THE SKIN-EGO

A NEW TRANSLATION BY NAOMI SEGAL

Didier Anzieu

THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOANALYSIS SERIES

Series Editors: Professor Brett Kahr and Professor Peter L. Rudnytsky

ROUTLEDGE

THE SKIN-EGO

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Didier Anzieu

Translated by Naomi Segal

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND TRANSLATOR

Didier Anzieu (1923–1999) was a French psychoanalyst and theorist whose work brings the body back to the centre of psychoanalytic enquiry. He was the author of numerous books and articles, on areas ranging from the psychology of groups and psychodrama to theories of creativity and thought; he also published short stories, literary criticism, a drama, a book of cartoons and a study of May '68 written from the heart of Nanterre. His research was always conducted alongside his academic and clinical practice, both characterised by inclusivity, curiosity, a broad mind and a gentle manner.

Naomi Segal is a professor of modern languages, specialising in comparative literary and cultural studies, gender, psychoanalysis and the body. In 2004 she created and then directed the Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of London. She has published 15 books, of which the most recent monographs are *Consensuality: Didier Anzieu, gender and the sense of touch*, *André Gide: Pederasty and Pedagogy* and *The Adulteress's Child: authorship and desire in the nineteenth-century novel*. Naomi Segal is an Academic Associate of the British Psychoanalytical Society, a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes académiques and Member of the Academia Europaea.

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SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD

In the spring of 1923, literally days after he discovered the cancerous lesions inside his mouth, Sigmund Freud received a welcome parcel in the post—a copy of one of the volumes of the *Obras Completas del Professor S. Freud*—a Spanish translation of his collected works—which had recently begun to appear in print. No doubt Freud derived considerable satisfaction that his works had finally penetrated Catholic Spain—a country long resistant to the overtly sexual and secular themes of psychoanalysis—and he wrote a letter, in Spanish, to the translator, Señor Luis López-Ballesteros y de Torres, congratulating him on his "very correct interpretation of my thoughts and of the elegance of your style" (Freud, 1923, p. 289).

Freud had, of course, studied Spanish rigorously as an adolescent; and consequently, he knew that López-Ballesteros y de Torres had acquitted himself splendidly. Whereas many of Freud's translators in other countries had studied with him directly and had already begun to practice clinical psychoanalysis, López-Ballesteros y de Torres—a *littérateur* and professional translator—had not. Knowing of López-Ballesteros y de Torres's non-clinical background, Freud (1923, p. 289) paid him high praise, noting, "I am above all astonished that one who, like you, is neither a doctor nor a psychiatrist by profession should have been able to

obtain so absolute and precise a mastery over material which is intricate and at times obscure."

Had the eminent French psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu lived long enough to read Naomi Segal's magisterial translation of his classic *Le Moi-peau*, one suspects that he might have written a similar Freudian encomium. Though neither a "doctor nor a psychiatrist", Naomi Segal has enjoyed a long and distinguished career as professor of French and comparative literature and as a scholar of psychoanalysis; and happily, has generously offered us the benefits of her dual strengths by providing us with a completely new, refreshed, and deeply thoughtful translation of Anzieu's important theoretico-clinical work which has long proved to be of great value to clinical practitioners.

Professor Segal's careful study of the theory of psychoanalysis and its value to literary scholars began many decades ago. Her many books on varying aspects of French literature bear testament to her deep steepage in psychoanalytical ideas. And in 1986, as a young "don" at the University of Cambridge, she and her colleague Edward Timms—both soon to become professors—organised a landmark conference at the Institute of Germanic Studies in the University of London, co-sponsored by both the Austrian Institute of London and, also, the newly-founded Freud Museum, to mark the half-century of Freud's enforced emigration to London. The speakers included many eminent scholars and practitioners such as John Bowlby, Ernst Federn, and Pearl King, amongothers, and provided us with a feast of ideas, resulting in the publication of a much valued book of essays *Freud in Exile: Psychoanalysis and its Vicissitudes* (Timms & Segal, 1988). Thus, Segal could not be better qualified to have undertaken the nuanced and challenging task of rendering Anzieu's compelling and often complex clinical French prose into engaging and edifying English.

Both Professor Peter Rudnytsky—my fellow series co-editor—and I know how much care and attention Naomi Segal has devoted to this translation: a labour of scholarship and a labour of love, combined. Over the last year or more, she had kept us closely informed of her careful thinking about the best ways of translating certain seminal Anzieu concepts—not least that of "psychic envelopes", now rendered as "psychical wrappings"—as well as many other technical terms, at each step on the journey. We can testify that Segal has set a very high bar indeed for all future academics who endeavour to translate classic texts from their native language into English.

Naomi Segal has prepared her translation of Didier Anzieu's *The Skin-Ego* with the same care and attention that the clinical psychoanalytical practitioner devotes to his or her patients. No detail remains too small to merit close scrutiny; no phrase does not brim with rich meaning, waiting to be deciphered. We thank Anzieu for his lifetime of wisdom in the realms of clinical psychoanalysis and developmental psychology; and we thank Segal for her recognition of the value of this text—still not fully appreciated by English-speaking audiences—and for sharing her considerable literary capacities and psychoanalytical knowledge with us so that those not blessed with a fluency in Anzieu's native tongue can profit, nonetheless, from the rich feast contained herein.

Professor Brett Kahr
Series Co-Editor
February 2016

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TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

This new translation of *Le Moi-peau* is based on the second and last (1995) edition, which is essentially similar to the 1985 edition, apart from the closing chapter, Chapter Eighteen. Because of the interest of the earlier Chapter Eighteen, I have translated it as an appendix following the main text. Three other regular elements of the translation may need explanation. First, I have translated *psychique* throughout as "psychical", in conformity with common psychoanalytic practice. Second, and perhaps more radically, I have chosen to translate *enveloppe* as "wrapping", rather than the word that appears in a number of earlier translations, "envelope". After much consideration, I concluded that "envelope" is misleading since its main and intuitive meaning in English is the object into which we put a letter: French is rare in using the same word for both this object and a more general wrapping or enclosure (neither German nor Italian nor Spanish do so); thus, even though Strachey renders Freud's *Hülle* as "envelope"—in German one puts a letter into an *Umschlag*—I considered it inappropriate for Anzieu's usage, which is much closer in meaning to "wrapping". Finally, to avoid sexist language, I have translated the French "gender-neutral" *il* by various English usages—"he or she", "they" with plural meaning or "they" with singular meaning.

I have adopted with gratitude a usage found in the 1989 translation by Chris Turner: he renders *contenant* as "container" and *conteneur* as "containor". I have followed Anzieu by capitalising *Moi* as "Ego" and *Soi* as "Self" (and used lower case where he occasionally does) and kept the opening capital for such compound versions as "Skin-ego", "Agent-ego", "Core-ego" etc. In the reference section I have substituted non-French original texts for some of Anzieu's items, when these are the texts I have quoted from, and in the text (but not in the References) I have translated titles cited, where I felt this may be useful to the reader. I have added the first names of authors referred to where I could ascertain them. Where, occasionally, a quotation lacked a page-reference I have added one if I could find it. Most errors in the original have been corrected silently, including misspellings of Fisher and Sheckley, though it should be noted that Anzieu incorrectly used the feminine pronoun for Barrie Biven and Isi Beller. Finally, some references mentioned by Anzieu in his text but not his bibliography have proved impossible to find; these therefore do not appear in the References of this translation, but the names have been left in the text: in order of appearance, these are Wallon, Ajuriaguerra, Ombredane, Martinet, Caffey and Moffitt, Butterfield, Wolff and Hall.

I am indebted to Peter Rudnytsky and Brett Kahr for giving me the opportunity to translate this wonderful book and bring Didier Anzieu's work to a new Anglophone readership. Thanks go also to Anne-Marie Smith-Di Biasio and Marc Lafrance for help with various sources, and to many other friends and colleagues for their thoughts on assorted translation knots. This translation is dedicated to Scarlet.

INTRODUCTION

On 10 December 1890, a fatal accident befell a five-year-old child called Marguerite Pantaine, the daughter of a farming family in Chalvignac, in the *département* of Cantal in the Massif central. Here are two versions of the event:

> The family talk a lot about a violent emotion the mother suffered while she was pregnant with my patient. The eldest daughter died as the result of a tragic accident: she fell, before her mother's very eyes, into the wide-open door of a lighted stove and died very rapidly of severe burns. (Lacan, 1975, pp. 174–175)

> [My mother] was the third child in the family, the third or fourth… That's the problem. Before her, in fact, three daughters were born. The family lived in a large stone house close to the stable and the fields. The main room was heated by a large fireplace filled with big burning logs […], and there were benches in it that you could sit on. This happened before my mother was born. It was a feast-day. Marguerite, the youngest of the three daughters, had an organdie dress on, ready to go to church. She'd been left for a moment in the charge of the eldest girl, the one who was to become

> my godmother. The child was lightly dressed, it was cold, she went up to the fire to warm herself… and was burnt alive. It was a dreadful shock for her parents and her two sisters. So my mother was conceived as a replacement for the dead child. And since she was another girl, they gave her the same name, Marguerite. The living dead, in a way… It's no coincidence that my mother spent her life finding ways to escape from the flames of hell… It was a way of accepting her fate, a tragic fate. My mother only spoke openly of this once. But I knew it as a family legend. I think her depression goes back to this untenable position. (Anzieu, 1991, pp. 19–20)

The variation between these two versions shows how a "family legend" (which will also become a "fate" carried through several generations) twists and turns to serve the vagaries of later causalities. Was the dead girl the eldest or the youngest? Was it a gaping stove or an ingle-nook fireplace? Was it a sister or the mother who witnessed the terrible event and should have been taking better care? Was the mother pregnant when it happened or did she become so to replace her lost daughter, whether firstborn or lastborn? What they agree on is the shock to the whole family, and the long-lasting effects not just on the parents and living sisters but on the siblings that followed. In fact the child who died was the eldest, not the youngest, of the three sisters and the mother Jeanne was not pregnant with the second Marguerite when the first was killed, but (possibly) with a baby who was declared stillborn the following August (see Allouch, 1994; also Lessana, 2000, pp. 293–342). The second Marguerite was born in July 1892 (see Allouch, 1994, pp. 99–104, 156 and 248–260; also Roudinesco, 1997, p. 35).

The first version cited above is that of Jacques Lacan, who treated Marguerite Pantaine, by then Marguerite Anzieu, in April 1931, when she was arrested and then sent to Sainte-Anne for attacking a famous stage actress with a knife. In 1932 Lacan published his doctoral thesis on her under the pseudonym of "Aimée", using her case-history as a prototype of the role of personality in psychopathic development.

At eighteen, Marguerite started work in the administrative section of the Post Office. She was transferred to a village some way from her home and from there in 1913 to Melun, near Paris, where she met René Anzieu, also a Post Office employee, and they married in 1917. Her sister Élise, who could not have children after a total hysterectomy in 1914 and whose husband Guillaume (an uncle) had died as a result

of war-wounds, came to live with the couple eight months after their wedding. Two children were born to Marguerite: a daughter who died at birth and, in 1923, a son, who was healthy but whose life seemed to his mother under constant threat—he was, of course, the replacement child of a replacement child. When Marguerite went off the rails and was sectioned, Elise took over the care of the child and later also took the wife's place with René, though the family put up energetic opposition when he wished to get divorced and marry her after Marguerite's final discharge from hospital in 1943—when, by yet another of the bizarre doublings that attend Anzieu's life, she became housekeeper to Lacan's father (and died the same year as Lacan, 1981).

The second version cited above is that of Didier Anzieu in a set of interviews conducted in 1983 when he was sixty. He goes on:

> I might put it this way—it sounds banal, but in my case it seems true: I became a psychoanalyst to care for my mother. Not so much to care for her in reality, even though I did succeed in helping her, in the last quarter of her life, to find a relatively happy, balanced life. What I mean is, to care for my mother in myself and other people. To care, in other people, for this threatening and threatened mother… (Anzieu, 1991, p. 20)

Looking back to his childhood, Didier Anzieu described himself in a draft autobiography rather dramatically as "unloved, the son of unloved people" (Anzieu, 1991, p. 36). But on another occasion he characterizes himself as over-loved:

> I couldn't go out of doors without being bundled up several times over: jumper, coat, beret, muffler. The layers of my parents' care, worries and warmth never left me, even when I lived far away from home. I carried it like a weight on my shoulders. My vitality was hidden at the core [*au cœur*] of an onion, under several skins. (Anzieu, 1991, pp. 14–15)

Yet Anzieu describes the influence of his father with warmth. Differently, almost contrary to Marguerite's longing for travel, frustrated by years of incarceration and the craziness of her projects, René's is internalized as mental geography, the pursuit of education and where it can take you. After some teenage conflicts and successful studies in Paris at

the Lycée Henri IV and the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Didier Anzieu finally reached the goal of psychoanalysis via these two pathways, then: the wish to "care for my mother in myself and other people" and, reading Freud, the discovery of "a new geography which took the place of the one my father had taught me. I had got a map to guide me through the internal continent" (Anzieu, 1991, p. 26).

He entered the Ecole Normale Supérieure at the age of twenty-one, as part of the postwar cohort of 1944; he began as a student of philosophy but soon transferred to psychology and, after graduating, took a job running projective tests and psychodrama groups at the Centre Psycho-pédagogique Claude Bernard, a treatment centre for disturbed children. At the same time, "I did a practical psychology course at Prof Graciansky's dermatology unit, where I gave Rorschach tests to eczema sufferers […]; that gave me a vague early intuition of the Skin-ego" (Anzieu, 1991, p. 30).

Anzieu's two doctoral theses were on Freud's self-analysis and psychodrama. In 1947 he married a schoolfriend, Annie Péghaire, who remained his colleague, published alongside him and is still practising; and their two children were born in 1950 and 1953. From 1949 to 1953 he was analysed by Lacan—who did not tell him he had already treated his mother. When, in 1961, Anzieu reported to the IPA commission, his main criticisms of Lacan's technique were three: "an almost total lack of interpretations, an inability to bear the negative transference, and a failure to understand the specificity of the early relationship with the maternal imago" (Roudinesco, 1994, pp. 335–336).

Among what she calls the "third generation" of French psychoanalysts, born in the 1920s, Elisabeth Roudinesco groups Anzieu as one of the "academics" (Roudinesco, 1994, p. 290), and this is where he made his career, as a lifelong educator as well as clinician. But in 1992 he himself describes a familiar ambivalence towards that world: "I have loved the academic institution like a foster-mother. Like my real mother, it was often disappointing—and doubtless often disappointed by me" (Parot & Richelle, 1992, p. 259). Less active than many in the series of dramatic schisms that rent the French scene from the 1950s onwards, and determined never to form a set of followers unable to emancipate themselves from his influence, Anzieu holds a central place in the "hundred years of psychoanalysis" (Roudinesco, 1994, p. 683 *et passim*) less because of his problematic relationship with Lacan—this he shares with all the major names of his generation—than because of his unswerving independence of thought.

In 1954 he succeeded Juliette Favez-Boutonier as professor of clinical psychology at the University of Strasbourg, bringing "with him his encyclopaedic knowledge" (Jean Muller, cited in Kaës, 2000, p. 63) and developing particularly innovative courses on social psychology, group psychology and psychodrama. Active in the local community, he lectured at hospitals, prisons and businesses; in 1956 he took part in an international seminar on group dynamics run, under the Marshall Plan, by disciples of its founder Kurt Lewin (see Hubert Touzard cited in Kaës, 2000, pp. 67–70 & Chabert, 1996, pp. 17–18). His combined interest in groups and drama led to the founding, in 1962, of CEFFRAP (the Cercle d'études françaises pour la formation et la recherche active en psychologie), and in the same year he ran the first regional seminar on psycho-sociology in Murbach, Alsace.

Anzieu was appointed to chair the newly founded Department of Psychology at the University of Paris X (Nanterre) in 1964.

> Committed to the principles of Lagache [his erstwhile doctoral supervisor], whom he admired unreservedly, on the epistemic unity of psychology, he was inspired by the wish to realize this unity at the level of both teaching and research. Curriculum development, the kind of posts he wanted to create, the staff appointed to these posts, all these depended on a long-term project of creating a balance between the various currents, methodologies and approaches in the field of psychology. Experimental psychology, clinical psychology, training psychology and psychoanalysis: all were *equally* recognized. (Jean-Claude Filloux, cited in Kaës, 2000, pp. 72–73)

By 1967–1968, the Nanterre department had over five hundred students, and Anzieu organized his staff with a stress on consultation and collegiality that was "pretty atypical at that time" (Filloux in Kaës, 2000, p. 75). He wrote a short account of the events of May 1968 under the pseudonym "Epistémon"; it was published the same year and much read at the time and after. Dedicated to the aim of "understanding the students" (Anzieu, 1968: n. p. and Anzieu, 1991, pp. 121–140), it takes as its premise the belief that the academics and their pupils, for all the old entrenched hierarchies, were on the same side, "the side of non-knowledge" (Anzieu, 1968, p. 20), and that the issue was both a "generational conflict" (Anzieu, 1968, p. 35) and a question of epistemology.

On 2 May, after two hundred demonstrators disrupted a French studies lecture, terrorising in particular staff who had lived through the Occupation not so long before, the Dean announced the closure of the Faculty of Nanterre. The students moved on to the Latin Quarter. "[On 10 May], I walked around there most of the night, crossing the smaller barricades with difficulty, blocked by others. An extraordinary atmosphere of collective enthusiasm inspired these young people [… among whom] I recognized many of my own students" (Anzieu, 1968, p. 73).

> From the morning of Tuesday 14 March, an explosion of talk, all the talk that had been repressed before, began to spread, by chain reaction, through schools and universities, among intellectuals and artists and the liberal professions. Joint committees of staff and students started meeting in the university buildings which were occupied now without interruption by their natural users. I attended almost every day up to Pentecost weekend (1–3 June), which I spent drawing up a detailed plan for this book. After that the tension had reached such a level that I began to suffer from fatigue and my attendance dropped off. Various learned societies that I belong to had their own revolutions and I was part of that. I cut into meal-times and night-times to write, but at other times I stayed with the students as much as possible. I took part in several meetings of colleagues where we were trying to take stock collectively and think through our attitudes by confronting them directly. Those who had understood more quickly gave patient explanations to the slower ones. (Anzieu, 1968, p. 75)

Anzieu insists, here and elsewhere, that, though fundamentally liberal and materialist, he was never politically minded: "regimes may come and go but the unconscious remains" (Anzieu, 1991, p. 95; see also 54 and 92; and Kaës, 2000, p. 50). But his pseudonym was quickly seen through and, far from causing him difficulties, it rather raised his profile. Edgar Faure, the newly appointed minister of education, asked him to devise a professional status for psychologists, and he worked on this during the following year; the issue was so vexed, with particular resistance from the psychologists themselves, that it was not finally resolved until twenty years later.

In the early 1970s, Anzieu continued to publish books and articles, including in the recently founded *Nouvelle revue de psychanalyse*, and

in 1972 he set up two series with the publisher Dunod, "Psychismes" and "Inconscient et culture". He spent two sabbatical years concentrating on research in 1973–1975, and 1974 saw the publication of his first article on the Skin-ego. A year later he published an article called "La psychanalyse encore" ["Still psychoanalysis"], in which he argues that

> Psychoanalysis has become sick with its own success […]. The problem is not to repeat what Freud discovered in relation to the crisis of the Victorian era. It is to find a psychoanalytic answer to the discontents of modern man in our present civilisation […] We need to do work of a psychoanalytic kind wherever the unconscious emerges: standing, sitting or lying down; individually, in groups or families, during a session, on the doorstep, at the foot of a hospital bed, etc., wherever a subject is able to let his or her anxieties and phantasies speak to someone presumed capable of hearing them and giving back an account of them. (repr. in Anzieu, 2000, pp. 257–268; see also the extract cited by Kaës in Anzieu, 1992, p. 33)

In 1978, he met a painter, Charles Breuil, who, without any knowledge of Anzieu's work, had painted the image of a man wearing a woman's skin. On the back of the painting he had sketched various titles: "Ta peau" [Your skin], "Ma peau" [My skin], "Peau-Moi" [Ego-Skin], "PO" and "Moi-peau" [Skin-ego], deciding finally on the title "L'Enveloppe" [The Wrapping]. Delighted by this "coincidence between an artist's intuition and a psychoanalyst's idea" (Anzieu, 1991, p. 109), Anzieu bought the painting after the two met in 1985, and hung it next to his analytic armchair.

Anzieu retired from Nanterre in 1983 at the age of sixty. He went on researching, with *Le Moi-peau* appearing in book form first in 1985 and then in a second edition in 1995; translations of it into Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, English and German came out in the later 1980s and early 1990s. His creative writings—a book of short stories, a tiny volume of cartoons and a play—chimed in with continuing work on the creativity of others, from Freud to Bacon via Borges, Henry James and, in his last years, Beckett. First published in 1998, *Beckett* is shaped by thoughts of death: "if I stop moving, I die" (Anzieu, 1999a, p. 237). The main text ends at the Montparnasse cemetery, where Anzieu visits both his parents' grave and that of the Becketts. There follow seven "postscripts", the penultimate one ending "This time, it's finished. Indefinitely"

(Anzieu, 1999a, 287), and the very last page giving a "finale" which includes the lines:

> To marry the masculine and the feminine in the mind, immobility and movement in the body. To tolerate anxiety and joy, hatred and laughter. To sustain love in the gap between abandonment to the other and abandonment of the other. To foil the seductions, perversions and ruses of the death drive. To turn the negative against itself. To deny, cut, tear and transgress in order to progress. To enwrap, unfold, unfurl, unroll, curl up, interleave, in order to exist and coexist. To give, indefinitely, to our human finitude, a form that is never definitive. (Anzieu, 1999a, p. 289)

But I want to "wrap up" this biographical introduction by returning to a description Anzieu gave, with characteristic wit, at a celebration of his seventieth birthday in 1993, of his family origin and where it placed him psychologically:

> Ten years later, Marguerite was freed. Her husband asked for a divorce. Another drama—I was going to say, psychodrama—Marguerite's family rose up against René and scuppered his plan of legalising his union with his sister-in-law. A fresh scandal. But also, for the adolescent son, what an experience to find himself confronting the private psychosis of a mother and the neurosis of the family group! And what luck to have been sustained by the competitive three-way love of his father and two women! What an introduction to the twinned knowledge of Oedipus and Narcissus! Yes, the history of this child is the epitome of banality! (Kaës, 2000, p. 50)

In 1993, Didier Anzieu considered his career, marked by its intellectual richness and variety, and noted: "Looking back on my life and work, I think I can grasp a guiding idea: unity in diversity, the convergence of parts in a whole" (Kaës, 2000, p. 50). In this section, I want to give a brief presentation of the main lines of his theory, keeping in mind always that they are converging lines, whose fundamental point of connection is the image in that closing phrase: a movement-into, a co-presence inside. What does it mean to contain or be contained? How do these processes work and what do they mean psychically? How does containment function dynamically?

Taking Anzieu's published works roughly chronologically, beginning with the two theses he first published in the 1950s, and echoing his own three-way presentation in the introduction to *Créer/Détruire* (1996), I am going to start with Anzieu's work on psychodrama and groups; then look at his theories of self-analysis and creation; and finally I will come to his major work, that of the Skin-ego, and its development into a theory of thought.

Le psychodrame analytique chez l'enfant et l'adolescent [*Analytic psychodrama used with children and adolescents*] was published in 1956, and was the shorter of Anzieu's two doctoral theses. In the preface to the 1994 edition, he declares: "Like the Rorschach test as a clinical technique for individuals, the use of psychodrama in group therapy is still one of the key methods for psychologists, especially when both methods are fortified by psychoanalytic thought" (Anzieu, 1994a, p. 1; on the Rorschach and other projective tests, see Anzieu & Chabert [1961] 2003). Psychodrama is a "composite matrix of energies" (Anzieu, 1994a, p. 7) which allows subjects "to *be* […], to *feel* […] and ultimately to *know* the meaning and range of what they feel" (Anzieu, 1994a, p. 98). If it is developed psychoanalytically, Anzieu suggests that it can incorporate the key rules of the analytic setting, non-omission and abstinence. Psychodrama "stands exactly midway between bodily expression and verbal communication" (Anzieu, 1994a, p. 83; see also 105). Thus, "as in individual psychoanalysis, the balance of permissiveness and frustration produces changes in the subject" (Anzieu, 1994a, p. 141), bringing out resistances and defence mechanisms in all participants. Everyone experiences the effects of the transference and the countertransference; the key difference, and this applies to all group analysis, is that it necessarily incorporates work on "common transferential material" (Anzieu, 1994a, p. 155). Its effect is a "*symbolic effectiveness*" (Anzieu, 1994a, p. 163) that both revives and repairs the participants' unconscious concerns, leading them to "emotional catharsis" (Anzieu, 1994a, p. 171).

Group theory appears in two main contexts. The first is *La Dynamique des groupes restreints* [*The Dynamics of Small Groups*], coauthored with Jacques-Yves Martin, first published in 1968. Introducing the seventh edition in 1982, Anzieu comments:

> To human beings the small group represents a place invested simultaneously or alternately with hopes and threats. Situated between intimacy (the life of the couple or private solitude) and social

> life (governed by collective representations and institutions), the small group can provide an intermediary space which sometimes reinvigorates a sense of contact and sometimes helps to reconstruct the essential gaps between the individual and society. (Anzieu, 1997, p. 11)

In two significant metaphors Anzieu suggests that the group provides an environment which imitates in key ways the child's fantasmatic relationship with its mother. The first is the image of a mutual mirroring: "a group of equals or peers is, after the mother, the second mirror in which each one can seek an identity through reciprocal recognition" (Anzieu, 1997, p. 308). In these circumstances, the group serves as a safe haven, even if it is a gang of egocentric individuals, and consensus may well reign (for other instances of such consensus, see Anzieu, 1997, pp. 179–181, 310 and 319). In the second, he cites the theory of his colleague René Kaës that "the space of a large group is experienced like an image of the inside of the mother's body" (Anzieu, 1997, p. 41); by this he is referring to the way that members seek safety and enclosure as well as a sense of cohesion.

In his monograph *Le Groupe et l'inconscient* [*The Group and the Unconscious*] (1975) Anzieu picks up on Kaës's theory of the "group psychical apparatus" (Anzieu, 1999b, p. 13). He opens the 1999 edition:

> A group is a wrapping that holds individuals together […]. A living wrapping, like the skin that regenerates itself around the body, like the ego which is meant to enclose the psyche, is a double-faced membrane […]. Its inner face allows the group to establish a trans-individual psyche which I propose to call the group Self […]. This Self is the container inside which a traffic of fantasies and identifications circulates among the participants. (Anzieu, 1999b, pp. 1–2)

At the time of the break with Lacan, Anzieu had begun a self-analysis, and he continued this throughout his life; indeed, he describes his retroactive recognition of his mother's importance in these terms: "it was through a long work of self-analysis that I was able to reconstruct in my mind the problems of my mother's contact with me in the first months of my life" (Anzieu, 1991, p. 17). From one viewpoint, of course, self-analysis makes no more sense than parthenogenesis: the lineage of psychoanalysis insists on the production of each new analyst out of the

teacher-pupil bond of at least one training analysis. From another, it is clear that, like parthenogenesis, self-analysis is a powerful fantasy: to reproduce oneself single-handed, through a mode of communication with oneself, not another. Perverse, absurd or megalomaniac, this is, for Anzieu, the base fantasy of all creativity.

The longer of Anzieu's doctoral theses, *L'Auto-analyse de Freud et la découverte de la psychanalyse* [*Freud's self-analysis and the discovery of psychoanalysis*] (1959), argues that Freud discovered—or, more accurately, created—psychoanalysis as a result of the work of self-analysis that followed a number of mid-life crises: the unplanned sixth pregnancy of his wife, a period of psychological and physical illness, a loosening of the intense tie to Fliess, and finally the death of his father on 23 October 1896. From July 1895, Freud analysed a number of his own dreams, setting this work alongside the dreams of his patients (for Anzieu always assumes at least one Winnicottian, Beckettian virtual other overseeing the act of "being alone") and what emerged was the formation of dreams as wish-fulfilments, the discovery of castration anxiety and ultimately *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and the whole theory of psychoanalysis. Anzieu in his turn analyses Freud's dream analyses, insists on the relevance of the life to the work, and derives from all this a theory of creation.

Freud is the first example explored in the fullest presentation of Anzieu's theory of creation, *Le Corps de l'œuvre* [*The Body of the Creative Work*] (1981), his favourite and, he believed, least appreciated book (see Anzieu, 1992, p. 8). This is a study not of creativity, more often a potential than a realization, but of the act of creation, where it originates and how it is carried through into the production of a work. Familiarly, Anzieu links this to the life-cycle. His theory is derived, he announces, from three sources: himself, his patients and "contact with 'great works'" (Anzieu, 1981, p. 9); and it stands in contrast to other uses of psychoanalysis in relation to creativity, which either claim to analyse "the unconscious of the text" or to give a psychoanalytic reading of the semiotics of language. His premise is that

> it is the unconscious of the author, a living and individual reality, that gives a text its life and singularity. The unconscious of the reader […] brings to it a new life, another originality. This is the same as what occurs, in the cure, between analyst and analysand. Cut off from these two unconsciouses, the text is simply an

> inanimate, anonymous body, a corpus of dead letters. (Anzieu, 1981, p. 12)

This is, as the first section title of the book—"Entering into creation" (Anzieu, 1981, pp. 15–23)—suggests, a highly gendered representation of the psychology of the creative act, a fact I have critiqued elsewhere (see Segal, 2009, pp. 67–72). Though in his theory elements of creativity belong to the five spheres of the maternal, the paternal, femininity, masculinity and indeterminate, they typically take place in a male body, for

> the greater frequency of male creators is due largely to the fact that the paternal mental function is generally more developed in boys than girls, because it is the resumption, in terms of thought, of the biological function of the father, endowing the Ego with a new function, the ability to conceive codes. (Anzieu, 1981, p. 83)

Thus, as aware as Anzieu is that the traditional metaphor of creativity is female reproduction—again a reason why it is traditionally ascribed to men, on the grounds that women cannot properly do both things—he sets out in this book to present an account of how male creativity is a consolidation, not a contradiction, of masculinity.

Locally, the opening moment of a creative act is a version of "take-off" or "lift-off" [*décollage*]. This metaphor is borrowed from Proust, in love with an amateur pilot, his secretary-chauffeur Alfred Agostinelli, who died in a accident while flying under the pseudonym of Marcel Swann; Anzieu uses it to describe the ability of the creator to "fly above" [*survoler*] other people (Anzieu, 1981, p. 17; and see Segal, 2009, pp. 171–179). From the longer viewpoint, the occasion is likely to be a life-cycle crisis, that of old age between sixty and eighty, middle age around forty, or youth around twenty. All these crises carry intimations of mortality, but they present themselves differently and produce different kinds of artwork: the old man seeks "'a piece' of immortality" (50), the middle-aged man a substitute for his declining potency and the solution to his mid-life depression in the form of a repaired "loved, lost and destroyed object" (Anzieu, 1981, p. 53), the young man creates explosively and violently as his "work of art is an attempt to re-establish the continuity, totality, perfection and brilliance of the narcissistic wrapping" (Anzieu, 1981, p. 55).

The actual work of creation goes typically (but not universally) by five phases:

> experiencing a state of sudden shock [*saisissement*]; becoming aware of an unconscious piece of representative psychical material; raising it into a code to organize the work of art and choosing a material that can give a body to that code; composing the work in detail; producing it in the outside world. (Anzieu, 1981, p. 93)

It is, as Anzieu himself pointed out, in his work on creation that he began to develop the concept of the Skin-ego (see Kaës, 2000, p. 34). A work of art is like a body fleshed forth, a poem is "a skin that holds together sensuality, motivity [*motricité*] and affectivity, a wrapping that unifies momentarily the past, the present and the expectation of a future, a membrane that harmonizes the vibrations of the body with the internal rhythm of the code" (Anzieu, 1981, p. 158). Like the Skin-ego, it has an inward- and an outward-looking face; but it also establishes an "empty space" (Anzieu, 1981, p. 208) between the kernel and the shell of the creator's psyche, filling that space as best it might.

As we have seen already, Anzieu's last book, *Beckett* (1998), returns to the concept of self-analysis. It does this in two ways. First it argues, as he had done earlier in a section of *Créer/Détruire*, that Beckett's writing is an extended response to the failure of his analysis with the young Bion, a soliloquy that is more exactly a free association directed to the virtual interlocutor of the invisible analyst. Half the self speaks, the other half listens, and what is spoken is "a universal message about psychical pain" (Anzieu, 1996, p. 124). The book implicitly brings together two people suffering from Parkinson's disease: the mother whom it was Beckett's unconscious purpose to "*vomit*" (Anzieu, 1996, p. 116) as he vomited his works and Anzieu himself, whose relation to Beckett's literature of immobilization is, as we have seen, at once deadly and life-preserving. Vividly written and enacting repeatedly the fear of ending, this book intersperses invented dialogues between "Beckett" and "Bion" with anecdotes, readings and diary-entries from the three months 18 October 1990 to 15 January 1991. It is offered as "a piece of jewellery mounted on a Moebius strip that is not spatial but temporal" (Anzieu, 1999a, p. 13), an "immense enterprise in the service of an act of negative thought" (Anzieu, 1999a, p. 32). For Anzieu, who waited a lifetime to undertake it, it represents, like Beckett's *œuvre*,

"a long, hard and meticulous work of composition" (Anzieu, 1999a, p. 114) expressing the quintessentially creative, self-analytic "project of not dying" (Anzieu, 1999a, p. 219).

As noted earlier, Anzieu's concept of the Skin-ego first appeared in print in spring 1974, in an article published in a number of the *Nouvelle revue de psychanalyse* entitled "Le dehors et le dedans" [Outside and Inside]. *Le Moi-peau* was first published as a monograph in 1985 and reprinted, in the expanded form which is translated in this volume, in 1995. But, by a coincidence of cultural history, the actual term had first seen the light forty years earlier, in a note by Robert Musil to *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* [*The Man Without Qualities*] (1930–1943), in which he refers to the visibility of emotions on the skin under the rubric "das Hautich" [the skin-ego] (Musil, 1978, p. 1974; see also Benthien, 2002, p. 208).

It is of course the best known of Anzieu's theories and its influence has already been considerable, including in the English-speaking world—though Judith Butler notes that "unfortunately, [it] does not consider the implications of its account for the sexed body" (Butler, 1990, p. 163 n43).[1] The theory is premised on the central importance of the body to psychical life. Whereas in Freud's time "what was repressed […] was sex" (Anzieu, 1995, p. 43; this volume, p. 23), in the 1980s the ignored and repressed issue was the body. Since Lacan, the stress on language had meant that the body was not being psychoanalytically theorized; yet "every psychical activity leans anaclitically on a biological function" (Anzieu, 1995, p. 61; this volume, p. 44). Anzieu's aim was to fill this gap. "Psychical space and physical space constitute each other in reciprocal metaphors", he wrote in 1990: "the Skin-ego is one of these metaphors" (Anzieu, 1990, p. 58; see also Anzieu, 1995, p. 28; this volume, p. 6).

The reader will, of course, discover the richness of the argument, its sources, vagaries and illustrations, in the pages that follow. Among

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NB Where not otherwise specified, all translations are my own and page-references are to the original text (except in the case of this translation of *Le Moi-peau*); italics within quotations are the author's.

[1] For other discussions of *Le Moi-peau* in English, see (alphabetically): Ahmed & Stacey 2001, Benthien [1991] 2002, Connor 2004, Deleuze & Guattari 1972, Grosz 1994, Lafrance 2007, Lafrance 2009, Moorjani 2000, Prosser 1998, Segal 1998, Segal 2009, Silverman 1988, Syrotinski & Maclachlan 2001 and Ulnik 2007. More recently, he is cited in eds. Birksted-Breen, Flanders & Gibeault 2010, Cavanagh, Failler and Hurst 2013, Diamond 2013, Howells 2011, ed. Lafrance forthcoming 2016 and Lemma 2010.

its key insights are the principle that—as cited above—"the problem is not to repeat what Freud discovered in relation to the crisis of the Victorian era. It is to find a psychoanalytic answer to the discontents of modern man in our present civilisation". In the late twentieth century, with a world running out of control, in what Zygmunt Bauman was later to call "liquid modernity" (Bauman, 2000), Anzieu saw a need "to set limits" (Anzieu, 1995, p. 28; this volume, p. 7): the typical patient is no longer a neurotic suffering from hysteria or obsessions but a borderline case whose problem is a lack of boundaries. If maths, biology, and neuro-physiology had all become sciences of interfaces, membranes and borders, and embryology had shown that the ectoderm forms both the brain and the skin, this meant that "the centre is […] to be found at the periphery" (Anzieu, 1995, p. 31; this volume, p. 78), and it is this complex structure of surfaces, rather than the old image of thought penetrating through into a truth-core, that could help us understand our physical, psychical and intellectual worlds in a different way.

The theory takes up and develops the work of figures as mainstream as Freud, Winnicott and Bion, on the one hand, and on the other scientists whose specialisms are somewhat or even very different, like (alphabetically) Abraham and Tőrők, Esther Bick, John Bowlby, T. Berry Brazelton, Paul Federn, André Green, Harry Harlow, René Kaës, Jean Laplanche, Donald Meltzer, Ashley Montagu, Michel de M'Uzan, Mahmoud Sami-Ali, Paul Schilder, René Spitz, René Thom and Frances Tustin. It invokes research in autism, dermatology, embryology, ethology, mathematics and paediatrics, as well as theories of consciousness, development and linguistics. Above all, Anzieu exploits his presiding metaphor wherever it can be found: in the discourse of everyday life, in the actions of groups, in myth, folktale and science fiction (Adolfo Bioy Casares, Gérard Klein, Robert Sheckley, John Varley) and, supremely, in his own case studies. He considers love in many contexts, experienced in material and phantasmatic form. If the baby develops the illusion of a "an interface, represented as a skin common to the mother and the child, with the mother on one side and the child on the other" (Anzieu, 1995, p. 85; this volume, p. 67), that phantasy of reciprocal inclusion "is revived later in life in the experience of being in love, in which each of the lovers encloses the other in their arms while at the same time being enclosed by them" (Anzieu, 1995, p. 85; this volume, p. 68). But for every function of the Skin-ego imagined as positive, holding or receptive, there are pathologies to be

ranged and detailed, toxicities like the bitter gift of the last fairy at Sleeping Beauty's christening.

Ultimately, growing out of this first configuration, "the Skin-ego is the basis for the very possibility of thought" (Anzieu, 1995, p. 62; this volume, p. 44). From the eight functions of the Skin-ego, after the individual has passed through the double taboo on touching, eight corresponding functions of the thought-ego will develop.

It is not for nothing that Anzieu named his set of interviews with Gilbert Tarrab *Une Peau pour les pensées* [*A skin for thought*]. Just as he began his research life with the study of Pascal and his *Pensées* (1660), so he ends it, in *Le Penser* [*Thinking*] (1994) with a theory that complements the psychical skin with a skin that contains—enables, controls and holds—the way we think. In psychoanalytic terms, the capacity for thought is the third term: first there is the body, then the primary process (impulses, drives, unconscious feelings) and finally there is the secondary process (consciousness, organisation, thought); it is what confronts the pleasure principle with the reality principle, deferral of gratification, acceptance of what is impossible or out of reach. We reason away our frustration, as far as we can. We mourn what is lost and transform it into knowledge. "*The reality principle* is a function that the ego imposes on the id" (Anzieu, 1994b, p. 60). The capacity to think "aspires to the ideal of a unique [utopian, universal] logic" (Anzieu, 1994b, p. 7)—though of course it is always disrupted by psychical impulses and failures—and "it is a moving moment for a psychoanalyst when a patient achieves the ability to think about him- or herself and about other people" (Anzieu, 1994b, p. 166).

Anzieu distinguishes between "thoughts" [*pensées*] and the capacity for thought, the act of thinking [*penser*].

> Thoughts precede thinking. They need to be thought in order to be recognized as thoughts. They invoke the creation of an apparatus for thinking (the function creates the organ). Thinking is the part of the ego where it intersects with the mind seeking to know the object. The first object is the body; then, by analogy (in the fullest sense) with one's own body, the next is ideas.
>
> In sum, all thoughts are thoughts of the body: one's own body, other bodies; thinking seeks to bring thoughts together in a body of thoughts. (Anzieu, 1994b, p. 21)

Developmentally, we first think through the thoughts of others. Bion, Bick and Winnicott see the work of infancy as letting the child internalize maternal care as a wrapping that forms the kernel of thought—a curious play with inside outsides typical of Anzieu's insights. The next stage is a doubly negative one. The taboo on touching, imposed on the child, means that "putting desires and needs into action becomes dependent on putting them into words. Putting them into words becomes dependent on putting them into thought" (Anzieu, 1994b, p. 33). But the child itself also has a capacity to negate. In conflict with its mother over feeding, the baby of about six months may spit, keep its mouth shut or move its head away from the nipple, teat or spoon; by fifteen months, it uses a consistent shake of the head or the word "no". Equal and opposite to the nod or smile, this gesture "marks the earliest acquisition of a system of communication" (Anzieu, 1994c, p. 4, citing the work of René Spitz). Once "no" is established as a word, "it is an act of *thought*" (Anzieu, 1994b, p. 48).

The theory of thinking in Anzieu is triadic:

> the skin envelops the body; by analogy with the skin, the ego envelops the psyche; by analogy with the ego, thought [*la pensée*] envelops thoughts [*les pensées*]. Analogy is not a vague resemblance, but a term-by-term correspondence of the elements of each of these wholes. (Anzieu, 1993, p. 31)

In the "Preamble" to *Le Penser*, Anzieu writes: "the person to whom I owe my capacity to think is essentially my father: unconditionally supporting my studies and my intellectual ambitions, he gave me two complementary experiences: the taboo and unconditional love" (Anzieu, 1994b, p. 1).

But, as we saw in the last section, describing his mother in *Une Peau pour les pensées* as having "intellectual tastes and gifts that I have certainly inherited" (Anzieu, 1991, p. 16), he also succeeded in "bringing my disunited parents back together" (Anzieu, 1991, p. 23). Referring, in 1992, to his writing in general, he concludes: "I have formed with my superego a couple united in the way a horseman is with his mount—and I don't know exactly which of us was the man and which the steed" (Parot & Richelle, 1992, p. 257).

To conclude this introduction, let us return to the comments of Anzieu's colleagues, who knew him best. Jean-Michel Petot, Anzieu's