symptoms' dependence on memories, as "these memories did not come into their (the patients') consciousness at the moment when the symptom first made its appearance" (Freud, 1962, p.197).

He nevertheless dismissed this problem as interesting but of no real concern. His failure to investigate the exact nature of that dependence might have been the reason for his inability to develop the seduction theory into a coherent critique of the structures of social conditions which distort psychic life. Freud's concern here was not with the process of uncovering, which was simply seen as part of the therapeutic process, but with what was being uncovered, and whether similarities regarding content and time of life occurred in the uncovering of the last memory to which all the associative chains led to. Initially it seemed that this

juxtaposition of memories was to be found in puberty relating directly to the realm of the sexual. However, the sexual experiences related by patients were on the whole innocuous, and were therefore unable, in terms of either suitability or traumatic force, to have caused the crippling symptoms of hysteria. Freud thus concluded that these experiences, often recounted with pain and difficulty, could only be the determinants of the symptoms if hysterics were "peculiarly constituted" towards hysteria (Freud, 1962, p.201). Since he had already dismissed that possibility, he concluded that the symptoms were rooted in memories of experience going even further back into childhood. Of importance here is his vehement dismissal of any event other than the most traumatic being at the root of hysteria. This dismissal on the one hand and the insistence on trauma on the other might have been the combined fomentation that shadowed his understanding of the interaction between individual and social surround. Freud stated:

If serious and trifling events alike, and if not only experiences affecting the subject's own body but visual impressions too and information received through the ears are to be recognised as the ultimate traumas of hysteria, then we may be tempted to hazard the explanation that hysterics are peculiarly constituted creatures - probably on account of some hereditary disposition or degenerative atrophy - in whom a shrinking from sexuality, which normally plays some part at puberty, is raised to a pathological pitch, and is permanently retained; that they are, as it were, people who are psychically inadequate to meeting the demands of sexuality (Freud, 1962, p.201).

The belief in one traumatic event thus excluded the exploration of "trifling events" symbiotically mirroring the mental experience of the restrictions placed on sexuality, the deceptions underlying interactions

between male and female, parent and child, and the helplessness of being at the mercy of sanctioned persecution.

Information that one is open to abuse because of one's position in the world, and that no recourse to resistance is possible, is received daily through the eyes and ears, through the formal and informal, spoken and unspoken hierarchical structures of interaction. Each trifling event in puberty that Freud led his hysterics to remember could have constituted the traumatic event, and could have been the mirror of the women's combined experiences of being sinful and helpless in a world that rigidly controlled their every act. But by disregarding the "trifling events" and by failing to reconstruct information received through senses in the mirrored image of social conditions and value-structures, Freud failed to initiate the shape of a psychology capable of understanding the linguistic metaphors that express the experience of external settings, systems and shapes.

To summarise: In order for Freud to formulate an aetiology of hysteria, he had to believe that one last collocation of memories existed; a collocation that firstly could be uncovered and secondly, that correlated in content, in all cases of hysteria, so that it was possible to comprehend, in the universally similar factors, the aetiology of hysteria. Freud claimed that irrespective of the hysterical symptom that was isolated to pursue, analysis lead, in all eighteen cases of hysteria he analysed to sexual trauma in childhood. Trauma in all cases involved the subject's body, so that, contrary to the puberty scenes in which traumatic sexual awareness came about through sense impressions, the childhood sexual scene related to the sexual abuse of a child by an adult. Freud asserted that

In every instance, you will be able to discover in the details of the scenes the determining factors which you may have found lacking in the other scenes - the scenes which occurred later and were reproduced earlier (Freud, 1962, p.203).

Freud thus viewed the adolescent experience as a mirror experience, in a diluted form, of the earlier childhood experiences. For these reasons adolescent experiences are repressed and in the search for a cause the hysteric offers, as a first milestone in the process of remembering, the adolescent experience as the origin of the symptom.

2.3 The Freudian Fallacy: Rape as Fantasy

Freud's fifth and final stage in his quest for the aetiology of hysteria is to be found in his renunciation of the seduction theory. His letter to Fliess (September 21, 1897) heralded this new phase of his professional career, and the "breakthrough to psychoanalytic theory" (Jones, 1956, p.292). As a thorough analysis of his renunciation is important for this thesis, I quote his letter at length, and have numbered the arguments I wish to challenge.

Dear Wilhelm:

Here I am again, arrived yesterday morning, refreshed, cheerful, impoverished, at present without work, and having settled in again, I am writing to you first.

And now I want to confide in you immediately the great secret of something that in the past few months has gradually dawned on me. I no longer believe in my "neurotica" (theory of the neurosis). This is probably not intelligible without an explanation; after all you yourself

found what I was able to tell you credible. So I will begin historically (and tell you) from where the reasons for disbelief came. The continual disappointment in my efforts to bring any analysis to a real conclusion, the running away of people who for a period of time had been most gripped (by analysis); the absence of the complete successes on which I had counted; the possibility of explaining to myself the partial successes in other ways, in the usual fashion - this was the first group. Then the surprise that in all cases the father, not excluding my own, had to be accused of being perverse (1) - the realization of the unexpected frequency of hysteria, with precisely the same conditions prevailing in each whereas surely such widespread perversions against children are not very probable (2). The (incidence) of perversion would have to be immeasurably more frequent than the (resulting) hysteria because the illness, after all, occurs only where there has been an accumulation of events and there is a contributory factor that weakens the defense. Then, third, the certain insight that there are no indications of reality in the unconscious, so that one cannot distinguish between truth and fiction that has been cathected with affect (3). Fourth, the consideration that in the most deep-reaching psychosis the unconscious memory does not break through, so that the secret of the childhood experience is not disclosed even in the most confused delirium.

If one thus sees that the unconscious never overcomes the resistance of the conscious, the expectation that in treatment the opposite is bound to happen to the point where the unconscious is completely tamed by the conscious also diminishes.

I was so far influenced by this that I was ready to give up two things; the complete resolution of a neurosis, and the certain knowledge of its etiology in childhood. Now I have no idea where I stand because I have not succeeded in gaining a theoretical understanding of repression and its interplay of forces (4). It seems once again arguable that only later experiences give the impetus to fantasies, which then hark back to childhood, and with this, the factor of a hereditary disposition regains a sphere of influence from which I had made it my task to dislodge it - in the interest of illuminating neuroses, (5) (cited in Masson, 1985, p.109).

The reasons he gives for this recantation lack plausability on an empirical level. The historical evidence that casts doubt on the possibility of a complete loss of faith in his own theory of childhood trauma will be discussed in section 2.3.1. The section will accord with the propositions put forward by Masson (1985) and Krüll (1987). Following the discussion in the introduction, these propositions are based on an exploration of the personal characteristics of Freud the man, which made it impossible for him to defy public outrage and social norms. Because the evidence contradicting Freud's renunciation is overwhelming, (see section 2.3.1) one can only conclude that Freud deliberately, albeit unconsciously, turned away from the evidence in support of his seduction theory. The implication underpinning this assumption is that Freud as a man, rooted in Jewish patriarchal culture and protective of male dominance per se, was unable, or deliberately unprepared, to disclose the uniquely sexual nature of power relations in the nuclear family, the nature of which is so clearly illustrated by the relationship of rape and submission in which male power over the female is crystallised in its most extreme form.

More important to the main thrust of my thesis though, are the reasons of a theoretical nature listed under points 1, 2 and 4. They show the theoretical problems inherent in a theory that focuses exclusively on an incident of trauma without analysing the social context in which it is prevalent. Here Freud dealt with concepts such as perversion and repression in the individual while not admitting perversion and repression in the society at large. The concept of perversion plays a dominant role in the formation of the seduction theory as well as the renunciation of the theory and will be explored in section 2.3.2.

Points 3 and 5, which encompass the precursors of the inevitable theoretical constructs that followed the renunciation of the seduction theory, will be discussed in section 3. I will argue that the female Oedipus complex and masochism as a constitutional component of female sexuality resulted inevitably from the assumptions made in points 3 and 5 in the Fliess letter.

A theory built on the reconstruction of the experiential context, by necessity convolutes internal meaning units which could at best be premises, into conclusions which then serve to consolidate erroneous assumptions. These logical inconsistencies in the internal structures of Freud's arguments, frequently leading to a logjam in understanding, will be pointed to throughout the discussion.

2.3.1 Father-Daughter Rape: Evidence in support of the Seduction Theory.

In 1885, when Freud studied under Charcot in Paris, he was exposed to a body of medico-legal history that dealt with the sexual and physical abuse of children. The most important of these studies was arguably "A Medico-Legal Study of Cruelty and Brutal Treatment Inflicted on Children" by Ambroise Auguste Tardieu. He was professor of legal medicine at the University of Paris, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and president of the Academy of Medicine in Paris. The study which dealt with thirty-two cases of abused children, revealed that in twenty-two cases the parents were responsible for the physical and sexual injuries inflicted on the children (Masson, 1985). In a later study, "A Medico-Legal Study of Assaults on Decency", Tardieu showed that during the period between 1858

and 1869, nine thousand one hundred and twenty five adults were accused of raping children who were, in the majority of cases, between the ages of four and twelve. He presented cases of father-daughter rape and concluded that this crime was a common occurrence in France. Tardieu believed that the majority of cases he investigated could not have been simulated because physical examinations proved without doubt that the children were sexually abused. He found "anal fissures and other physical evidence of violent attacks on the sexual parts of young girls" (cited in Masson, 1985, p.24). Alexandre Lcassagne, who held the chair of legal medicine at the University of Lyon, published a study in 1886 on Sexual Assaults on Young Girls (Masson, 1985), in which he noted that more than two-thirds of criminal cases involved sexual assaults on young girls. In the same year Paul Bernard noted in an article on sexual assault that:

the influence of the family does not make itself felt to any significant degree and it would seem that, on the contrary, children living at home constitute a stimulus to evil acts. In our observations we have been struck by the large number of cases of incest that figure in them (cited in Masson, 1985, p.26).

Bernard further stated:

Sexual acts committed against children are very frequent.... Those charged with this sort of crime are most often men of mature age or elderly men, and one can say that the age of the aggressor is almost always in inverse proportion to that of his victim (ibid, p.27).

Not only did Freud possess all these books and journals but according to Masson (1985), he also attended the autopsies and lectures by Brouardel at

the Paris morgue. Brouardal not only wrote a book on the rape of small children by adults, in which he emphasised that "sexual assaults are crimes of the home" (cited in Masson, 1985, p.34), but apparently also drew the attention of his students, during his conferences at the morgue, to sexual abuse of children by their parents. Brouardal moreover cited cases of extreme perversion in his book: three or four cases where nipples were bitten off, mutilation of the genitals, etc. (cited in Masson, 1985, p.34). Freud was thus aware that the "widespread perversions against children" (Masson, 1985, p.109) were indeed very probable. Not only did French medical and legal literature support the notion of child abuse, but it was proved by men who were above suspicion. Not only was Freud familiar with the literature, he personally knew Brouardal and attended his lectures. The empirical evidence to support Freud's thesis thus existed. Moreover, his patients increasingly provided proof that sexual abuse was a common occurrence in families, with more than one member in the same family confirming the incidence of abuse. An example of this was provided by a male hysteric who, having been raped by his uncle, in turn raped his own sister, who had witnessed the uncle's rape of the boy. The sister later became psychotic. The male hysteric's own children displayed a number of neurotic symptoms, which, in all probability, were sexually derived. A patient whose father regularly abused his daughter between her eighth and twelfth year, also abused one of her sisters, and her cousin had to resist the "advances of her grandfather" (cited in Krüll, 1987, p.45). In his lecture on the aetiology of hysteria, Freud noted the "uniformity" of the experiences as recounted by different patients which would, if these details were not believed, "lead us to believe that there were secret understandings between the various patients" (Freud, 1962, p.205). He also noted that the hysteric's story would be irrefutably proved if it was

corroborated by different members of the same family. He proceeded to give examples of such incidences:

In one instance it was the brother (who had remained well) who of his own accord confirmed...scenes of that kind from later childhood, and the fact that there had been sexual relations dating further back. In the other instance, it happened that two women whom I was treating had as children, sexual relations with the same man, in the course of which certain scenes had taken place a trois. A particular symptom, which was derived from these childhood events, had developed in both women, as evidence of what they had experience in common (Freud, 1962, p.206).

Freud thus answered the objections he raised in his letter to Fliess very effectively in his own 1896 papers on seduction. Moreover, he had the whole body of French medico-legal literature at his disposal and could have used it to support his theory. Why Freud did not use this evidence, or even refer to it, and why he ignored the evidence amassed in his own practice of the frequency of childhood sexual abuse, is a matter of speculation. It might be, as Masson (1985) insists, simply a matter of personal failure of courage. As a result of his seduction theory, Freud was professionally and socially isolated, and he must have felt the social ostracism deeply. It might also have been a failure of courage in the sense that Krüll defined it, that Freud in his self-analysis came to the point where he either had to admit the "perversions" of his own father, or renounce the seduction theory which had as its main tenets the perversion of the father. However, these speculations on Freud's personal reasons for his recantation are not very fruitful in bringing us closer to an understanding of the implications the renunciation of the seduction theory

had for psychoanalysis and psychology in general. It also does not clarify the reasons for the failure of the seduction theory to adequately explain the processes of repression and fantasy, or the expression of the experience in the hysterical symptom. For a clarification of that failure, it is necessary to examine the concept of perversion as understood by Freud.

2.3.2 (i) Perversion translated into a social norm

Freud first mentioned the concept in a letter to Fliess dated December 6, 1896.

It seems to me more and more that the essential part of hysteria is that it is a result of perversion on the part of the seducer, and that hereditary is seduction by the father. Thus a change occurs between the generations - first generation: perversion. Second generation: hysteria, and consequent sterility. Incidentally, there is a metamorphosis within the individual; he is perverse during the age of his strength and then, after a period of anxiety, becomes hysterical. Thus hysteria is in fact not repudiated sexuality but rather repudiated perversion (cited in Krüll, 1987, p.44).

The father's perversion is seen as the real cause of the child's seduction, i.e. the perversion of the father is isolated as the aetiology of hysteria. I want to argue here that Freud's inability to further explore perversion as the aetiology of hysteria is the result of his attempt to isolate the perversion of the father from the patriarchal structure which not only makes perversion possible but which makes it almost inevitable. Freud clung to the structure while attempting to heal the symptom that expressed the structure. Perversion is defined as the act of changing from that

which is right and normal to that which is evil and immoral. Perversion however, is a concept that can only realise its goal in a stratified structure. Because a perverted act moves only downwards it is inflicted by one with power on one without power. In every stratified society, power is legally and morally sanctioned for one section of the community and denied to the other sections, and this formal cycle of power is channelled into interpersonal relationships. Patriarchal society is built on the absence of equality, on the absence of access to the avenues of power by one group of the society. A brief outline of the position of women relative to men in Victorian society, might give a clearer understanding of how "perversion" operated in the sanctioned interactions between men and women.

Firstly, it might be useful to examine the body of laws as they stood in 1850, which defined the legal identity of a wife and her position in relation to her husband. Once married, a woman ceased to possess a legal existence; in common with minors and idiots, she had no responsibility under the law. Unless she committed murder, her husband was liable for her crimes. She could not sign a contract, make a will or cast a vote. Prior to 1884, she could be imprisoned for refusing her husband his "conjugal rights". Until 1891, she could be legally detained against her wishes by her husband in his house. She could not sue for divorce (Harrison, 1978). But the true relationship between marriage and the patriarchal system was demonstrated by those laws relating to the wife's property. During the engagement period, she was forbidden to dispose of any of her possessions without her fiancée's permission. When she married, all her property including inheritances and earnings, passed

automatically into the ownership of her husband, and he was legally free to do with it whatever he wished. If he chose, he could disinherit her. Nor could a wife lay claim to her children, for they too belonged legally to her husband, and he alone had any rights over them. Even after her husband's death, she did not automatically become their legal guardian. A special provision to that effect had to be incorporated in his will (ibid). The middle class Victorian woman was not required, in fact she was forbidden, to play any part in the economic system. Victorian women were educated to believe in marriage as a reward, (in their case the only reward for virtuous behaviour), which required complete passivity and obedience to the values and beliefs of the patriarchal system. It is still argued today that the essential nature of the two sexes predetermine their social functions and relative positions. But under Victoria's rule, women's delicate and passive nature were enshrined in the moral code of the times. Although it was believed that men were naturally the masters of the universe, great care was taken to prevent women from aspiring to equality. In the life of the average middle class girl, the selection of occupations considered suitable for a young lady was severely restricted. She was allowed to draw and paint, play the piano and sing ballads, construct shell boxes and seaweed albums and make wax flowers. Decorative needlework was allowed, but not darning and mending - she was permitted to pass her time only with those activities likely to attract a husband who would indulge and pamper her. Physically, the middle class Victorian woman was useless. The tightness of her corset ensured a state of extreme physical debilitation. The overloaded and constricting costumes with their accessories and paraphernalia made her about as mobile as a life-size doll. The constraints of her clothes alone, ensured that she passed her time wastefully and made adaptation to any environment outside of the boudoir

and drawing room untenable. But not only was she useless physically, she was also stupid. She was ill-educated, inexperienced and over protected. The average daughter of middle-class parents was, in effect, maintained in a state of suspended infantilism (Harrison, 1978). She was not equipped to deal with life outside the boudoir, and as a result husbands treated their wives in much the same way as fathers treated their daughters. Freud expressed this well in a letter to Martha, his future wife:

I will let you rule the house as much as you wish, and you will reward me with your sweet love and by rising above all those weaknesses for which women are so often despised (cited in Jones, 1956, p.211).

Or later, when Martha expressed dissatisfaction with her position in life:

Nature has determined woman's destiny through beauty, charm and sweetness. Law and custom have much to give women that has been withheld from them, but the position of women will surely be what it is; in youth an adored darling and in mature years a loved wife (cited in Jones, 1956, p.234).

In other words, she was reduced to the status of a plaything, to be discarded when the man had more serious business at hand or used in any way he desired. My contention is that this whole structure was locked into perversion which, in turn, could only give rise to perversion. Legal devices, social values and economic and educational practices combined to keep women at the mental and physical mercy of men. Women had relinquished the power and the authority to use their bodies in pleasure or resistance, and the power and the authority to use their minds. The

victim of another's dominance automatically becomes the subject of perversion. Women were possessions with neither the educational nor the legal resources to meet men on equal terms. Because the subordination of women was codified in law and enshrined in the moral values of the time, the absolute control men were given by God and law over women and children was simply expressed and confirmed in the perverted acts inflicted on the bodies of girl-children.

However, the Christian sexual code and the social mores employed to safeguard the subordinate position of women also structurally implemented perversion as underpinning the rules that regulated child rearing practices. Here the anal and genital stages are of specific importance; I will briefly outline a few of the practices that carried the inscape of perversion and deceit with them. Toilet training was started at a very early age, long before the child could reasonably be expected to have any control over its bodily functions. From as early as nine months, the child was usually strapped to the potty, sometimes for hours at a time. The child was ruthlessly forced to master its own body, but more than that, to regard its own body with distaste. The child thus had to learn the very difficult emotional lesson, from its loving and caring parent that its own body was disgusting (Poster, 1982). The third stage, the genital stage, gave the impetus for profoundly skilled methods of persecution of the child, all in the name of Christian morality and care. A deep awareness and horror of childhood masturbation was expressed in medical and religious circles. Medical opinion agreed on the dangers of self-abuse which included acne, mental torpor, haemmerroids, tumours, homosexuality, insanity, and finally death (Poster, 1982). Inventions designed to aid parents in their war on child masturbation were sold on the market. Sharp

toothed rings prevented erection and devices set off alarms when the penis hardened. The final solution was surgery. Doctors in the United States, Germany and England, at least for some time, performed a variety of operations on boys and even sometimes girls to curtail masturbation (ibid). Coupled with the physical techniques of repression, there was the continuous threat of castration. A threat which could only be believed by the boy, since the distaste and the horror of his genitals was so clearly and so frequently expressed by his parents. If one agrees that a child absorbs the emotional climate in which he lives, then one has to agree that the Victorian child, subjected to perversion, absorbed that perversion. It is a logical step then to agree that that perversion had to be expressed. Perversion could not be isolated in the individual: the Victorian child imbibed the emotional air of perversion. Both the male and the female child were at the mercy of their Victorian parents, more so than any child at any other stage in our history. Modern studies on incest have shown that the abused child becomes the adult abuser: The adult acts out the abuse suffered as a child (Renvoize, 1985; Walker, 1976; West, 1978; Ward, 1984). Freud himself observed that obsessional neurosis in the male complements the aetiology of hysteria in the female. The obsessive male, sexually abused as a child, abuses in turn, and suffers not only the guilt of being abused, but also the guilt of being the abuser (Freud, 1961, pp.168-174). The point is that the male, riding the pinnacle of power, had the right and the access to perversion. This was a legacy of his upbringing, which included the acquisition of aggressive personality traits derived from the social mores of the day that emphasised competitiveness and aggression in the economic spheres. The woman, on the other hand, was brought up to be passive with no mental or

physical skills and was not sanctioned to carry perversion into the next generation, except in the obedient support of her husband's values. It seems to me that Freud was correct when he called hysteria "repudiated perversion" (see section 2.3.2 (i)). The woman, prohibited physically, emotionally and mentally from repudiating her subordinate position instead expressed her position symptomatically, whereas the male imprinted the next generation with the mould of the law, religion, industry and patriarchy through his adherence to his social and religious code. Freud was theoretically unable to justify and explain the mass perversion that emerged in the testimonies of the daughters precisely because he understood perversion as a psychic abnormality. For Freud, perversion was expressed by the male who raped the girl-child; perversion was an intra-psychic phenomenon that denoted individual mental illness. I contend that the systematic and ruthless promotion of male power solidified into a base of ideological solidarity in which each secret and elementary premise interlaced and derived meaning from the internal relationship that linked them together. As such, each meaning unit - industry, male power, religious and moral fanaticism, legislation, education - carried the inscape of perversion like a contagious disease which transmitted it to each property that constituted the whole. In each of these properties the configuration of perversion was to be found; the male with absolute power, and the female at the mercy of that power. Perversion can only be inflicted and transmitted when the actors in the drama stand in an unequal relationship of power to one another.

2.3.2 (ii) Perversion translated into Masochism

Or, and here we come to the second code in Freud's recantation, if

perversion is not forcefully inflicted on someone who has no recourse to resistance, the victim participates willingly in the act of perversion and experiences pleasure in that perversion. Freud's unwillingness to root his analysis in a critique of the social conventions is demonstrated in the term 'seduction', which denotes the willing participation in the act. In other words, the terms he chose to describe the relationship between abuser and abused implied that the daughter willingly, at least on one level, partook in her rape. Although nothing in the seduction theory implied blame where the daughter was concerned, the term itself was the precursor of Freud's theory of female sexuality with its overtones of masochism and passivity. I believe that the implication inherent in the term "seduction of the daughter" underpins the doubt expressed in point 5 (in the Fliess letter) which marks the first tentative return to the concept of hysteria as an hereditary disposition. This doubt would eventually lead to the conception of instinctual disposition as it emerged in his description of female sexuality and crystalised in his understanding of women's nature as being determined by her sexual function in the process of physical and psychical development.

3. WOMEN AND MADNESS

In order to follow the development of this understanding, from the early period when the father's perversion was viewed as the aetiology of hysteria to the renunciation of the seduction theory and beyond, it would be necessary to return to Freud's lecture on the aetiology of hysteria. Here he maintains that hysterical symptoms in adolescence almost invariably represent the effects of a much earlier sexual assault. The adolescent responds to the sexual experience in an abnormal way because the childhood trauma is inscaped on every sexual encounter. Because every sexual encounter, even those which are in themselves innocuous and which carry minimal sexual overtones, revive the memory of the childhood sexual experience, these encounters, trivial in themselves, frequently signify the onset of hysterical symptoms (Freud, 1962). In the therapeutic process the adolescent experience constitutes the first milestone in the uncovering of memories.

However, after the renunciation of the seduction theory, Freud, in his attempt to explain why the adolescent re-lived the childhood structures of interaction, concluded that the abnormally sensitive reaction to sexuality in puberty mirrors the sexually sensitive genital phase. The misdemeanours of childhood are remembered and, in order to change the content of insistent and guilt-ridden memories, the blame for these misdemeanours is shifted on to the father. This is partly due to the sexual satisfaction achieved from the fantasy of seduction, and partly to revenge for the father's attempts to prevent masturbation:

Since childhood masturbation is such a general occurrence and is at the same time so poorly remembered, it must have an equivalent in psychic life. And, in fact, it is found in the fantasy encountered in most female patients - namely, that the father seduced her in childhood. This is the later reworking which is designed to cover up the recollection of infantile sexual activity and represents an excuse and an extenuation thereof. The grain of truth contained in this fantasy lies in the fact that the father, by way of his innocent caresses in earliest childhood, has actually awakened the little girl's sexuality. It is these same affectionate fathers that are the ones who then endeavour to break the child of the habit of masturbation, of which they themselves had by that time become the unwitting cause. And thus the motifs mingle in the most successful fashion to form this fantasy, which often dominates a woman's entire life: one part truth, one part gratification of love, and one part revenge (cited in Masson, 1985, p.12).

Hysterical symptoms are derived from fantasies and not from reality. The perverted father has become the affectionate father. The woman who recalled the sexual trauma of childhood during the therapeutic process and who "suffer(ed) under the most violent sensations of which they (were) ashamed and which they (tried) to conceal" (Freud, 1962, p.204) have now become the women who glibly told the untrue tales of seduction.

3.1 Fathers and Daughters

It might be useful at this point to look at the clinical material on which Freud originally based his seduction theory. These included the experiences recounted to him which he regarded as fantasies in which the daughters rooted their sexual gratification. The following is a case history which he sent to Fliess on December 2, 1897, only three months after his letter of renunciation.

The following little scene which the patient claims to have observed as a three-year-old child, speak for the intrinsic genuineness of infantile trauma. She goes into a dark room where her mother is carrying on and eavesdrop. She has good reason to identify with that mother. The father belongs to the category of men who stab women, for whom bloody injuries are an erotic need. When she was two he brutally deflowered her and infected her with gonorrhoea, so that her life was in danger as a result of loss of blood and vaginitis. The mother now stands in the room and screams: "Rotten criminal, what do you want from me? I will have no part of that. Just whom do you think you have in front of you?" Then with one hand she tears off her clothes while with the other hand she presses them against her body, making a funny impression. Then, with her features distorted with rage, she stares at a spot in the room, covers her genitals with one hand and pushes something away with the other. Then she raises up both hands, claws at the air and bites the air. While screaming and cursing she bends over backwards, again covers her genitals with one hand, then falls forward so that her head almost touches the floor, finally falls over backwards quietly to the floor. Afterwards, she wrings her hands, sits down in a corner with her features distorted with pain and weeps.

Most notable to the child is the scene where the mother is standing bent forward. She sees that the toes are strongly pointed inward. When the girl is six to seven months old, the mother is in bed almost bleeding to death as a result of an injury inflicted by the father. At the age of sixteen she again sees the mother bleeding from the uterus (carcinoma), which brings about the beginning of her neurosis. The neurosis breaks out one year later when she hears of an operation for haemorrhoids. Can it be doubted that the father forces the wife into anal intercourse? Can one not recognize in the fit of the mother the separate phases of his assault, first the effort to get at her from the front, then the pressing down from behind and the penetration between her legs, which forces her to turn her feet inward? Finally, how does the patient know that in fits one usually performs the parts of both persons (self-mutilation, self-murder) as in this case where the woman tears off her clothes with one hand, like the assailant, and with the other holds on to them, as she did then? (cited in Masson, 1985, p.116-117).

This is not a sexually-tinged act, performed by excessively affectionate parents (Freud, 1984, p.166) which triggered off precocious sexual maturity in children and became part of the invented tales in which daughters found their sexual gratification. This scene is imbued with fear, violence and the anguish of mother and daughter. It shows the reality of a woman utterly at the mercy of male power. This case history, written up after Freud had already renounced the seduction theory, is reminiscent of the life history of a young rape survivor which was published in the Rape Crisis Newsletter, February 1986. I believe the only difference between these testimonies of violence against women, lies in the fact that the daughter of 1986 was eventually believed by the women to whom she turned, whereas the daughter who told her story in 1896 was not believed by the male professionals who eventually diagnosed her as psychotic. I quote this document at length.

He came at night...with two weapons to create war in my mind for twenty years' time. He came three weeks ago tonight leaving my blood and his semen on the sheets of my bed while his wife slept in the next room. This is a long story; it could be the length of a book, but I will castrate it. He is my father. His weapons are only an aging penis and a knife brought back from the Korean War. In war anything is fair and there is no love lost there. In war people kill and do not even stop to count the bodies bleeding in the road. My father has killed and maimed and succeeded in blocking each and every victim from his mind. He will kill again. It is only a matter of time. If this stops him, then I can say I have done something...done something with the only weapon I will ever bear in war or peace; a pen before the public eye.

Incest is a war. And in war anything that moves at night has all or some of its life cut off. I had my life cut off for twenty years with sodomy and rape and repeated beatings and verbal abuse, but tonight behind a double-locked door, my life as victim and the terror of my father's and my

secret is going to come down in smoke and ash...

Incest is a conspiracy of lies and silence, but I am learning to talk, and in screaming consummate rage I will scream until the last rapist burns. And when my father burns I will walk the beach outside my home in peace and let someone else bury him. Tonight there is no peace, and so I will keep you awake too...maybe long enough to tell someone else and so begin to end the silence...

So the street lamps are on and the world is mostly sleeping...but you and I are awake in search of peace. I have long since given over counting reasons for my insomnia or sleeping pills into my hands...my father taught me to be afraid of the dark when I was six years old. My mother was in the hospital having my sister, her fifth child and my father carried me to his bed and made a ritual of my first experience with rape. Jack the Ripper was on the late show that night...Jack the Ripper who was famous for murdering streetwalkers and prostitutes...and my father made me stay awake screaming through all of it. Then when I was terrorized and crying my father sodomized me for the first time. He said he would teach me not to talk or cry and so removed his knife from the closet and slashed my vagina, leaving me a bleeding, sprawling piece of meat in his bed. That night I learned silence and was initiated into twenty years of depression that would put me through two suicide attempts, a psychiatric hospital stay (where I was given a permanent label) and a half a dozen psychiatrists with their ten years of psychotherapy. Today I still go dry-eyed through terror, and will probably never again find a voice to scream when attacked.

My father has blocked all of his victims from his memory and twenty years ago I began to block each rape from mine. It was not until the depth of a therapy hour a year ago that I unblocked that first episode and began to uncover all the other night raids on my body. Until that hour I had spent almost my entire life using all my energy to block the incest and bury the terror and the rage. The result was nearly twenty years of suicidal depression, episodic psychosis and enough psychiatric labels to jail me behind the locked doors of a psychiatric hospital.

Until last year I was emotionally straight-jacketed at one point or another by every psychotic drug that had ever failed to kill a rat, but which led three gynaecologists to tell me

never to have children... And I heard all three of them and I hear them tonight...which is another reason why I am awake and trying to keep you there too....

Three weeks ago a sudden snow and ice storm locked me into my parents' home for the night. After struggling with my unblocked memory for a year with two therapists and a rape councillor, and knowing that my father had not touched me in years, I closed my bedroom door and went to sleep. I had forgiven him all previous damage and was still trying to learn who he was when he awakened me at two in the morning and punched me in the jaw, knocking me unconscious. When I came to he was standing over my bed and he said, "That will teach you who your main man is". He left me rocking in a bed of blood and semen-stained sheets with cracked ribs and fearing the worst; another rape; later confirmed by my internist. To this day my mother knows nothing about any of the incest, and is still paralyzed by silence. I waited for the house to empty the next morning, scrubbed the stains from the sheets, put them back on the bed and fled to my own home. Locking the door I fell lethally silent for four days. The one person who knew enough to believe me, my psychiatrist, was out of town for two weeks.

These are two testimonies by daughters and both disbelieved by the professionals. The latter found the strength to fight back in the friends and the psychologist who believed her. We do not know what happened to the girl who was raped when she was two and who watched her mother's madness, except that she was later diagnosed as psychotic. According to Freud, we cannot say with any certainty that she was raped or that her story was not purely invented to revenge or to seek sexual gratification.

Although the above are extreme examples, extracts from available case histories all show deep distress in the memories that are recounted. There can be no doubt that real cases of father-daughter rape were frequent, and it is possible that Freud's original theory of hysteria was

correct. It is also possible that rape was alleged where no actual rape took place. To debate the actuality of rape in the aetiology of hysteria is, however, not fruitful. Psychoanalysis would have become a critical analysis of a pathogenic society, even with the renunciation of the seduction theory, if Freud had rooted the fantasy of the daughter in the experiential context, instead of specifying a cause and effect paradigm within the realm of biology.

3.1.1 How the daughter fashions her madness

For the purpose of this thesis, the central question to ask is what kind of person, living what kind of life, would find sexual gratification in that account of madness and violence. Would a girl, experiencing the innocent affection of her father be precociously sexually stimulated and then hide her own illicit desires by transferring blame to the father? According to Freud, the answer is yes. This assertion carries the prototype of his later conviction that female sexuality is defined by masochism. It is easy to understand the logical continuity of his thought processes here. His first assertion that the memories of rape were simply defences against the daughters' own illicit desires had to be justified, because their stories were not light-hearted fantasies tinged with sexuality. The daughter could only find sexual gratification in the accounts of humiliation and sorrow, which characterised the fantasies, if the female sexual constitution was either inherently masochistic, or made masochistic by a social formation which forced her to repress any inch of personal creativity or need, and placed her completely at the service and mercy of the male, thus absorbing and perpetuating the "mass psychology of the

conqueror" (Brownmiller, 1976, p.324). After the renunciation of the seduction theory the latter was never an option that could fit into Freud's paradigm of cause and effect, and so it had to be the former. Freud thus had to develop the concept of a female sexuality that was constitutionally masochistic in order to explain the satisfaction he claimed the daughter found in the invented tales of seduction. He divided masochism into three categories; the erogenous, the female and the moral. The first is a form of sexual excitement, the second is the expression of femininity, and the third is a model of behaviour. In applying his dual instinct theory to the problem of masochism, Freud explains erogenous masochism as a residue of the death instinct which has not issued in destructive impulses but remains confined within the organism. He called this mixture of the residual death instinct with eros erogenous masochism (Freud, 1961). Female masochism in his view, was essentially identical with erogenous masochism (Freud, 1973). Women's masochistic fantasies can be traced to Oedipal guilt, resulting from Oedipal fantasies. This confirms the view that such fantasies fuse sexual desire with the need for suffering which serves as a defense against guilt feelings. According to Freud, the "powerful masochistic impulses which succeed...in binding erotically the destructive trends which have been diverted inwards" (Freud, 1961, p.149) found their theoretical confirmation in the Oedipus legend. Therefore, it will be necessary to review the Oedipus legend in combination with Freud's drive theory.

It will not be possible here to review the entire history of this concept, so I will focus on those aspects of the drive theory that are specifically important to the development of the nucleus of ideas presented here in opposition to the assertion that neurosis is developed in the realm of

ideas, and not in the experiential context. I want to reiterate that the importance of a reasonably thorough analysis of the drive theory lies in Freud's statement in his Introductory Lectures (Freud, 1973). Although he initially believed the testimonies of the daughters, he claimed he was later able to recognize in "this phantasy of being seduced by the father the expression of the typical Oedipus complex in women" (ibid, p.80).

3.2 The Drive Theory

As a definition of the drive theory, Alice Miller's exposition will suffice.

The belief Freud held after 1897, (subsequently held by his disciples) in infantile sexuality, divided into its oral, anal and phallic phases and culminating in the four-year-old's desire to possess sexually the parent of the opposite sex and do away with the parent of the same sex, which inevitably leads to conflict because the child needs and loves both parents. The way this conflict between the id and the ego - or between the ego and the superego is resolved determines whether a person becomes neurotic or not (Miller, 1984, p.4).

One of the most revolutionary theories in psychology, was Freud's insistence that the infant was born with a sexual drive. This sexual drive can have diverse aims and can be active or passive in its direction. Initially, these sexual urges are satisfied auto-erotically, or from the mother's body, which is experienced as an extension of the infant. Realisation of the infant's incompleteness and separateness is forced on it by the discovery that satisfaction of the drive is dependent on outside forces. From that discovery onwards, the sexuality of the child is more

actively defined and linked to objects and people. The mouth, anus and genitals are particularly associated with libidinous satisfaction. From the moment of birth onwards interest in them develops in a definite sequence. For the new born child the mouth is the primary organ of pleasure through which she makes contact with her first object of desire, the mother's breast. The oral phase is overlapped and succeeded by the anal phase which is characterised initially by the aim to expel aggressively and later to control. Preenatal sexuality as a stage of development ends towards the end of the third year when the early genital or phallic interest begins to centre on the penis. Freud defined the sexual object as the phallus specifically and not the genitals, because this stage knows only the male genital. This stage deserves special focus.

3.2.1 The Phallic Phase

The phallic phase begins towards the end of the third year when the boy's interest becomes centred on his penis. This interest arouses sexual attraction for the mother which is accompanied by feelings of jealousy and resentment directed towards the father who has become the boy's rival for his mother's affections. The boy here experiences the Oedipal situation which comes to an end primarily because he fears that his father might castrate him as punishment for his illicit desires. The state of affairs for the girl is rather more complex. For both boys and girls the first object of attachment is necessarily the mother and after the oral and anal phases, the orientation is primarily phallic. The girl becomes interested in her clitoris as the biological equivalent of the boy's penis, but since

this organ appears inferior to the masculine one, she develops a desire to be like the boy. Freud calls this penis envy, and postulates that the girl's attachment to her father, which now takes place, only occurs once she has renounced the hope of masculinity and reconciled herself to castration as an accepted fact (Freud, 1977).

Freud maintains that for girls the Oedipus complex is a secondary formation which is first introduced by the castration complex. The Oedipus complex, therefore, only arises once the girl has, after a long struggle, accepted the "fact of her own castration" (Freud, 1977, p.133). The object-libidinal relation to the mother is transformed into identification with her; the father is chosen as a love object, and so the rival becomes the beloved, and the beloved the rival. The girl enters the Oedipus situation with the transference of the wish for a penis-baby on to her father, but this entrance is marked by a long and bitter struggle before acceptance of castration becomes possible. The pre-oedipal attachment and desire for the mother is not given up easily, and is achieved only at the expense of the relationship between mother and daughter. The mother is blamed for the girl's lack of a penis but, at the same time, the realisation that she is similar to her mother forces identification with the mother. This identification is, however, fraught with resentment and anger, and does not hold the same promise of bigger and better things to come that characterises the boy's identification with his father. Identification with the mother is accompanied by the renunciation of the active, conquering tendency of her love aim as the girl realises that the absence of the penis will prevent her from ever conquering her mother sexually or impregnating her. The masculine Oedipus complex is resolved by the castration complex while the girl's entrance into the Oedipus phase is

marked by the repression of active impulses. The fact that the girl thinks she has been punished while the boy fears he might be punished is believed to have important consequences for their later development and has a direct bearing on the development of masochism.

Two aspects of the drive theory are of importance here:

- a) The two crucial expressions of bisexuality in mental health eventually became, for Freud, penis envy and the castration complex, the two sides of the same coin. Towards the end of his life Freud asserted that, although the presence of the two sexes is a fact of biology, the mental experience of this is a matter for psychology. It is the most fundamental and difficult problem that confronts our mental life (Freud, 1977). There is a biological antithesis between the sexes, but psychologically they are bisexual; both the male and the female psychologies contain the antithesis. Each person must resolve for him or herself the place he/she occupies in the world but neither sex wishes it to be the female place. For the man this dilemma is linked to the castration complex; the fear of occupying the place of the woman. For the woman, the dilemma is linked to penis envy; she does not want to occupy the place that belongs to the female. Each sex thus carries within her/his mental life the knowledge of the other place, a knowledge of either fear or desire (ibid). It follows that for the truly feminine woman, who has accepted the place defined by absence and who is fulfilled by her role, the

gratification in her role must be accompanied by pleasure in pain. It is useful to point out that the man's castration anxiety does not, however, prevent his passive relationship with a woman but only with another man. To lose his mastery with another man is to lose his manhood. To reveal masochism and passivity to a woman holds no danger of loss of manhood for it was in that very role that his mother accepted him. The feminine predicament, for both sexes, applies only in the relationship to men, while the woman's subservience to the male, as giver of the substitute of what she does not have, i.e. the male child who carries with him the penis, contains overtones of joy in suffering with it (ibid).

- b) For both sexes the first sexual object is the mother's breast, and then it becomes the mother who cares for them and holds them. The first love for the mother is a necessary part of the Oedipal moment; for the boy it means re-attachment while for the girl it means detachment and an analogous attachment to the father. This re-attachement and de-tachment persist through to the later choices of sexual objects made by adults. For boys, the first and second mother (pre-Oedipal and Oedipal) are fused so that the boy retains the same object which he previously cathected with his libido (Freud, 1973). At that stage it is not yet a genital one. The mother-baby attachment for the girl, however, is more fraught with danger. The mother-girl attachment, even during the pre-Oedipal phase, is not a completely loving one. Preceding any rivalry the little girl might feel with the mother in her demands for the

father in the Oedipal stage, there is already considerable hostility in her attitude. Grown women, sharing their memories of early childhood with Freud, complained that their mothers did not give them enough milk. In other words, they did not nurture them or give them enough love. They accused their mothers of poisoning them, and finally, the situation arose where they blamed their mothers for their gender and therefore their lack of a penis. Freud asserted that because later love patterns are built on this primary love relationships, all this hostility can be transferred from the mother onto the husband. He states:

We noticed that many women who had chosen their husband on the model of their father, or have put him in their father's place, nevertheless repeats towards him, in their married life, their bad relations with their mother. The husband of such a woman was meant to be the inheritor of her relation to her father, but in reality he became the inheritor of her relation to her mother (Freud, 1973, p.154).

More important to Freud though, was the ambivalence of the relationship. Because of the intensity of the relationship both love and hate are present for boy and girl. Unlike the boy, the girl is not able to separate these emotions and transfer the hatred to her rival, her father, because he must eventually become her love object. Female sexuality thus embodies a fundamental ambivalence, which crystallises ultimately in the masochism which, for Freud, is constitutionally part of female sexuality.

In summary, the biological impossibility and the social taboo of fusion

with the mother combine powerfully in the girl's renunciation of her "masculine position" (Ruitenbeeck, 1966, p.43). The repression of aggressive impulses galvanise her towards passive gratification both in the penis supplied by the boy-child and in the physical pain of childbirth. She is thus forced to occupy and fulfill herself in the mental pain of the absent female place in the world.

The concept of the castration complex, and its complement, penis-envy, not only gave birth to Freud's understanding of female sexuality but also came into being as a result of his renunciation of the seduction theory. At the same time it served as a justification of that renunciation. Freud's theory of castration and penis-envy will be summarised in section 3.2.2, and critically discussed in section 4.

3.2.2 Castration and Penis Envy: Two sides of the same coin

The third phase, the phallic phase, is initially, according to Freud, as impervious to gender differences as the oral and anal phase. It is within this area that the recognition of the phallic power of another, as being bigger and better than one's own, occurs. The boy compares himself with his father and the trauma of castration anxiety results, while the girl compares herself with all men and experiences penis-envy. What is of importance here is that although men suffer the fear of losing what they have, they use themselves as model of the universe; everything is constructed in their own image. The girl, who does not have what he has, does not become a model of a different kind of universe because she has already lost the inscape of the universe. The same fate might be waiting for him too. The girl takes her model of the world to be male and she is,

therefore, at odds with the world; she has already lost her place in the world. Her failure to conceive the world as female is explained in terms of her association of sexuality with the clitoris. Up to that point, the girl experiences only clitoral genitality and because the clitoris is homologous to the penis, she too assumes a phallic world (Freud, 1977).

Castration is bound to masturbation, and in the case of the boy, to the moral condemnation of masturbation. But the concept is more complex, and is not necessarily linked to masturbation as it is frequently thought, but also very much to the anatomical differences between the sexes. It is also culture bound to the institution of patriarchy, although Freud never explicitly built on that concept. Freud himself insisted that the social reality is not altogether relevant, and although the threat of castration might not exist, the idea still exists (ibid).

When Freud formulated his castration complex in 1908, it was quite a crude explanation of the differences between the sexes. According to that first formulation, the castration complex defined the girl who would always feel inferior because she lacked something of great importance. It made the boy abandon his incestuous wish for his mother, and made him feel fearful of and temporarily inferior to his phallically more powerful father. It ended his Oedipus complex and therewith his infancy. However, Freud subsequently developed the role of the castration complex into a much more subtle concept. In 1927 Freud stated:

Castration can be pictured on the basis of the daily experience of the faeces being separated from the body, or on the basis of losing the mother's breast at weaning. But nothing

resembling death can ever have been experienced... I am therefore inclined to adhere to the view that the fear of death should be regarded as analogous to the fear of castration (cited in Jones, 1956, p.227).

Castration, or the threat thereof, became, for Freud, the high point of the psychological fear of loss and hence of danger. Freud now saw the Oedipal sequence in different terms. The boy desires the mother and fears the father, because it is in the omnipotent father's power to deny him the mother. Castration is linked with loss as well as with danger, because the boy feels himself threatened by the superior strength of the father. The boy does eventually give up the mother, only to realise that the loss precedes a gain. The boy has now moved into manhood, and is ready to take over the omnipotent penis of the father. By realising that one day he will be the father in his own right, i.e. by submitting to the symbolic role of castration, the boy resolves the fear of castration. (Here the notion of castration bearing the transmission of culture is introduced, but Freud never fully developed this notion) (Jones, 1956).

Death and castration are also closely allied. The child internalises the father because of his fear of castration, and this process gives birth to the superego. Fear of castration then leads the boy to identify with the castrating agent. With the aid of his own aggressive drives, the boy incorporates the castrating agent into his own personality as an internal authority figure, a judging superego. The ego experiences hatred from its own superego and fears death. As the ego once feared castration from the father, it now experiences an equivalent threat from the superego that was formed out of an identification with the father. The fear of death then, as the fear of conscience, is a development of the fear of castration

(ibid).

The instance of fetishism indicates fear of the mother, or, rather, of the mother's genitals and this constitutes the other dimension of the castration complex (Freud, 1977). Some boys are unable to overcome their fright when they first see their mother's genitals and, as a result, deny the sight of their own eyes. Instead of acknowledging this evidence of castration, they develop a fetish which substitutes for the missing phallus of the woman. There is an ambivalence here, in that they both recognise that women are castrated and deny it. The fetish is treated with affection and hostility simultaneously. It represents the absence of the phallus and by its very existence, asserts the presence of it. Instead of accepting the possibility of symbolic castration, i.e. the loss of the desired object but with the hope of bigger and better things to come, the young boy denies the possibility of castration by denying what he has perceived of women's genitals. His own penis is thus kept safe. In this case the castration complex is not resolved (ibid). An alternative unresolved castration complex is homosexuality. Homosexuality, according to Freud, simply means that the feminine position is adopted. The symbolic possibility of castration is not accepted, but actual castration (in fantasy) is supposed. Thus the choices for men are fetishism, acknowledged or denied homosexuality, or manhood (ibid). The latter is itself a resolution of the other possibilities, all of which are contained within it.

Penis envy is the other side of the coin. It has its roots in the belief, of all infants, that everyone has a penis and in the case of the girl, that

her's will grow. The boy discovers the fear of castration through threats to his masturbatory practices and, more importantly, at the sight of the female genitals, or rather, as it seems to him, the absence of the female genitals. The girl only has to look at herself, and the realisation that the absence will never return, that the lack cannot be made good dawns on her near the end of the anal phase. What is of importance here is castration and the different meaning it holds for the two sexes (Freud, 1973).

The boy, as he reaches manhood and enters into his phallic heritage, can initially preserve the mother as his object of desire. Up to the point where she has accepted her deficiency, the girl wishes to possess the mother with the same kind of virile desire as the boy wishes to be possessed by the mother and to bear her a child. In the pre-Oedipal stage, sex roles are not fixed, and all variations of sexual fantasies relating to the mother are available to both sexes. The father's only importance during this phase is his demands on the time and attention of the mother. The boy continues to regard his father as a rival during the Oedipus phase while for the girl, he becomes the loved one. But the girl makes the shift from mother-attachment to father-love only because she has to and with much pain and protest. The girl has to transfer her desires onto the father because she is without a phallus. Recognition of her lack, punishment and castration, herald her entry into womanhood. The girl's entry into her feminine heritage is characterised by hostility towards her mother for failing to make her a boy. It is an entry marred by penis-envy that must be repressed or transformed. Accepting castration means not only acknowledging the lack of the phallus but abandoning the inferior and disappointing clitoris as a source of sexual satisfaction

(ibid).

After her recognition of castration, the girl has three options open to her, only one of which is normal.

- 1) Blaming her mother for her castration and her positive image of herself being shattered, she turns away from women and womanhood altogether. In this case, she is liable to become inhibited and neurotic.
- 2) Refusing to abandon the pleasure of her clitoris, she remains at the pre-oedipal masculine phase.
- 3) She accepts the strength of the passive aims of her sexual drive, and transfers her sexual attentions from her mother to her father who represents sexual mastery and the active sexual impulses. Initially she wants his phallus, then his baby, and finally a man to impregnate her with a boy child who at long last brings the coveted phallus with him (ibid). The active pursuer becomes the passive receptor of love. "The woman who is truly feminine does not know object love in the true sense of the word: she can only let herself be loved" (Ruitenbeek, 1966, p.42) and is "brought unlimited satisfaction by her relation to a son, because she transfers to her son the ambition which she has been obliged to suppress in herself, and she can expect from him the satisfaction of all that has been left over in her of her masculine complex" (Freud, 1973,

p.154). Thus she becomes a woman. This transference from mother to father is the girl's positive Oedipus complex. It is her first correct step on her path to womanhood, achieved after a long and painful struggle. She enters the Oedipal situation as a "haven of refuge" (Freud, 1973, p.156), and never needs to leave it again. She can continue, without fear, to love her father and hate her mother as the rival who has no absolute strength (ibid).

For the boy, it is different. He fears his father as the rival who is all powerful and potent, against whom he will lose his own potency. The girl, on the other hand, has nothing to lose. She can safely linger in this stage for life, while the boy must leave it quickly lest he be castrated. The girl's acceptance of castration, as opposed to the boy's fear of castration has as a powerful consequence that the motive for developing the superego falls away. This is because there is no fear and therefore an attempt to resolve the fear does not take place. Because the girl does not have to internalise a powerful and punitive father, her own superego with all the implications of authority, conscience and sublimation will of necessity be weaker (Freud, 1973).

Freud's psychology of women developed out of the castration/penis-envy concepts. Three themes are of importance here: masochism, passivity, and envy. Masochism is an inevitable theoretical construct resulting from the decision to root neurosis in the realm of intra-psychic fantasy. Because I focus on masochism here I will attempt to define the concept.

Masochism is essentially the turning against the self of the wish for the

satisfaction of a drive (Freud, 1961). It typifies the feminine predicament and derived from the violent repression of the girl's infantile sexuality. Masochism expresses the wish to submit to castration, copulation or childbirth, and to receive erotic pleasure from painful experiences. But feminine masochism is inherent within both sexes. When it refers to men, the masochist seeks to be in the female situation. Where women are concerned, the girl's acceptance, and therefore submission to castration becomes a prototype of her life, so that ever after she can only find pleasure, i.e. sexual pleasure, in the submission to endlessly repeated patterns of the original castration (ibid).

4. THE WICKED SON, THE RIGHTEOUS FATHER

4.1 Laius and Oedipus

We have come full circle. In order to be normal, the woman has to find pleasure in her pain, whereas the boy achieves normality through the fear and repression exerted on him to resolve his Oedipus complex. Normality for both sexes is achieved at a cost. This begs the question of what type of society requires the mechanisms of fear, repression and masochism to breed normality? In what coded patterns of language, symbol, thought and action does society transmit repression, fear and masochism from generation to generation. Freud involuntarily answered the last question when he stated that the superego, that internalization of the castrating agent, perpetuates the past. In his formulation of the Oedipus complex, he carries forward the tradition of the sinful son and daughter for whom redemption is achieved only at the cost of submission to the structures and the agents of authority. Hatred and sin are both innate and not reactive, and the fathers play no part in the awakening of the son's hatred or the daughter's violent testimonies of abuse; they are simply actors in the immutable and ancient rituals of rebellion and submission.

Far from being a revolutionary theory, Freud simply added a psychological perceptive to the traditional religious view of children's innate sinfulness which must be eradicated at all cost. He merely refashioned the ancient tale of strife between father and son which resolved itself in the Judaic-Christian legend by the expiation of the son. Although Freud

did not prescribe but describe, his understanding of development as being divided into fixed patterns of rebellion and submission, his credo of anatomy is destiny, carried with it a justification and therefore perpetuation of existing thought systems with their complement of attitudes and responses to the child. Whereas his trauma theory drove a wedge into the mired field of authority and power, his Oedipus theory was a complete reversal which reinforced the concept of the parent's duty to suppress the revolt germinating in every child from birth onwards. That Freud simply occupies a place in an honourable tradition, is clear from Alice Miller's (1983) excerpts from "Guide to Child-rearing from Two Centuries". This collection of excerpts on child-rearing practices describes not only the techniques used to subdue and teach the child obedience, but clearly shows a specific attitude, a belief that the child is born sinful, born with the overriding potential to harm, destroy and revolt.

In 1748, J. Sulzer wrote:

As far as willfulness is concerned, this expresses itself as a natural recourse in tenderest childhood as soon as children are able to make their desire for something known by means of gestures....These are dangerous faults that hinder their entire education and encourage undesirable qualities in children. If willfulness and wickedness are not driven out, it is impossible to give a child a good education....Therefore, I advise all those whose concern is the education of children to make it their main occupation to drive out willfulness and wickedness And to persist until they have reached their goal (cited in Miller, 1983, p.11).

In other words, the "wickedness" is innate, and it is the duty of the educator to employ any method or technique to drive the wickedness out.

J. G. Kruger, 1752, agreed:

If your son does not want to learn because it is your will, if he cries with the intent of defying you, if he does harm in order to offend you, in short, if he insists on having his own way:

Then whip him well,
till he cries so:
Oh no, Papa, oh no!

Such disobedience amounts to a declaration of war against you. Your son is trying to usurp your authority, and you are justified in answering force with force in order to insure his respect, without which you will be unable to train him. The blows you administer should not be merely playful ones but should convince him that you are his master....If you do not pay heed to this, you will have engaged him in a battle that will cause his wicked heart to swell with triumph and him to make the firm resolve to continue disregarding your blows so that he need not submit to his parents' domination (cited in Miller, 1988, p.15).

The son is thus not only wicked, but he is at war with the father and wants to usurp his authority. The Oedipus themes of innate revolt are very much present here. The father becomes the object at which the son's innate need to usurp power is directed. So too is the theme of castration present. The father whips the son until he cries for mercy thus reducing the son to the feminine position of renouncing his claim to equal power. The child's desires, needs and wishes had to be forcefully repressed because to concede to them would be to admit that the child too had rights and would therefore increase the possibility of successful revolt. D. G. M. Schreber, 1858, makes the need for self-renunciation in the child very clear:

Another rule with very important consequences:
Even the child's permissible desires should

always be satisfied only if the child is in an amiable or at least calm mood but never while he is crying or behaving in an unruly fashion. First he must have regained his composure even if his previous behaviour has been caused, for example, by his legitimate and periodic need to be fed - only then, after a brief pause, should one grant the child's wish. This interval is necessary because the child must not be given even the slightest impression that anything can be won by crying or by unruly behaviour....Only in this way can one aid the child in the salutary and indispensable process of learning to subordinate and control his will, to distinguish for himself the difference between what is permissible and what is not (cited in Miller, 1983, p.28).

AND

It proceeds from this that discipline, as the Old Testament word indicates, is basically chastisement (musar). The perverse will, which to its own and others' detriment is not in command of itself, must be broken. Discipline is, as Schleiermacher puts it, life-inhibiting, is at the very least curtailment of vital activity insofar as the latter cannot develop as it wishes but is confined within specific limits and subjected to specific rules. Depending on the circumstances, however, it can also mean restraint; in other words, partial suppression of enjoyment, of the joy of living....A consideration of the idea of punishment reveals that, in the task of education, healthy discipline must always include corporal punishment. Its early and firm but sparing application is the very basis of a genuine discipline because it is the power of the flesh that needs most to be broken....(cited in Miller, 1983, p.31).

Written in 1858 and 1896 respectively, the need is made clear for inhibiting legitimate desires and emotions lest the child gain a foothold in the power struggle between righteous father and wicked son. The excerpts stress the necessity of breaking the child's will. Any method is justifiable, even if it means denying the child food. The sin of

wilfulness includes any display of emotion or need, even the need for knowing what their sins were:

It is rarely useful and often harmful for you to give them (children) reasons why you are not granting their wishes (cited in Miller, 1983, p.34).

AND

One of the vile products of a misguided philanthropy is the idea that, in order to obey gladly, the child has to understand the reasons why an order is given and that blind obedience offends human dignity. Whoever presumes to spread these views...forgets that our faith requires us adults to bow to the higher wisdom of Divine Providence and that human reason must never lose sight of faith....Anyone who alters these circumstances is flagrantly replacing faith with presumptuous doubt and at the same time overlooking the nature of the child and his need for faith - I do not know how we can continue to speak of obedience once reasons are given. These are meant to convince the child, and, once convinced, he is not obeying us but merely the reasons we have given him. Respect for a higher intelligence is then replaced by a self-satisfied allegiance to his own cleverness. The adult who gives reasons for his orders opens up the field to argument and thus alters the relationship to his charge. The latter starts to negotiate, thereby placing himself on the same level as the adult; this equality is incompatible with the respect required for successful education (cited in Miller, 1983, p.38).

Once again, all the themes present in the Oedipus complex are present in the education manual. The relationship between parent and child is stratified and fraught with tension. The child constantly attempts to usurp authority and the parent becomes the object of the child's wilful desire for equality or even superiority. The only protection available to

the parent is the unspoken threat of castration which in this case means keeping the child ignorant. Blind obedience becomes the prerequisite for maintaining the child's subservience. The parent is empowered by knowledge and the child submits without even knowing the reason for his/her enforced submission.

4.2 Oedipus revisited

In formulating his Oedipus complex in the tradition of wilful sons striving to appropriate the power of the father, Freud retold the Oedipus legend in accordance with the prevalent system of thought and value that mediated the relationship between parent and child. He believed that the Oedipus legend anthologized the themes that directed the immutable development of child into adult as that development consolidated in the interaction between parent and child. His version of the Oedipus legend congealed the themes of conflict between father and son, with the father as the passive object of the son's challenge to the father's authority, i.e. the father's place. According to the abridged version which he used, Laius, the ruler of Thebes who was married to Jocaste, was informed by the Delphic Oracle that any child born to Jocaste would become his murderer. When Jocaste bore him a son, Laius snatched the boy from the nurse's arms, pierced his feet with a nail, and bound them together. He then ordered a shepherd to expose the boy on Mount Cithaeron. But the shepherd took pity on the boy, and handed him over to a herdsman who tended the sheep of Polybus, king of Corinth. Polybus and his wife adopted him and named him Oedipus, because his feet were deformed by the nail wound (cited in Krüll, 1987).

When Oedipus grew up, he sought the council of the Delphic Oracle to foretell his future. The Oracle answered: "Away from the shrine, wretch. You will kill your father and marry your mother" (cited in Graves, 1975).

Since Oedipus loved his adopted parents (without knowing that he was adopted), and shrank from bringing disaster upon them, he decided not to return to Corinth. But in the narrow defile between Delphi and Daulus he happened to meet Laius who ordered him roughly to step aside and make way for his betters. When Oedipus responded in anger the old man brought his goad down on the youth's head. A fight ensued between Laius' men and Oedipus. Oedipus killed two of the men and then, flinging Laius on the road, he made the team of horses drag him to death. Laius had been on his way to ask the Oracle how he might rid Thebes of the Sphinx who sat at the gates of Thebes and asked the people of Thebes a riddle which no one could answer. Those who could not answer the riddle, the Sphinx tore to pieces and devoured. Oedipus approaching Thebes after he had killed Laius, was accosted by the Sphinx and was able to give the correct answer to the riddle. The mortified Sphinx leaped from Mount Phicium and dashed herself to pieces in the valley below. At this the grateful Thebans proclaimed Oedipus as king and he married Jocaste, unaware that she was his mother. Plague then descended upon Thebes, and the Delphic Oracle, when consulted once more, replied that the murderer of Laius must be expelled. Oedipus, who did not know that he himself was the murderer, pronounced a curse on Laius' murderer and sentenced him to exile. Teiresias, the most renowned seer in Greece of the time demanded an audience with Oedipus and revealed to him and Jocaste that Oedipus had killed his father and married his mother. Jocaste hanged herself for grief and shame, while Oedipus blinded himself with a pin taken from her garments. After wandering for

many years through country after country, Oedipus finally came to Colonus in Attica where the Erinnyes hounded him to death (cited in Krüll, 1987).

This legend not only tells the ancient story, repeated in every generation, of the son in conflict with the father, but it also spells out the consequences if the son is allowed to challenge the father's authority; spiritual, if not physical death for the father, and castration for the son. (Freudians see the blinding of Oedipus as symbolic of castration). The son is guilty, and his guilt is determined even before birth. Nothing that the son or the father does, can change the potential for disaster that shadows their interaction. But, as has been pointed out by various writers (Miller, 1985; Krüll, 1987; Masson, 1984), Freud stripped the legend from its pre-history and moreover, exonerated the father and placed all the blame on the son. He wrote to Fliess in 1897:

The gripping power of Oedipus Rex, in spite of all the rational objections to the inexorable fate that the story presupposes, becomes intelligible, and one can understand why later fate dramas were such failures...but the Greek myth seizes on a compulsion which everyone recognizes because he has felt traces of it in himself. Every member of the audience was once a budding Oedipus in phantasy, and this dream - fulfilment played out in reality causes everyone to recoil in horror, with the full measure of repression which separates his infantile from his present state (cited in Krüll, 1987 p.148).

The revolt against the father is a compulsion present in EVERYONE. No longer are individual fathers perverse. The Oedipus theory, confirmed by the Oedipus legend, starts with the premise that the child projects desires onto his parents. These desires are not caused by the parents' actions,

but have sources within the child, sources which are universally part of the development process. The child, like Oedipus, is guilty even before birth. But the pre-history of the Oedipus legend tells a different story. According to Gustav Schwabs in "Myths of Classical Antiquity", (cited in Krüll, 1987) Laius was not a blameless father nor merely the victim of his son's compulsions, for

Laius had been driven from his kingdom in youth and had been received at Pelops' court, but had repaid his benefactor's kindness with ingratitude, abducting Chrysippus, Pelops' beautiful son, at the Nemeao games...." (cited in Krüll p.61).

It was because of Pelops' curse, and Zeus' support of that curse, that it was determined that the son would kill the father. The Oracle's warning referred to a sin of the father that had to be punished, not a universal obsession of a son to appropriate the place of the father. Moreover, the Sphinx that haunted Thebes had been sent by Hera to punish Thebes for Laius' abduction of the boy Chrysippus, (Graves, 1975, p.10). Therefore, even Laius' fateful meeting with Oedipus at the crossroads was a link in the chain of events that held Laius to his original sin, and in which Oedipus was simply an agent of retribution. The pre-history thus showed us that Laius was an active homosexual, a man who abused his benefactor's kindness. But even in the legend, as told to us by Freud, Laius emerges as the instigator of his own fate. Laius is a sadist. Not satisfied with exposing his new born son on the mountain, he pierces his feet. Although Laius knows that the gods have chosen his son to kill him as punishment for his sins, he inflicts punishment for a deed not yet done on

the son, least he himself should suffer his just rewards. Moreover, by striking the first blow at the crossroads, he causes the revolt of the son. Laius was the perverse father in Freud's seduction theory, the father who causes his children's neuroses. The unabridged version of the Oedipus account might have been the symbolic representation of the seduction theory. And contrary to Freud's claim that ancient myth mirrors in many areas the Oedipus theory, it seems to me that many of the most important myths, in particular the cosmogonical myths, mirror not the drive theory but the seduction theory. In these myths the conflict between father and son, the vying for the throne, is depicted, but in all of these, the father who refuses to share, to impart knowledge, who rapes and castrates, initiates the conflict. And the son who suffers under his cruelty and fights for his share of power, in turn repeats the saga of cruelty and dishonour with his own son. The son always internalises the castrating agent and thus perpetuates the patterns of oppression and revolt. The following three cosmogonical myths, as told by Hesiod, (cited in Graves, 1975) clearly mirror these ancient designs of struggle between father and child, repeated in every generation.

All that were produced by Gaia and Ouranos - most dreadful of children - were hated from the beginning by their own begetter. He hid them all away, just as soon as any came into being, in an inward place of Gaia and did not let them into the light; and Ouranos rejoiced in his evil deed. Huge Gaia groaned within, for she was crowded out and contrived a crafty and evil device. Without delay she created the element of grey adamant and wrought a great sickle; then she addressed her dear children in encouraging tones, though troubled in her heart: "Children of mine and of a reckless father, if you consent to do what I say, we could avenge your father's outrageous treatment; for it was he that first devised shameful deeds." But her children were all possessed by fear, and none of them uttered until

great Kronos of crooked council after a while addressed his noble mother thus: "Mother I shall give you my promise and accomplish the deed, since I care nothing for my father of evil name: for it was he that first devised shameful deeds". These were his words and huge Gaia rejoiced greatly in her heart. She sent him into a hidden place of ambush, put in his hands a jagged-toothed sickle and instructed him in the whole deceit. Great Ouranos came, bringing on night; desiring love he stretched himself on Gaia and spread all over her. And his son from his place of ambush stretched out with his left hand and with his right hand he grasped the monstrous sickle, long and jagged-toothed, and swiftly reaped off the genitals of his dear father and flung them behind him to be carried away.

Many years later Kronos carried on the tradition. Hesoid continues his account:

Rhea was subjected to Kronos and bore him glorious children:....These were swallowed by great Kronos as each of them came toward her knees from out of their holy mother's womb; his intention was that no other proud descendant of Ouranos should have kingly honour among the immortals....Therefore he kept no idle watch, but keenly observing them he swallowed down his children, and Rhea was possessed by unforgettable grief. But when she was about to give birth to Zeus, father of gods and men, then she besought her own dear parents, Gaia and starry Ouranos, to devise a plan whereby she might bear her child in secret and repay the avenging furies of her father and of the children great Kronos kept swallowing. They listened carefully to their dear daughter....They despatched her to Lyktos, into the rich community of Crete, as she was about to give birth to her youngest child, great Zeus; and huge Gaia agreed to nurture and tend him in broad Crete. Then Rhea brought him through the swift, dark night to Lyktos first; she took him in her hands and hid him in a steep cave under the recesses of sacred earth. To Kronos, great lord and son of Ouranos, she presented a great stone that she had wrapped in swaddling clothes. He took it in his hands and deposited it in his belly, the villain, and did not notice how his son was left behind, unconquered and carefree, in

place of the stone - his son who was soon to subdue him with the might of his hands and drive him from his honoured position.

Kronos, the son of a father who denies him life, in turn denies life to his son, and is violently overthrown. And the son follows in the tradition of his forefathers:

Zeus, king of the gods, made Metis his wife, she who is most knowledgeable of gods and mortal men. But when she was about to give birth to owl-eyed goddess Athena, then he deceived Metis with a trick, and through crooked words deposited her in his belly, following the advice of Gaia and starry Ouranos. This was the advice they gave him, so that no one apart from Zeus should have kingship over the everlasting gods.

Once again the motif corresponds closely to that of Kronos swallowing his children. Zeus in his turn is threatened by the problem of a powerful son destined to overthrow him, and he meets it by swallowing the mother and so preventing the child from ever being born. If Freud is correct that myth and legend survive because they carry the prototype of the fabric of which human interaction is made, then these myths of creation depict the conflict between father and son, but with the father as aggressor, as the agent of castration, a life-denying process which is internalised by the son through the superego and carried on from generation to generation. These legends that survived antiquity, have their clearly drawn parallels in the education manuals that abounded in the 18th and 19th century. In the same way as Oedipus' fate as his father's murderer is determined before birth, so too is wilfulness and wickedness in the child assumed from the moment of birth. But in the annals of the history of the relationship between

father and son, the son's determination to have his own way, means determination to appropriate the father's place: the son's claim on life denies the father life.

4.3.1 The Context of Hysteria

The role played by force in the interaction between child and father cannot simply be reduced to the father's belief in the innate wickedness of the child. The power of the father is a social constant in patriarchies which makes the transition from scenes of intimacies in the family to the political context in which the tone and design of interpersonal relationships are entrenched in legal and religious force, possible. Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. The family mirrors and connects the individual in his/her private spheres of interaction with the larger society. If the pattern of co-operation between the family and society were to change, the chief institutions of patriarchy, i.e. family, church and state would then assume radically different forms, because the chief contribution of the family is the socialization of the young into the ideologies sanctioned by society. The family reproduces itself, and in Victorian society it reproduced itself most effectively through the resolution of the Oedipus complex. Freud hinged on the realization of the social conditions that are intertwined with Oedipus, but his insistence on the universality of Oedipus disfigured a social critique into a mythical explanation of communication patterns. He observes:

Thus a child's superego is in fact constructed not of its parents but of its parents' superego; the contents which fill it are the same and it becomes the vehicle of tradition and of all time resisting judgements of values which have

propagated themselves in this manner from generation to generation. You may easily guess what important assistance taking the superego into account will give us in our understanding of the social behaviour of mankind in the problem of delinquency for instance - and perhaps even what practical hints on education. It seems likely that what are known as materialistic views of history, is underestimating this factor. They brush it aside with the remark that human ideologies are nothing other than the produce and superstructure of their contemporary economic conditions. That is true, but very probably not the whole truth. Mankind never lives entirely in the present. The past, the tradition of the race and of the people, lives on in the ideologies of the superego and yields only slowly to the influences of the present and to new changes; and so long as it operates through the superego it plays a powerful part in human life, independently of economic conditions (Freud, 1973, p.99).

Here Freud's realization that psychic structures and mechanisms reproduce tradition is clearly set out, but for him Oedipus lived in myth and fantasy, and the fantasy content in relation to interactional structures is never explored; fantasy derived in myth and is transmitted through myth (Freud, 1953), and force itself becomes part of the shadowy, mythical past. It is because of this inability to root the psyche in the sedimented conscious and unconscious interactions between parent and child, that Freud finds it possible to assert that the Oedipus complex too resolves in the realm of fantasy, and not in the concrete fear of the power of the father. The process of repression and thus normality does not result from the threat of castration, but from the sight of the female genitals:

Sooner or later the child, who is so proud of his possession of a penis, has a view of the genital region of a little girl, and cannot help being convinced of the absence of a penis in a creature who is so like himself. With this, the loss of his own penis becomes imaginable, and the threat of castration takes its deferred effect (Freud,

1984, p.318).

The concepts of threat and loss are thus mediated in the realm of fantasy - the boy puts himself in the place of a girl, fantasises the possibility of loss, and, in order to survive, internalises the castrating agent. My argument here is that the Oedipus complex cannot take place at some purely internal, intra-psychic level, but that it forms part of the interactions and the social structures of the family which represent and reproduce society. Patriarchal society would be inoperable unless it had the rule of force, institutionalised through the legal system and sanctioned in the religious and educational satellites, to rely on. Through the legal system, force relates to notions of ascendancy and power which play a formulating part in the model of patriarchy. The law charges the attitudes and values to which religion, the legal and medical profession, and social convention ascribes. As such the principles of patriarchy appears two fold; "male shall dominate female, elder male shall dominate younger" (Millett, 1971, p.25). Traditionally, patriarchy granted the father nearly total ownership of wife and children and the powers of physical abuse. As can be seen in section 2.3.2, the father in Victorian society was both begetter and owner in a system in which kinship was the medium through which property was channelled. The concept of ownership was first defined by Sir Henry Maine, a nineteenth-century historian of ancient jurisprudence. Basing his definition of the family on the "patria potestas" of Rome, Maine observes:

The eldest male parent is absolutely supreme in his household. His dominion extends to life and death and is as unqualified over his children and their houses as over his slaves (cited in Millett, 1971, p.34).

Although the Roman "patria potestas" was an extreme form of patriarchy and by no means universal, the wife and children's legal position in Victorian society made this extreme kind of tyranny possible in every legal sense, while excluding redress through political, legal or religious institutions. In a society in which autonomy and power depend upon currency and gender, the information of the total power which structure relations and by which one is collectively and mutually controlled, must be deeply and irreversibly built into the system of interaction between father and children, and reproduced in every generation. In order to reproduce the structures of power, control and submission, revolt has to be repressed and the father internalised.

4.3.2 Our original question is once more relevant: in what kind of society is normality achieved through repression, or phrased differently, in what kind of society is tradition transmitted through internalising the castrating agent? Freud himself answers that question:

A considerable amount of aggressiveness must be developed in the child against the authority which prevents him from having his first, but nonetheless his most important satisfactions, whatever the kind of instinctual deprivation that is demanded of him may be....By means of identification he takes the unattackable authority into himself. The authority now turns into his superego....(Freud, 1973, p.95).

In this kind of formulation, the castration threat is less important than the intensity of the interaction. As we have seen, the bourgeois home in the nineteenth century was characterised by its imploded, sexually charged,

authoritorean nature. The private quality, the dependence of children on parents out of which Oedipus grew and the domination of the old generation over new was sanctioned, not only by the church, but in the law. In this family, parental authority was presented as the inevitable necessity of human experience, and the systems of interactions through which the stratified, threatening, intensely emotional relationship between parents and children were experienced, created the conditions for internalizing the punitive father. In addition, the reality of persecution was suppressed by ascribing to the morally and legally sanctioned beliefs that the child was innately wicked - or, as Freud would have it, the inevitable psycho-sexual development of the child.

5. THE JUNCTION: MASOCHISM AND HYSTERIA, REALITY AND FANTASY

5.1 The Silenced Witch

By moving away from the seduction theory, Freud displaced the cause of neurosis from the social reality of family structure to biological or mythical reality. In the seduction theory, sexuality was defined for the child through her/his interactions with parents who were unconscious agents of their class and society. But in Oedipus, the transactions through which the child's libido begins to take its characteristic shape, were represented as the choices made by the child, and thus the fundamentally hierarchically reciprocity of family communications were distorted. This, in turn, led to the formulation of the distinction between real events and fantasies as a basic premise on which the difference between the pleasure principle and the reality principle rests. The assertion that the pleasure principle governs the libido and the reality principle governs the ego gave rise to the understanding that there are no fantasies in the external world and no reality to the libido - a sharp duality which compelled Freud eventually to remove psychic reality from social reality. However, the world of internal fantasy Freud structured explains neither the blindness of Oedipus nor the chain of events which gave rise to his self-imposed disfigurement. If myth reflects reality, then Oedipus' blindness can be seen as reflecting the punishment which Victorian daughters imposed on themselves.

Oedipus' blindness prevented him from living fully in the world; by taking the responsibility of his father's actions on himself, he also refrained

from speaking out and condemning the actions of his father. The symptoms of hysteria not only prevented the daughters from functioning in their social surround in an even remotely normal way, but they also made condemnation of the father, as agent of society, impossible. In other words, the symptoms of hysteria constituted a self-imposed blindness and silence. Hysteria comprised aches of various kinds which were without organic cause; split consciousness, hallucinations, motor hyperactivity or rigidity, anesthesia, neuralgia, visual disturbances, epileptic convulsions, contortions, paralysis, tics, etc (Freud 1962, p.198). Even more striking is Freud's analogy of hysteria to medieval theories of possession and exorcism. The punishment meted out to witches seemed to him to bear a resemblance to the self-punishing tendencies of his patients. He wrote:

The hysterics among them would quite often stick pins into themselves or have their breasts cut open. These self-destructive tendencies could always be traced back to early seduction, and time and again patients had been tortured with pins by those responsible (cited in Krüll, 1986 p.45).

In 1897, Freud wrote to Fliess:

I am beginning to dream of an extremely primitive devil religion the rites of which continue to be performed secretly, and now I understand the stern therapy of the witches (ibid, p.44).

His interaction with his hysteric patients thus evoked in Freud images of a blood culture. In a later letter to Fliess, he describes the fantasy of a girl:

Think of it; I have been given a scene about the circumcision of a girl, involving the cutting off of a piece of one of the labia minora, and the sucking off of the blood, after which the child got to eat a piece of the skin (cited in Krüll p.46).

These images, evocative of blood and mutilation, constitute the hysteric's reality. Once again these symptoms, in their intensity and total ability to prevent normal life, cannot be viewed as the effect of sexually-tinted misunderstandings between father and daughter. The violence of the effect must be matched by the violence of the cause. Freud's distinction between an external, real world of events versus an imaginary world rooted in phylogenetic, biological unconsciousness, left him with the eternal individual-biological level of intra-psychic fantasy, and turned psychoanalysis into ideology.

In order to understand the severity of the symptoms of hysteria, to match effect with cause, it is necessary to focus on the structures of interactions and to specify the mutual interrelatedness of the agents of psychic mutilation which communicate at several levels of fantasy and reality. There are two aspects of the female Oedipus complex of specific relevance to the discussion of masochism and hysteria (see section 5.2). These two which interlace the internal construct of the Oedipus hypothesis with the realms of fantasy and reality, will be outlined in section 5.1.1 and section 5.1.2.

5.1.1 The first point of importance regarding the internal pattern of the Oedipus construct, is the logical inconsistency inherent in the two

mutually exclusive premises on which the female Oedipus complex is concluded. Freud maintains that, in order for the girl to resolve the pre-oedipus attachment to the mother, she has to accept her castration and replace her mother as love object with her father. After the strife, anger and resentment that this process inevitably involves, she enters the Oedipus phase like a "haven of refuge" (Freud, 1973). In order for her to fantasise seduction by the father, the girl had obviously moved out of the pre-oedipal phase in which the mother was the object of desire and the father was simply a rival in her active attempt to fuse with the mother. However, the daughter's accusations of cruelty and mutilation do not speak of a father who is perceived as a "haven of refuge", but of a father who is feared. The accusations perhaps speak most eloquently of that ambivalence that Freud found at the core of female sexuality: a father who is simultaneously loved and at a fundamental level, hated; respected but also despised. Perhaps it would be more realistic to assume that it is this relationship, this configuration of emotions, that is carried through to the marriage, and not the pre-oedipal ambivalence of resentment and love towards the mother. Two examples of this will suffice. In the case history of Dora, the daughter was "most tenderly attached" to her father, to the point where her "behaviour...went far beyond what would have been appropriate to filial concern. She felt and acted more like a jealous wife" (Freud, 1925, p.26). At the same time she was extremely offended by many of his "actions and peculiarities" (ibid., p.26) and critical of him to the point of obsession. When this girl was sexually approached by a man whom she liked and respected, she rejected his advances vehemently. Freud observes:

This was surely just the situation to call up a distinct feeling of sexual excitement in a girl of fourteen who had never been approached. But Dora had at that moment a violent feeling of disgust, tore herself free from the man, and hurried past him to the staircase and from there to the street door (ibid., p.37).

Freud came to the conclusion that Dora's behaviour at the time proved conclusively that at fourteen she was "already entirely and completely hysterical" (ibid., p.38). Apart from the astonishing blindness of a closed psychoanalytic thought system in which distaste expressed at the advances of a man not found sexually attractive is taken as conclusive proof of illness, it seems feasible to assume that Dora's feelings for her father were reproduced in her interaction with this man whom she liked and respected on the one hand, and found deeply unattractive on the other.

Two symptoms of her illness, relating to her interaction with the male sex, are of importance here, not only for their relevance to the central thesis of my discussion, but also for the importance accorded to them in the therapeutic process. The first, a loss of voice, was given almost no attention by Freud. The second, a sensory hallucination, was emphasised in Freud's discussion of the case (Freud, 1925). This hallucination became an intermittently permanent feature of her symptoms after her encounter with the elderly housefriend. She complained to Freud years after the incident had taken place, that she could still feel upon the upper part of her body the imprint of the embrace. Freud, in the typically cumbersome way that becomes inevitable when patients are, as a matter of course, disbelieved, reconstructed the complaint in the following explanation. During the man's embrace, Dora not only felt his kiss but also his erection pressing against the lower part of her body. Because

this experience was so revolting for the budding hysteric, she repressed the memory and replaced it with the sensation of pressure upon her thorax, a sensation not reminiscent of the sexual. Her disgust at the man's embrace, and her subsequent avoidance of any man engaged in affectionate or eager discussion with a woman, could now be explained in terms of the link she drew between the genitals and excremental functions. Freud observed:

The subject of erection solves some of the most interesting hysterical symptoms. The attention that women pay to the outlines of men's genitals as seen through their clothing becomes, when it has been repressed, a source of the very frequent cases of avoiding company and of dreading society - it is scarcely possible to exaggerate the pathogenic significance of the comprehensive tie uniting the sexual and the excremental, a tie which is at the very basis of a very large number of hysterical phobias (Freud, 1925, p.41).

This elaborate detour used to obscure any link between male genitals and female disgust or fear, is not only cumbersome but has little explanatory power. It is certainly possible that Dora felt the pressure of her suitor's erection against her body. It is clear that she reacted with disgust. What is not clear is why the disgust should be linked to the excremental functions and not to her attitude towards the male genitals? It is also not clear why so much more emphasis is placed on this symptom rather than on that of the loss of voice which is so much more serious in terms of interacting with the world. It is at least as plausible to suggest that the loss of voice, in conjunction with the pressure of the thorax, denoted an inability to tell what the incident with the male, her father's age, was reminiscent of. This is not to suggest that the incident repeated an earlier one with her father. The suggestion here is

that the symptom, or rather, the combination of the two symptoms told a story of distaste and suspicion directed at the father who represented the male world. In other words, the symptoms told the secret that could not be spoken of.

The case of Fraulein Anna O is another example of the ambivalence felt towards the father which is, to a large extent, expressed in the symptoms of hysteria. According to Breuer, Anna O was "passionately fond" of her father (Freud et al., 1974, p.74). However, although the girl never mentioned any resentment towards her father during the course of her illness, many of her symptoms originated in her interaction with her father. One of her symptoms was selective deafness. Breuer observed that it was possible to differentiate this habit of not hearing as follows:

Not hearing when someone came in...108 separate detailed instances of this....First instance: not hearing her father come in.
b) Not understanding when several people were talking. 27 instances. First instance: her father.
c) Not hearing when she was alone and directly addressed. 50 instances. Origin: her father having vainly asked her for some wine.
e) Deafness brought on by fright at a noise. 37 instances. Origin: a choking fit of her father's caused by swallowing the wrong way (ibid., p.90).

It is plausible to assume that Anna O did not want to hear her passionately loved father and that the symptom tells of her reluctance to listen to the father. It is also curious that a daughter who loves her father so passionately should suddenly be unable to hear him when he is choking and obviously in need of help. The choking clearly indicated a threat to life. Her frightening hallucinations and paralysis of the right arm

originated in a "waking dream" (ibid., p.93) while she was nursing her father. While sitting next to her father's bedside, she saw a black snake coming towards him. She tried to fight the snake off, but her arm was paralysed. When she looked at her hand she saw that the "fingers (had) turned into little snakes with death's hands" (ibid., p.93). Not only did Anna O. find it impossible to fight off the danger, but the very hand that could have saved her father had turned into the symbol of destruction. If Anna O. really "adored" her father, the adoration was certainly entwined with some very negative emotions towards him.

5.1.2. Delving deeper into the interconnected levels of fantasy and reality that webbed themselves into Freud's Oedipus construct, the inconsistency relating to the father as seducer becomes more apparant. In this fantasy, the girl shifts the blame of her own illicit desires onto the father. In so doing, she is able to find pleasure in the fantasy without suffering the consequences of her guilt for allowing herself the desire to take the place of the mother. If this is the case, it is difficult to understand why hysteria should be the inevitable result of the fantasy. Hysteria was a crippling disease, stunting and distorting the lives of the young women who suffered from it. If hysteria is the effect of fantasy, then the assumption is that hysteria is the self-imposed punishment for a fantasy that is both illicit and immoral. But the unanswered question in this construct remains then of why punishment is necessary if the blame is shifted onto the father? By shifting the blame onto the father, the girl is blameless, and therefore no punishment is needed.

5.2. The Self-mutilating Witch

With the use of several case histories, Alice Miller (1985) illustrates that it is possible to detect in a patient's behaviour the active re-enactment of a situation passively endured in childhood. The mystery of the illness lies in its ambivalence: its symptoms are used to tell something that must remain absolutely secret. If one accepts that symptoms express the experience of a patient, whether in reality or fantasy, then the question that needs to be asked is what the hysteric tried to tell the world in her self-mutilation, and what was it that she tried to keep secret? It is possible that she told of the mutilation of her body and/or trust in infancy, and that she not only re-lived that mutilation in her symptoms but like Oedipus, punished herself. In so doing she hid not only the sin of the father but her own part as the guilty victim in the re-enactment of the myth. Working within the Freudian paradigm, this possibility becomes viable when it is taken into account that the punitive father is internalised through a process of repression and lives in the son who in turn becomes father. (Bearing in mind that the blameless father of the Freudian paradigm was, in fact, the omnipotent Victorian father described in previous sections). To return to the observation made in section 5.1.1, the accounts of the daughters were of mutilation and fear. The symptoms of hysteria were often related to blood and mutilation (see section 5.1). Freud's conviction that masochism was an inevitable part of female sexuality, grew out of the case histories of the daughters which he eventually anchored theoretically in the female Oedipus complex as an inevitable part of the female developmental process.

I want to argue two points here. Firstly, Freud's use of the term

'masochism' with its implication of joy in suffering, is a singularly unhelpful description of the female plight. Even if the daughters' accounts were fantasies, no indication exists that they found pleasure in those fantasies. In fact, the symptoms of hysteria argue eloquently against such an assumption. Secondly, if the testimonies of blood and mutilation were fantasies, they were rooted in reality. I would agree with Alice Miller's position that an illness such as hysteria, is on the whole, the active re-enactment of a traumatic event passively endured. I would argue that the obsession with sexual deprivation and degradation (if such an obsession existed) of Victorian women, simply expressed the fate they endured at the hands of fathers, brothers and husbands.

In this section I will question the suitability of the term masochism as used by Freud and his immediate followers. I will argue that the term originated in male prejudice and male distaste for the female body and female functions, and has no explanatory power concerning women's attitudes towards their bodies or their roles. I will argue further that the use of the term obscures the social conditions in which certain configurations of traits coalesce and coagulate, thereby expressing the condition of subordination.

5.2.1 According to Freud, the three distinguishing traits of female personality were passivity, masochism and narcissism. These female traits develop out of the process of growth every girl goes through and are the inevitable result of normal development (see section 3.2.1). Femininity can thus be understood as constitutionally passive, masochistic and narcissistic. The leading feminine characteristic, passivity, achieved

"with the abandonment of clitoridal masturbation" and maternal longings in the Oedipal stage, brought about "with the help of passive instinctual impulses" (Freud, 1973, p.162), is the first link in the chain that tie women to their fate, and is dynamically interrelated with masochism.

Masochism comprises all passive attitudes to sexual life and object (Freud, 1961). Abandoning her active impulses is the girl's first correct step on the road to normal womanhood, and because masochism is inextricably linked to passivity, it follows that masochism is a pre-requisite for normal womanhood. Freud confirms this notion further in his explanation of masochism in men: "If, as happens so often, you meet with masochism in men, what is left to you but to say that these men exhibit very plain feminine traits?" (Freud, 1973, p.149). When fantasising, the subject is placed in a situation characteristic of womanhood; "they (masochistic fantasies) signify...being castrated, or copulated with, or giving birth to a baby" (Freud, 1961, p.162). Erotogenic masochism (see section 3.1.1) develops with the libido through all its phases, and takes on the characteristics of each phase:

The fear of being eaten up by the totem animal (the father) originates from the primitive oral organization; the wish to be beaten by the father comes from the sadistic-anal phase which follows it; castration, although it is later disavowed, enters into the content of masochistic phantasies as a precipitate of the phallic stage or organization; and from the genital organization there arises, of course, the situation of being copulated with and of giving birth, which are characteristic of femaleness (Freud, 1961, p.165).

The assumption on which this whole elaborate construct is built is, that if joy is experienced in the functions which denote femininity and therefore

passivity, it must of necessity be of a masochistic nature (i.e. joy in suffering). There are a number of implicit assumptions made here that are arrived at without any attempt to clarify the theoretical steps that built the construct of masochism. Firstly, although Freud advises against conflating feminism with passivity (Freud, 1973) and points out that women display activity in a variety of directions, his concept of masochism is built on passivity, and not on femininity as giving preference to passive aims (Freud, 1973). (His followers, notably Deutch (1945) of course, did not even attempt to make that distinction). Passivity, as being inextricably linked to masochism, is the first premise that has to be undermined if the concept of masochism is to be questioned.

Because penis-envy and the acceptance of castration form the first link in the chain leading inexorably to the concept of constitutional female masochism (see section 3.2.1), it is necessary here to examine the curious expression used by Freud, namely, "the fact of castration" (Freud, 1973). Little girls have not, in fact, been castrated; their bodies are completely intact. Moreover, little girls don't even suffer the penile trauma of circumcision. Freud's insistence on using a term so devoid of any real meaning might very well point to the symbolic meaning of the term. In other words, it is possible that Freud himself understood, perhaps on an unconscious level, that the penis symbolised a pattern of life, a system of values. The mis-statement implicit in the words "the fact of castration" calls attention to a latent meaning in his theory of the castration complex. No woman has been deprived of a penis; she never had one to begin with. But she has been deprived of a world that men enjoy and exert power on. As such, the penis stands as symbol of the power to control

one's own destiny. Thus, the physical absence of a penis symbolises women's powerlessness. As social castrates they had no access to the avenues of power which men used to control and subordinate them (Firestone, 1971). Women were not physically wounded, but they were mentally mutilated in that they could never reach their full potential as human beings. The only avenue of acceptance open to them was that of childbirth and motherhood. I want to argue here that wifhood, childbirth and motherhood did not denote passivity, nor a preference to passive aims. As the only means of livelihood for the woman, it meant the active pursuit of a means of survival. Therefore, the acceptance of castration and the acceptance of a place, a role and a function in life, can only be understood as a means of survival. The term masochism used in this content bears little resemblance to the meaning given to it by Freud.

Secondly, the assumption is made that women found joy in their inferior, passive place in the world. In fact, Freud's assertion of masochism is the only indication in his collected writings that women find some joy in sexual activity. The secret premise on which the construct of masochism is built, is

- a) that women's role in coitus is constitutionally passive,
- b) that it is painful to the woman and therefore,
- c) that she finds joy in the fantasies of coitus before marriage, and in the painful experience itself after marriage.

However, even the most superficial reading of history questions this assumption. As a result of her education, or rather lack of education, and her protected middle-class environment, the majority of middle-class

women were completely ignorant of what marriage meant sexually. In addition, they were kept ignorant of what happened within their own bodies since the onset of puberty (Harrison, 1978). Mid-Victorian girls were brought up in an environment where sexuality was, as far as possible, cauterised from the minds of children, where every mention of the reproductive process was cloaked in mystery and prohibition, and where babies were treated as beings more angelic than human. The origin of babies was answered, if at all, by various fantasies: i.e. God made babies in heaven through the Holy Mother; or parents fetch them from heaven, sometimes in a balloon; or the babies fly down and lose their wings; they also grow in cabbages (ibid). For the majority of women copulation, if not the entire sexual function, remained either a non-existent concept, or something for nervous and ignorant speculation. The moment of the wedding night made a traumatic impact on most women. This was the case with even the most educated of women (ibid).

Two examples, taken from Harrison (1978), sufficiently illustrates the ignorance women lived under and counter Freud's assumptions about masochistically inspired erotic fantasies. Mary Stopes' upbringing was very different from that of most girls. As a child she read extensively, and amongst the writers she favoured was Darwin. She was placed second in her class for zoology in her first year at college; she studied botany in Munich and eventually gained her doctorate in that subject. However, when she married, it took her six months to begin to feel "instinctively that something was lacking" (Harrison, p.36). She went to the British museum to find out what it was and discovered there that her marriage had never been consummated. Annie Besant, another woman who became involved in the

birth control movement, also wrote a book about her disastrous marriage, in which she contradicts Freud's implicit assumptions about the joy of suffering.

My dreamy life, into which no knowledge of evil had been allowed to penetrate, in which I was guarded from all pain, shielded from all anxiety, kept innocent of all questions of sex, was no preparation for married existence, and left me defenceless to face a rude awakening (cited in Harrison, p.46).

The ignorance in which women were kept, the alienation of women from their own bodies, and the teachings that taught that the female body and its reproductive functions were objects of disgust, forced most women to adopt a policy of pretending that the erotic dimension to the human character did not exist. Such a policy clearly prevented them from accepting, understanding and enjoying their own sexuality, and made it impossible to share that sexuality with a man they could not even converse with (see section 2.3.2). The conventional twentieth century joke of the Victorian woman lying still on her wedding night and thinking of England implies that women were repelled by their husbands' sexual demands. The truth, however, might well be that women were not only repelled but revolted and frightened. It is possible to theorise women into a position of masochistically swooning under the superior strength of the male. Freud takes his place in a long line of pornographers, male writers, and male and female psychoanalysts (notably Bonaparte and Deutch) who have titilated their audiences with visions of the helpless, swooning female at the mercy of the dark male force. However, the reality was probably very different. The Freudian image of the woman finding erotic enjoyment in the passive endurance of male sexuality is very much part of an elaborately constructed

theory in which every tenet points towards the denouncement of the lived experience in a social reality which deformed the expression of experience into an acceptable language and message. Moreover, this assertion of masochism as constitutionally female, the assumption that women find joy in their subordination, justifies the domination and humiliation of women. Freud was the first in a long line of psychoanalysts, medical and legal practitioners who scientifically attempted to prove that women not only enjoyed humiliation, but they also craved it. Marie Bonaparte, whose own sexual tendencies as deduced from her joyful descriptions of intercourse as flagellation can at best be called a little suspect, prescribes healthy womanhood as the joy in the perceived brutality of intercourse.

Vaginal sensitivity in coitus for the adult female, in my opinion, is thus largely based on the existence, and more or less unconscious, acceptance of the child's immense masochistic beating fantasies. In coitus, the woman, in effect, is subjected to a sort of beating by the man's penis. She receives its blows and often, even, loves their violence. This sensitivity must be a deep and truly vaginal sensitivity to the blows of the penis (cited in Millett, 1971, p.205).

The woman who finds difficulty in accepting the experience of her sexuality as a series of punitive blows, has been unable to successfully resolve the pre-oedipal conflict (see section 3.2.2) and is, therefore, diagnosed as neurotic:

When a woman protests so energetically against her masochism, her passivity, and her femininity, it is because the makeup against which she protests is already overdetermined, owing to constitutionally preponderant bisexuality. But for that, she would perfectly and without any

great conflict have accepted the feminine masochism essential to her sex (ibid., p.205).

It is only one small conceptual step from here to assure men and women that rape too is nothing but an expression of the male's knowledge of the woman's need for that kind of violence. Freud himself opened the door to this kind of interpretation; he asserts that women's masochistic fantasies can be traced to Oedipus guilt, and that such fantasies are viewed as fusing sexual desire with the need for suffering which serves as a defence against guilt feelings which result from Oedipal fantasies. This circular argument concludes in the assumption that the Oedipal stage as the origin of masochism is most obvious in female fantasies of rape. The women shift the responsibility for their desires to the attacker, thus simultaneously relieving their own conscience and satisfying their sexual interests by assuming the role of the innocent victim (Freud, 1961).

Sandor Rado (1956) takes it from there. He situates the act of rape within a criminal pain dependent pattern of sexual behaviour, isolating dramatized and hidden forms of sexual pain dependence, which reveal themselves in the woman as an unconscious desire to be raped. This unconscious desire is betrayed by a conscious dread of rape. (In other words, the woman who wants to counter this theory by explaining the horror of rape, simply expresses her unconscious desire to be raped.) Rado introduces the concept of sexual violence as contextualised in sexual education, i.e. the mother introduces the concept of violence by her threats of violent consequences following masturbation or sexual exploration with the opposite sex. Historically the need to place violence in the centre of sexual education may have originated with women.

"In the perennial battle of the sexes, women may have invented this strategic though self-defeating scheme in order to avenge their sexual servitude" (Rado, 1956, p.365).

Concerning rape, he believes that the standard sexual performance is inhibited by the victim's guilty fear of inescapable punishment. To free herself from the crippling inhibition, the woman undergoes beforehand the punishment by inviting humiliating treatment from the opposite sex. In an outburst of repressed yet overflowing rage, the man inflicts on the opposite sex the punishment he dreads, thus vicariously sharing in the latter's suffering. These psychoanalytic theories of rape which underline and support Criminological and Sociological theories of rape focus on the victim-precipitation hypothesis (Amir, 1971; Taylor, 1973). Freud's concept of masochism has spiralled into a justification and perpetuation of the abuse of women.

The third assumption I want to take issue with is the assertion that the male's fantasy about the woman's function and role is masochistic. That is, a conceptual leap is made between fantasies of being eaten up, beaten, castrated, and being copulated with or giving birth, between fantasies in which the subject is degraded, put at the mercy of another and hurt and the normal female functions. Perhaps here we have come to the crux of the matter. To describe masochism and suffering as inherently feminine expresses the male attitude towards the female body and functions. It does not express the reality of the female experience of copulation and motherhood, but the male perception of those functions as degrading, painful and ultimately repulsive (see section 1.2). It puts the female functions on a par with the defilement and dishonour experienced by the

male in the sado-masochistic encounter. The concepts of sadism and masochism must be understood in the context of the social fabric from which they were derived.

5.3.1 The "Perverted Father"

Then the surprise that in all cases, the father, not excluding my own, had to be accused of being perverse (Freud, cited in Masson, 1985).

Medard Boss, in his phenomenological approach to sexual perversions (De Koning (ed.), 1982) states that "all human diseases are limitations set upon the free execution of the total possible relations, which constitute the being-in-the-world and being-with-others of man within a particular society" (p.85). Sadism and masochism, as diseases which limit the interaction between men and women to the act and enjoyment of humiliation, has to be understood in the context of a patriarchal society. Sadism is built into its culture as a necessary tenet of force which interlinks the units of that culture.

In the discussion that follows, my concern is not with masochism as a psychic disorder, but as the acceptance of castration as portrayed in psychoanalytic literature of female sexuality. As I have pointed out, I don't believe that any evidence exists which proves conclusively that women in fact enjoyed their place and role in the world. Women might have lived through endlessly repeated patterns of castration, but then hysteria was the expression of their experience of castration. The symptoms of hysteria were a testimony of endurance which could not be told in any other

way. Sadism in this context pertains to the limitations placed on a population group which makes the "free execution of (their) total possible relations" impossible. This took place in a society which implanted patterns of relations as patterns of mind upon its members.

5.3.2 Kate Millett observes that patriarchy presents a long history of cruelties and barbarities:

The suttee execution in India, the crippling deformity of footbinding in China, the lifelong ignominy of the veil in Islam, or the widespread persecution of sequestration, the gynacium, and purdah. Phenomena such as clitoridectomy, clitoral incision, the sale and enslavement of women under one guise or another, involuntary and child marriages, concubinage and prostitution, still takes place - the first in Africa, the latter in the Near and Far East, the last generally. The rationale which accompanies that imposition of male authority euphemistically called "the battle of the sexes", bears a certain resemblance to the formulas of nations at war, where any heinousness is justified on the grounds that the enemy is either an inferior species or really not human at all. The patriarchal mentality has concocted a whole series of rationales about women which accomplish this purpose tolerably well. And these traditional beliefs still invade our consciousness and affect our thinking to an extent few of us would be willing to admit (Millett, 1971, p.46).

In patriarchal societies emotions dealing with cruelty and punishment are frequently linked to sexuality which in turn is equated both with evil and power. This is apparent in pornography, art, literature, mythology, and the scientific explanations of the relations between the sexes used in psychoanalysis. The genesis of masochistic formations is to be found in the family unit, reflecting the reality of the sado-masochistic variables

present in the dyadic interaction where one individual exerts total power over another. The spectrum of sado-masochistic variables include the reality of father-daughter rape, the fantasy of the child-adult sexual abuse in pornography, literature in which power or authority, calculated to injure and humiliate, is romanticized, and the psychoanalytic and psychological understanding of the relationship between father and daughter, mother and son. The rule associates sadism with the masculine role, and victimization with the female role. This is well expressed by Deutch in her visions of sexuality as assault and joy in assault:

What the young boy yearns to accomplish is an anal, cloacal, intestinal penetration of the mother; a bloody disembowelling even. The child of two, three, or four, despite, or rather because of, its infancy, is truly then a potential Jack the Ripper (cited in Millett, 1971, p.204).

Whatever one might think of these histrionics on the part of Helena Deutch, she illustrates the understanding expressed by writers, artists, pornographers and social scientists that the family is the nexus of experience, the secret of the individual and the origin of sado-masochistic variables. It is thus interesting to note that the term 'family' is derived from the Latin "famulus", designating servant or slave, clearly expressing the power the father held over wife and children. In this unequal relationship of power, social convention, religious belief and the ethos of aggressive competition combine to formulate the acts of injustice and humiliation which are performed as a matter of course in the daily interaction between family members. In ancient times, unwanted children were killed, either by exposure or drowning or any other means suited to the occasion. Parental cruelty is a frequent theme in fairy tales, myths

and literature. In our own Western civilization, we face the predicament of the battered child, and in increasing frequency, the sexually abused child.

5.3.3. Up to the turn of the century, women were little more than property over which the husband had decisive power (see section 3.2.1). As such, the family guarded and preserved the female status of perpetual minor, which in effect meant being perpetually at the mercy of the male power. However, the family as the bullwark of patriarchal ideology simply served to enforce the information carried in myths, literature, rites and legend concerning the nature of women. Central themes that emerge in mythology always counterpose the good mother with the evil mother, the destroyer. This notion found its counterpart in the Victorian whore as ever present antithesis of the virgin. Shirley Pankin (1973) observes that there is no figurative image of woman that does not carry with it its polar opposite.

Delilah, castrator and destroyer, and Judith, redeemer; Pandora, with her casket of evil knowledge and Athena with her godly wisdom; Eve and the Virgin Mary, dark and light, exist side by side (p.211).

But it is in the realm of ritual that the male fear and distrust of the female body crystallizes. In ancient Greece, men dominated and controlled in every sphere, while women were given ritual presidency over the transitional experiences, dying and birth, which were perceived as passages into and out of darkness. Death was seen as a polluting state, and the fact that the rites of burial and mourning were assigned to women reflected the male view that women were polluting beings and that aspects of female

biology were polluting to men. It was taboo to touch women during menstruation and after childbirth; entering a temple after intercourse with a woman was taboo (Pomeroy, 1975). The same taboos still exist in many African cultures (Hammond and Tooke, 1974), and form part of Judaic tradition. Greek literature and myth reflect the view that the sexuality of women can threaten male order, male life and male sanity. Most Greek daemons were female, they were born from earth, and were described as daughters of the night. Their femaleness was synonymous with their earth-born status, their attack on the mind and their habitation in darkness. Men became vulnerable to possession by these dark forces if women and their affinity to darkness were not controlled by the forces of the rational mind (Pomeroy, 1975). The same fear pervaded relations between men and women in the Middle Ages. Women, passive and obedient, were the earthy representatives of Mary. But when active and self-willed, she was dangerous, the representative of Eve who could lead men to their fall. The narrative of the Temptation and Fall formed the basis on which moral attitudes towards women were shaped. The name 'Eve' was applied to women in general because she was the cause of both good and misfortune to men - good because she gave birth, disaster because through transgression she became the cause of dying. Taboos surrounded the interaction between male and female; the resumption of intercourse before a child was weaned was frowned upon, and intercourse during menstruation was forbidden (Kirshner and Wemple, 1985).

Writers of the Romantic era either projected women as unattainable and cold, forever out of reach, or directed extreme malevolence towards women. At its most extreme, the malevolence merged with erotic enjoyment of horror and perversity, as evident in the works of the Marquis de Sade in which the

degradation of women is described in phrases which reach a sadistic frenzy (Gorer, 1953).

Throughout the ages, women have been feared, controlled, and viewed as polluted beings who could contaminate rationality and the purity of the male intellect. This view of women is not found only in myth and legend, but has been transmitted from generation to generation in the interaction between mother and daughter, and has thereby informed the unconscious image of the self. From birth to old age, women have been subjected to invidious versions of themselves in myth, literature, ritual, religion, and artistic expression. Women have had to limit their vision of their own potential according to the constraints placed on the portrayal of their image through the ages. This is re-enforced by the denigration women encounter persistently in their daily interaction with men. It is not surprising that women have developed and internalised traits of minority status:

group self-hatred and self-rejection, a contempt both for herself and for her fellows - the result of that continual, however subtle, reiteration of her inferiority which she eventually accepts as a fact (Millett, 1971, p.56).

In Freud's words, "the fact of castration". But the assertion that women find erotic pleasure in their castration, that the normal woman ought to find erotic pleasure in her castration, is part of a fallacious web with which psychoanalysis justified and perpetuated women's oppression. The emphasis was glibly shifted from perversion in the father to constitutional perversion in the daughter. In order to exonerate the father, the reality

of the daughter's experience was abstracted into an elaborate justification of her psychic mutilation, and possibly of her physical mutilation.

5.3.4. I wish to return to sadism in the male, as opposed to masochism in the daughter. While still believing the accounts of the daughters, Freud struggled with the concept of perversion in the fathers. Boss' observation concerning the sexual perversions is relevant in this context.

Human existence can only be called a selfhood while it alone, in the encounter with everything that lays claim to it (out of the open realm of its world) addresses itself as this or that particular being, has itself to decide to which of the innumerable givens of the world it will commit itself at any given moment, and in what way it will do this (De Koning (ed.) 1982, p.87).

The husband and father who had total control over his wife and children was also the man who had learned from early childhood that his body was disgusting and that sexual pleasure was evil. Most importantly, he learned that lesson from people who were deeply loved. He was also a man with an extremely well developed superego who lived in a culture that placed a high value on personal ambition and material possession. He was competitive to the extreme, and learned from early childhood that, in order to retain his position and power, he had to guard continually against subordination from those he ruled over. The ambivalent understanding and attitude towards women accompanied this cultural structure. On the one hand women were regarded as pure, angelic beings who were worshipped for their unworldly ways. On the other hand, she was the confined wife, ignorant to the extreme, legally a perpetual minor, and incapable of understanding or participating in any conversation not focusing on fashion

or children. And somewhere in between, like a shadow haunting every gesture of trust or tenderness, she was the polluter, a reservoir of physical and mental infection. Sexuality was a twisted, repressed, shameful thing. The Victorian man, rigidly controlled in childhood, growing up in the intense nuclear structure in which sexuality emerged as a distorted and repressed expression of human interaction, would never have been able to "lay claim" to the possibilities of interaction open to men and women. The following extract from the experiential social realm of a sado-masochist illustrates for me the structure in which men and women lived (and to some extent still live) and in which they encounter one another sexually.

When I swear at the women and humiliate them, take away their worth as women, contaminate them with dirty names, I destroy their proud personality-core, that stiff attitude which they have as adult people....Also when I hit them until they whine and wail, only then such a woman becomes very soft and gentle and submissive. My sexual lust-curve suddenly increases significantly when the woman starts to do exactly what I want her to do, when she is no longer hard-headed and obstinate....The moment of absolute submission has to come, and when it is there, I perform no more violence. It is not so much a whipping out of the will which I am after as the absolute gentle submission (cited in De Koning (ed.), 1982, p.92).

I am not saying here that all men in Victorian society were sadists. But I am saying that sadism - the reduction of the other to a position of subservience and humiliation - was built into their culture. Men learned from an early age that in order to establish and retain their position of power, they had to beat and force their way through resistance. Children were forced to submit through deprivation and a love that chipped away at

any possibility of resistance. Women were forced to submit through a myriad of legislative devices, religious doctrines and social conventions. In a culture in which the destruction of the "proud personality-core" was sanctioned by law and religion, sadism was the structure through which sexuality emerged, and in which the father participated. Masochism in this context can only be understood as consent to sadism, i.e. to the destruction of "the proud personality-core". In the patriarchal society which women inherited and cemented through their consent, they were legitimate targets and victims of violence. Hysteria told the story of their victimization.

6. HYSTERIA: REVOLT OF THE CASTRATE

Hysteria as the urtext in the history of women, derived its diagnosis from the relationship between analyst (Freud) and patient (the Victorian hysteric). In order to critically address that diagnosis, it is necessary to understand the structure out of which the diagnosis emerged. In the concluding section, the concepts of hysteria and masochism will be discussed within the framework of the theoretical milieu in which they were formulated, understood and diagnosed. No polished model for a new understanding of hysteria can be offered here but an attempt will be made to translate the symptomatology of hysteria into the Lacanian paradigm in which repression is understood as the consequence of metaphor formation.

According to Lacan, the child's desire to fuse with the mother is repressed by the understanding of the father's presence and the father's name. The child assimilates the father's name and the father's 'no' to his/her desire to be the mother's desire, and she/he identifies with the father. In Freudian terms, the child's desire for the mother has been repressed, but Lacan represents the Freudian act of repression in linguistic terms as the process of metaphor formation (Lacan, 1977). That is, one signifier, the desire for the mother, is substituted for another which is the father's name. Thus the child enters the symbolic order because she/he does not longer relate to what is being signified (the phallus) in a direct unmediated fashion. The relationship between signifier and being signified is now mediated and therefore more distanced from one another. The old signifier (the desire for the mother) is now pushed down to a

deeper level. A chain of signification is established of which the original signifier is just one, unconscious link. In Lacan's treatment of the Oedipus myth, fears and desires that Freud interpreted as relating directly to real parts of the body and real or mythic family events, are therefore understood in terms of language. The Oedipus crisis, when understood as a process of metaphor formation, begins with the child's growing comprehension of the sexual rules that are embedded in its culture's linguistic terms for family and relatives. It is the kin terms, not body parts or any other events in themselves, which determine what is to follow (ibid). In the linguistic sense, the phallus serves as a distinctive feature that separate two classes of subjects: men and women. In Victorian society, the discrepancies between these two classes were catalogued in terms of superiority and inferiority, purity and impurity, and ultimately, sadism and masochism. The phallus as signifier, is the carrier of the information about social inequality with its underside of stunted and/or warped sexuality.

Lacan's use of the incest taboo as metaphor formation corresponds, to some extent and is based on Levi-Strauss' structuralism. Levi-Strauss maintains that it is always a system of exchange that is found at the origin of rules of marriage, and that it is this system which constitutes society. The incest taboo reveals the essence of society as it establishes a structure of exchange between separate groups (women being the goods which are exchanged). The exchange of women between groups ensures that a biological family does not become established as a closed system, and the bond of alliance with another family ensures the dominance of the social over the biological, and of the cultural over the natural (Leach, 1974). Firstly, I want to argue here (taking the assumptions of

Levi-Strauss and Lacan as text) that within these parameters, the female Oedipus complex can only be understood as the insertion of the woman in the circuit of symbolic exchange. Secondly, that the primal scene fantasies, i.e. the sado-masochistic fantasies which take shape at the Oedipal moment, signify the hysteric's repudiation of the female position in the primal scene, while at the same time confirming/articulating the meaning of the scene itself and the sadistic meaning of the phallus. I am thus saying that "neurosis" is the understanding of reality, fantasy articulates that understanding, whereas the acceptance of herself as object in the circuit of symbolic exchange comprises "normal" female sexuality with its overtones of masochism (the passive acceptance of a destiny). It is in the approach to the Oedipus complex that the contradictions in the Freudian analysis become most ambiguous. Although the Oedipus complex specifies a relational structure, properties in this structure are isolated and imbued with meaning that exists outside the properties themselves. Freud never conceded that the significance of the detail lies in the social meaning assigned to it, that explanation lies outside the detail itself. However, Lacan's fundamental assumption that words create things, complicates an analysis of the interplay between language, social systems and the manner in which social structures influence family patterns. For Lacan, society does not influence the individual - society lives inside the individual. This assumption is conceded as valid here, as the social creates, through the superego, the terms in which the norms of society are expressed and reinforced. However, the implicit assumption on which the Lacanian paradigm is based, will be made explicit in this conclusion.

6.1 The Structure of Freudian Explanation

Freud's quest to find an answer to the riddle of hysteria was enmeshed in the strands of the therapeutic relationship. Of importance here, is that that relationship was based on an adherence to the nomological sciences where the laws of causality were applied to human conduct, and the one-to-one relationship by necessity changed in the therapeutic experience to an I-it relationship. The "it" in the subject-object relationship is not necessarily confined to objects, but includes categories or systems of thought which abstract away from the subject-subject relationship, and thus the elementary relational structures through which awareness emerges. The postulates of analizability and law-governedness, as constitutive of an empirical-analytical science are isolated in the analytical experience, and diagnosis of a disease is ultimately derived from these postulates. Implicit in the postulate of analizability, i.e. the natural scientific attempt to derive the properties of wholes from the intrinsic properties of parts, is the assumption that properties exist apart from and before the parts are assembled into complex structures (De Boer, 1974). The study of the chains of associations that constitute the reminiscences of the hysteric is thus directed towards the establishment of connections between factors. The postulate of law-governedness, expressing the assumption that dependent relationships exist between the properties of parts, asserts that properties, after they have been isolated, are investigated as functions of others (ibid). The meaning given to associations, linking the reminiscences of the hysteric into a complex chain in which conventional word and thought categories dissolve, and in which words, memory, fantasy, puns, half-understood reality and inarticulate thought supplement and subvert one another, is thus artificially abstracted from

the experiential context, and re-linked as functions of one another.

However, as De Boer (1974) points out, there are certain objections to the assumption that cause and effect in a conditional relationship are definable without reference to one another. In the first place, although the assumption that wholes are composed of units cannot be argued against, the nomonological method ignores the possibility that the interaction of these units in the construction of the wholes may generate complexities that may result in products qualitatively different from the component parts. When this methodology is applied to human action, the role of history in the creation of complex developmental interactions cannot but be ignored. The fact that the position of any organism at any given moment in time is dependent, not only on its composition at that time, but upon a past that influences contingencies in the present and future interaction of its components, must then be overlooked as well. The breaking up of wholes into their component parts has as an unavoidable consequence the objectification of the properties and thus of the whole, taking the organism out of its personal and historical context. The analytical method is thus unable to explain the meaning objects derive from the internal relationships that link them together. It is at this point that the method proves inadequate for explaining the hysteric who dwells obsessively, to the exclusion of everything else, on the meaning that the internal structures in her world derive from one another. A dream evokes a memory that evokes a paralysis; a half-glimpsed, partially understood encounter turns into a vision of disaster; words, innocent in themselves, represent an underground of sexual mutilation. The hysteric weaves a look, a touch, the taste of food, the sound of running water, the bulge of

the male genitals, into a complex web of associations in which the feminine discourse is neither answerable to the formal categories of thought nor to the laws of cause and effect. Because the meaning that objects take from one another is overlooked in the analytical experience, the status of the component parts change, and thus a new framework of reference is introduced when analysis is undertaken. Therefore, the conclusion the analytical experience works towards no longer complies with the whole as it presents itself in the original pre-analytical experience. The immediate experience of phenomena is altered by the analytical method and re-presented in its changed form to the individual as the "real" experience. This externalization of experience becomes even more problematic when applied to the human being herself. De Boer (1974) states:

When we put on the spectacles of analytical thought, man is suddenly transformed into a complex of factors that are logically independent of each other (p.16).

The postulate of analizability can only explain the human being as fragmented being but is unable to tie the fragments of thoughts, intentions, speech and action together into a coherent whole that is historically and socially specific. The unity of man as he presents himself to the world through his actions and experiences of the world, is lost, and he becomes a series of factors which are causally interconnected. De Boer points out that, when consistently applied to all phenomena in the world, the postulate of analizability functions not as a rule or as a model, but as a description of reality in that it serves as an ontological axiom to the effect that reality is made up of logically independent events (p.25).

By the same token the postulate of law-governedness maps out and defines the approach to an experiential domain. The postulate establishes what is meant by reality, which is that every event has a cause. However, the importance of this principle does not lie in its reference to the objects which constitute reality, it lies in the fact that reality itself has been framed and limited to the search for cause and effect. As such, it becomes the model through which the world is explained and understood. In his quest for a cause, Freud focused on an event (seduction). When the event, that was to be his urtext (going back to the so-called bloodcult of witches in the middle ages), proved not to be rooted in the reality as defined by his natural-scientific method, he abandoned a reality which he equated with the rational categories of thought and language on which the natural scientific method is based, and built up a structure of fantasy that co-existed with the categories of cause and effect, but which did not partake in the events that shape an awareness of the experiential surround. Reality, defined and limited by the method served to catalogue the un-reality of fantasy, exposed fantasy as a sham. Freud, working outside the confines of un-reality, the disease, was thus able to build up the elaborate thought system that constituted the exposure of the female discourse. The validity of Freud's theoretical construct rests on a number of assumptions, of which not the least is the acceptance that the therapist is able to expose the fantasy precisely because he works outside the realms of fantasy (a hysteric afloat in fantasy cannot explode the myth in which hysteria is locked). However, fantasy as a diagnosis is to a large extent derived from the male concept of female sexuality, of the female as sexual being. As such, the male concept of female sexuality is equal to a mythology of femininity. This emerges through the images of a

dominant-submissive interpolation on which traditions of literature, art, religion and education were built; an interpolation which had become part of a collective unconscious. Freud's understanding of masochism shows the influence of this interpolation clearly (see Section 5.2.1.). It is on this dominant-submissive interpolation that sado-masochism turns. In the convoluted structures of signifiers that direct the hysteric to the "fact of castration", sado-masochism is the eroticized underside of the romantic sexual union so fervently sanctioned and promoted by the family, the church and the law. The hysteric turns the romance into pornography - a pornography that plays obsessively on the erotic which is derived from the unequal power relations between the sexes, and which is starkly and unambiguously played out in father-daughter rape. Where physical rape does not take place in actuality, the hysteric's embodiment of mental rape is not a fantasy, but an inability to compromise, and a refusal to allow rape to go unacknowledged in any of its expressions in the relational structure of the sexes. In other words, fantasy is juxtaposed against reality. Fantasy is based on the only two models of female sexuality available in Victorian society; female sexuality as servitude and as prostitution - the prostitute serving as the repressed of the virgin. In the fantasy of father-daughter rape, these two models blend to become the urtext of the male-female relation.

The quest for a cause led Freud to assume hysterical symptoms as compromise formations that literally expressed repressed sexual wishes. The hysteric must have had a secret, an unconscious desire. This desire is spoken across the body, and the Freudian quest then was, ultimately to lead his patients to the point where they could possess their own story. However,

the Victorian woman could not possess her story because possessing a story meant becoming a subject. She was designated as an object - an object of desire, of distrust, an object that had to be taken care of, and an object in the circle of exchange between males. Finally, and importantly for the outcome of diagnosis and ultimately of prognosis, she became an object in the therapeutic relationship. Freud wanted the Victorian woman to become the subject in a story with a beginning (the event which caused hysteria) and an end (the successful completion of therapy) which is told in rational language based on accepted categories of thought and speech. Instead, the hysteric told the story of being an object in the symptoms of hysteria; dramatizing through her body, she converted from the psychic to the physical the ambivalence (guilt, resentment, love) that directed the domestic drama. The hysterical discourse signified the non-acceptance of the symbolic order in which the father's name and the father's no are assimilated; ultimately signifying the refusal to be assigned a masculine or feminine place. For the hysteric there was no cure possible. For Freud, the cure of the symptom and the completion of memory were synonymous. Therefore, it was possible for him to write to Fliess of his reluctance to pursue the seduction theory any further because there were so few cases of cure (see Section 2.3.). However, for the hysteric to trace the segmented associations could lead, inexorably, only to the moment of loss that could never be resolved.

In psychoanalytic literature, the woman's attitude towards the mother is ambiguous while her attitude towards the phallus is unambiguous. The phallus signifies liberation from the painful and contradictory emotions prevalent in the primal relationship with the mother. (In Lacanian terms, the fusional, dual, immediate relationship in the imaginary order which is

dominated by the desire to lose self in other - a desire that can never be satisfied). It signifies acceptance and, overriding all other emotions, it signifies desire. However, in the fantasies of the hysteric, the phallus signifies violence and destruction. The hysteric perceives sexuality as annihilation. If sexuality is formed in the Oedipal moment when castration is accepted, and reproduced through the superego as agent of society, then normal male sexuality can only emerge through the structure of violence, i.e. the incorporation of the castrating agent; and normal female sexuality can only emerge through the ambivalent structure in which acceptance and denial are juxtaposed; the acceptance of the empty space in the world accorded to them and denial of the meaning of the empty space. The fantasy that takes place in the Oedipal period, and which in puberty is translated into a shrinking from the sexual by the hysteric expresses the essential content of patriarchal reality and patriarchal sexual fantasy: the annihilation of the female. Hysteria, then, signifies a refusal to deny the empty space in the world, and becomes the discourse of resistance. However, this discourse is neither poetically feminist (as Montrelay and Kristeva, in Bernheimer et al, 1985 would have us believe), nor revolutionary because in her statement of annihilation, the hysteric destroys herself. Through her discourse the hysteric turns herself into an outlaw; an outlaw without weapons or a strategy of resistance and even without access to the language of those she is in revolt against. Therefore she is unable to direct her insight towards reformulating the answers to the questions that structured her revolt. By defining neurosis as a libidinal turning away from reality, Freud insisted in the case history of Dora (Freud, 1925) that her hysteria was caused by her unconscious desire for Herr K.; a desire which she refused to

acknowledge. The therapeutic work in the analytical experience consisted of leading her back to the roots of her disease - in other words to the point where she could possess her story. But Dora's story was clearly very different from the one Freud chose to hear. In the sterile preciousness of that household, where shoes had to be removed before entering the house and cleanliness became the mother's abiding passion, there was an underside. Dora's father, Philip Bauer, died of tuberculosis. He suffered from syphilis, and the sexual dirt which he brought into the house contaminated his whole family (Freud, 1925). Dora spoke across the precocious cleanliness to the messy underside, across the pretence of normality catalogued in the norms of male as conqueror and female as disease-ridden servant, to her longing for the female, in this case her own father's love object. Freud himself tells us that Dora's love for Frau K. was the "deepest unconscious current in her psychic life" (Bernheimer et al, 1985, p.22) but the model of reality, as imposed by his methodology, does not allow this love to be validated. Dora did not desire the phallic male (Herr K.) but identified with the phallic male (her father). Her desire was for fusion with the female; her hysteria was not a thwarted desire for the father but a breakthrough of the prohibited desire for the mother. A whole range of questions were asked on an unconscious level. Am I a man? Am I a woman? What does it mean to be a man or a woman? Where do I fit into the circuit of exchange between men? How can I accept a 'no' from a contaminating man? These questions prevented her from entering the symbolic order, and thus prevented her from living the story, living under the law, and talking the language of the symbolic order. But identification with the contaminating and contaminated male also prevented her from re-formulating the relational structures in which she was caught up. Dora had no 'own' story to tell -

she could only circle endlessly in the imaginary order in which self is lost in other. Using the fusional, dual and immediate language of the imaginary order, the hysteric's symptoms tell of her need and her inability to escape the categories imposed on her by the bourgeois family, the church, law and education. Her symptoms were the loss of voice, the aversion of the sexual, frigidity which is the cornerstone of hysteria and its most profound sign, Anna O's disruptive polylingualism - a testimony catalogued in associations and codified in the symptoms of the body because there was no other way of telling it, and no models to identify with outside the confines of prostitute and virgin. As such, the hysteric who exists in an alienated mode of being which is expressed in action and the language of the body, falls outside explanation. In the search for cause and effect, no cause can be found in the discourse of the hysteric - the structure through which sexuality emerges is the cause. Nor can the properties of cause and the properties of effect be linked together in a chain that would lead to a cure. Reality itself, as it has been framed and defined by the methodology, prevents the cure, and cannot interpret the effect. It is only if the tension is maintained between the assumption that all events can be traced back to a lucid motive, and the opposing assertion that human beings are helplessly delivered to social forces and physiological impulses, that it becomes possible to integrate an explanation in the verbal and bodily language which carries with it the inscape of the social order. In the language of the outlaw (that person who falls outside rational explanation) causal links dissolve, and associations which link a chain of experiences coagulate in communication with the outside world. However, it is in these frozen patterns of communication that the structure of experience is represented. The

structure is the product of the female history and signifies the empty space at the core of the female condition. As such, the structure of experience does not fall within the parameters of a methodology that negates the complexities that result from the developmental interaction of the properties of wholes. Freud, polarizing reality and fantasy, negated his very first understanding (see Section 2.2.) that words as signs signify the categories of experience. Although he continued to hold to this principle theoretically, basing his therapy on the "talking cure", his diagnosis of hysteria implicitly rejected the concept of a mediated relationship between the body and fantasy, expressed in language which complied with the linguistic definition of the sign. It is true that fantasy lies at the root of the hysteric's disability, but the fantasy is related to the categories of experience the body speaks of. The illness, mediating between the language and the body, can only represent the categories of experience, cataloging the experience in the refusal to partake in the structures of society.

The outlaw outlawed herself. Speaking across her body to the relational structures in which her culture was rooted, she compulsively acted out the Oedipus legend. Castrated by the idiom of law and religion, like Oedipus, she grimly crippled herself. The hysteric was neither a revolutionary nor the precursor of feminism. She was the victim who saw, with the visionary's eye, the warped underside of her culture. Refusing to partake, she nevertheless carried the guilt.

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