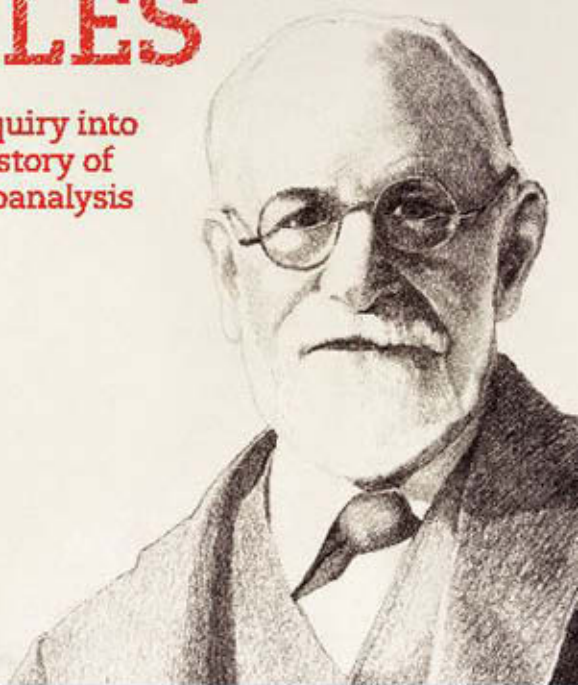


Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen
and Sonu Shamdasani

THE Freud FILES

An Inquiry into
the History of
Psychoanalysis



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THE FREUD FILES

How did psychoanalysis attain its prominent cultural position? How did it eclipse rival psychologies and psychotherapies, such that it became natural to bracket Freud with Copernicus and Darwin? Why did Freud 'triumph' to such a degree that we hardly remember his rivals? This book reconstructs the early controversies around psychoanalysis, and shows that rather than demonstrating its superiority, Freud and his followers rescripted history. This legend-making was not an incidental addition to psychoanalytic theory but formed its core. Letting the primary material speak for itself, this history demonstrates the extraordinary apparatus by which this would-be science of psychoanalysis installed itself in contemporary societies. Beyond psychoanalysis, it opens up the history of the constitution of the modern psychological sciences and psychotherapies, how they furnished the ideas which we have of ourselves, and how these became solidified into indisputable 'facts'.

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Books by both authors have been recipients of the Gradiva Award from the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis.

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For Charlotte and Maggie

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Acknowledgements

This book began in 1993 as an inquiry into Freud historians and their work. We had become aware of the upheavals that had affected Freud studies since the 1970s, which were completely transforming how one understood psychoanalysis and its origins. Intrigued by the new histories of the Freudian movement, we decided to interview the key players to gather their testimonies in a collective volume. These interviews were transcribed and annotated (we reproduce a few excerpts in the following), but the volume itself remained unfinished, for in the meantime our investigation had changed.¹ Quite quickly, it became apparent that it was not possible to situate ourselves with the neutrality and ironic detachment that we had initially adopted. The stakes were too high, and too much remained to be researched and verified before one could attempt to pass judgment on the endless controversies around psychoanalysis. Instead of describing them from the outside, we became drawn in, and here put forward our own contribution to the history of the Freudian movement.

This book is the product of this engagement, but also an attempt to regain, through historical reflection, some of the distance that we at first maintained towards our object of study. We wanted to study the history of the history of psychoanalysis and to understand better the basic issues of this fascinating and conflictual field – fascinating because of the conflict. We wanted, in the end, to draw consequences from historical criticism for the understanding of this strange movement. For any reckoning with the status of psychology, psychiatry and psychotherapy in today's societies at some point requires coming to terms with Freud and his legacy.

We would like to thank all those who accompanied us in this task and above all the historians who agreed to be interviewed. Many became friends (when they were not already) and guides in the minefields of Freud studies: Ernst Falzeder, Didier Gille, Han Israëls, Mark S. Micale, Karin Obholzer, Paul Roazen, François Roustang, Élisabeth Roudinesco, Richard Skues,

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Introduction: the past of an illusion

The history of the World, I said already, was the Biography of Great Men.

Carlyle (1959 [1841]), 251

Vienna, 1916. Freud decided to canonise himself. In front of the audience which had come to hear the eighteenth of his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, given at the University of Vienna, the founder of psychoanalysis undertook to indicate his place in the history of humanity.

Sigmund Freud: But in thus emphasizing the unconscious in mental life we have conjured up the most evil spirits of criticism against psycho-analysis. Do not be surprised at this, and do not suppose that the resistance to us rests only on the understandable difficulty of the unconscious or the relative inaccessibility of the experiences which provide evidence of it. Its source, I think, lies deeper. In the course of centuries the naive self-love of men has had to submit to two major blows at the hands of science. The first was when they learnt that our earth was not the center of the universe but only a tiny fragment of a cosmic system of scarcely imaginable vastness. This is associated in our minds with the name of Copernicus, though something similar had already been asserted by Alexandrian science. The second blow fell when biological research destroyed man's supposedly privileged place

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in creation and proved his descent from the animal kingdom and his ineradicable animal nature. This revaluation has been accomplished in our days by Darwin, Wallace and their predecessors, though not without the most violent contemporary opposition. But human megalomania will have suffered its third and most wounding blow from the psychological research of the present time which seeks to prove to the ego that it is not even master in its own house, but must be content itself with scanty information of what is going on unconsciously in its mind. We psycho-analysts were not the first and not the only ones to utter this call to introspection; but it seems to be our fate to give it its most forcible expression and to support it with empirical material which affects every individual. Hence arises the general revolt against our science, the disregard of all considerations of academic civility and the releasing of the opposition from every restraint of impartial logic.¹

Copernicus, Darwin, Freud: this genealogy of the de-centred man of modernity is by now so familiar to us that we no longer note its profoundly arbitrary character. This is not because one should necessarily be offended by the evident immodesty of the historical tableau presented by Freud. After all, Kant was not especially humble when he spoke of effecting a ‘Copernican revolution’ in philosophy,² and Darwin did not hesitate to predict that his theory would provoke a ‘considerable revolution’³ in natural history. As Bernard I. Cohen and Roy Porter⁴ have shown, the motif of the ‘revolutions’ effected by Copernicus, Galileo and Newton is a commonplace in the history of science since Fontenelle and the *encyclopédistes*, and Freud was certainly not the first, nor will he be the last, to recycle it to his advantage. However, he was by no means the only figure in psychology to do this, which immediately relativises his version of the evolution of the sciences. At the end of the nineteenth century, there was a veritable plethora of candidates vying for the title of the Darwin, Galileo or Newton of psychology. But how did Freud’s audience, and indeed so many others, come to believe in Freud’s entitlement, rather than that of one of his rivals?

Waiting for Darwin

According to Freud, the originality of psychoanalysis lay in the fact that it had accomplished in psychology the same type of scientific revolution which Copernicus and Darwin had effected in cosmology and biology. However, this ambition was one shared by many psychologists at the end of the nineteenth century, from Wundt to Brentano, from Ebbinghaus to William James.

Franz Brentano: We must strive to achieve here what mathematics, physics, chemistry and physiology have already accomplished . . . a nucleus of generally recognized truth to which, through the combined efforts of many forces, new crystals will adhere on all sides. In place of *psychologies* we must seek to create a *psychology*.⁵

From all sides, it was maintained that psychology had to separate itself from theology, philosophy, literature and other disciplines to take its rightful place in the orchestra of the sciences. Armchair speculation would give way to the rigours of the laboratory. When the Swiss psychologist Théodore Flournoy obtained his chair in psychology, he insisted that it be placed in the faculty of sciences.

Théodore Flournoy: In placing this chair in the faculty of sciences, rather than in that of letters where all the courses of philosophy are found, the Genevan government has implicitly recognized (perhaps without knowing it) the existence of psychology as a particular science, independent of all philosophical systems, with the same claims as physics, botany, astronomy . . . As for knowing up to what point contemporary psychology does justice to this declaration of the majority, and has truly succeeded in freeing itself from all metaphysical tutelage of any colour, that is another question. For here not less than elsewhere the idea should not be confounded with reality.⁶

Taken together, Brentano's imperative and Flournoy's reservations depict the 'will to science' (Isabelle Stengers)⁷ which historically presided over the setting up of the new discipline. 'Scientific' psychology didn't emerge as the fruit of a lucky discovery, a fortuitous

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invention, or by some ill-defined process of natural development. It was *desired* by its various promoters, and imagined on the model of the natural sciences. It was envisaged that psychology would complete the scientific revolution through applying the scientific method to all aspects of human life. Until then, knowledge of Man had been scattered between the stories of myth and religion, the speculations of philosophy, the maxims of morality, and the intuitions of art and literature. Psychology would replace these incomplete and partial knowledges by a true science of Man, with laws as universal as physics and methods as certain as those of chemistry.

Freud: The intellect and mind are objects for scientific research in exactly the same way as any non-human things. Psycho-analysis has a special right to speak for the scientific *Weltanschauung* at this point . . . Its special contribution to science lies precisely in having extended research to the mental field. And, incidentally, without such a psychology science would be very incomplete.⁸

From the very beginning, the ‘new psychology’ presented itself as an ‘imitation’ of the natural sciences (a sort of scientific version of the ‘imitation of the Ancients’). The philosopher Alasdair McIntyre remarked, ‘pre-Newtonian physicists had . . . the advantage over contemporary experimental psychologists that they did not know that they were waiting for Newton’.⁹ By contrast, the new self-styled psychologists inevitably *simulated* the science to come. The most perspicacious asked whether psychology would ever obtain the heights of its models.

William James to James Sully, 8 July 1890: It seems to me that psychology is like physics before Galileo’s time – not a single elementary law yet caught glimpse of. A great chance for some future psychologist to make a name greater than Newton’s; but who then will read the books of this generation? Not many I trow.¹⁰

James, 1890: When, then, we talk of ‘psychology as a natural science’ we must not assume that means a sort of psychology that stands at last on a solid ground . . . it is indeed strange to hear people talk

triumphantly of 'the New Psychology' and write 'Histories of Psychology', when into the real elements and forces which the word covers not the first glimpse of clear insight exists . . . This is no science, it is only the hope of science . . . But at present psychology is in the condition of physics before Galileo and the laws of motion, of chemistry before Lavoisier and the notion that mass is preserved in all reactions. The Galileo and the Lavoisier of psychology will be famous men indeed when they come, as come they some day surely will.¹¹

For James, psychology was only the 'hope of a science', the preparatory work for its Galileo and Newton, who were yet to come. The Berlin psychologist William Stern was of a similar view. In 1900, in an article to salute the new century, he drew up a largely negative balance sheet of the new discipline. One was far from the unity sought by figures such as Brentano. Aside from an empirical tendency and the use of experimental methods, he saw little in the way of common features. There were many laboratories with researchers working on special problems, together with many textbooks, but they were all characterised by a pervasive particularism. The psychological map of the day, Stern wrote, was as colourful and chequered as that of Germany in the epoch of small states.

William Stern: [Psychologists] often speak different languages, and the portraits that they draw up of the psyche are painted with so many different colours and with so many differently accented special strokes that it often becomes difficult to recognize the identity of the represented object . . . In short: there are many new psychologies, but not yet the new psychology.¹²

Already by the turn of the century, there was little consensus in psychology. Thus, for psychologists, the task became one not only of distinguishing the new psychology from what had gone before, but of forwarding their own claims to form the one scientific psychology, over that of their colleagues. Rhetorical analogies to scientific heroes readily lent themselves to such a situation. A number of figures suggested candidates for the role of the new Galileo or Newton of

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psychology. Théodore Flournoy placed the laurel on Frederic Myers, one of the founders of psychological research.

Flournoy: Nothing permits one to foresee the end that the future reserves to the spiritist doctrine of Myers. If future discoveries will come to confirm his thesis of the empirically verified intervention of the discarnate in the physical or psychological frame of our phenomenal world, then his name will be inscribed in the golden book of the great initiators, and join those of Copernicus and Darwin; he will complete the triad of geniuses having most profoundly revolutionized scientific thought in the cosmological, biological, psychological order.¹³

For Flournoy, who had by then read and reviewed Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, the founding genius of psychology wasn't Freud, but Myers. Likewise, Stanley Hall stated in 1909 that 'the present psychological situation calls out for a new Darwin of the mind'.¹⁴ In 1912, Arnold Gesell proclaimed it was Hall himself who was the 'Darwin of psychology'.¹⁵ Hall later recalled that this 'gave me more inner satisfaction than any compliment ever paid me by the most perfervid friend'.¹⁶ Others nominated Freud.

C. G. Jung: Freud could be refuted only by one who has made repeated use of the psychoanalytic method and who really investigates as Freud does . . . He who does not or cannot do this should not pronounce judgment on Freud, else he acts like those notorious men of science who disdained to look through Galileo's telescope.¹⁷

Eugen Bleuler to Freud, 19 October 1910: One compares [your work] with that of Darwin, Copernicus and Semmelweis. I believe too that for psychology your discoveries are equally fundamental as the theories of those men are for other branches of science, no matter whether or not one evaluates the advancements in psychology as highly as those in other sciences.¹⁸

David Eder: The work of Freud in psychology has been compared by one of his disciples to that of Darwin in psychology.¹⁹

The disciple in question was Ernest Jones, who flattered himself with having been the first to have accorded Freud the title of 'Darwin of

the mind' in his *Papers on Psycho-Analysis* of 1913.²⁰ In 1918, in the course of a debate with the psychologists William Rivers and Maurice Nicoll, the latter representing Jung, Jones expanded upon this analogy.

Ernest Jones: The contrast between this [Jung's] view and Freud's is just the same as that between the positions adopted by Drummond and Wallace, on the one hand, and Darwin and Huxley on the other, regarding the origin of the mind and soul – a matter which in the scientific world was decided half a century ago.²¹

Frank J. Sulloway: Jones saw himself in relation to Freud as T. H. Huxley – 'Darwin's bulldog' – had stood to the embattled Darwin a half century earlier.²²

Thus one sees that the question of who posterity would view as being the founding genius of psychology was hotly debated at precisely the same time when Freud nominated himself. This self-canonisation, which has been taken as self-evident, immediately loses its authority, and appears for what it was: a peremptory attempt by Freud and his followers to act as if posterity had already unilaterally settled the debates between psychoanalysis and other psychologies in their favour, and discarded any other claimants to this position. Some figures vigorously protested.

William McDougall: The only authority we have for accepting this [the theory of the social bond presented by Freud in his *Group Psychology*] as the necessary and sole permissible line of speculation, for regarding our explanation of social phenomena as necessarily confined within the limits of the sexual libido, is the authority of Professor Freud and his devoted disciples. I, for one, shall continue to try to avoid the spell of the primal horde-father and to use what intellect I have, untrammelled by arbitrary limitations.²³

Alfred Hoche: To top it all, the [Freudians'] dogmatic arrogance leads them to compare Freud's role with the historical position of Kepler, Copernicus and Semmelweis, and are compelled, according to a comical reasoning, to find the proof in the fact that they all had to battle the resistance of their contemporaries.²⁴

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Wilhelm Weygandt: Freud's teaching has been compared with the puerperal fever theory of Semmelweiss, which was initially ridiculed and then brilliantly recognised. If we certainly also revolt against this, it would still be cruel to compare Freud with Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy. It is perhaps closer to think of Franz Joseph Gall, whose theories, despite some striking points of view and findings, fell into rejection immediately due to their uncritical exaggeration and utilisation, including good and bad components.²⁵

Freud: I was either compared to Columbus, Darwin and Kepler, or abused as a general paralytic.²⁶

Adolf Wohlgemuth: Freud–Darwin! You may as well couple the name of Mr. Potts, of the *Eatonswill Gazette*, with that of Shakespeare or Goethe . . . Both Copernicus' and Darwin's work was violently attacked and herein may be some resemblance to Freud's, but yet what a sea of difference! Who were the attackers of Copernicus and Darwin? The Church, whose vested interests were endangered. Astronomers, as far as they dared in those dark days and were not Church dignitaries, or teachers at clerical universities, received the work of Copernicus and his successors with admiration. Biologists and geologists were almost unanimously enthusiastic about Darwin's work. The chief objectors . . . to Freud's theories, I say, are psychologists *von Fach* [professional psychologists], that is exactly those people who stand to Freud's work in the same relation as the astronomers to Copernicus, and the biologists and geologists to Darwin's work, and who hailed it with joy and admiration.²⁷

So why should we have faith in Freud, rather than in his rivals? Because Freud 'triumphed' to such a degree that we hardly remember names such as Stern, Flournoy, Hall, Myers or McDougall? Because the 'scientific revolution' effected by this new Copernicus banished them to the realms of pseudo-science? This would be to invoke precisely what one is attempting to explain. This would amount to begging the question, conceding everything to the 'victor', whereas we would like to know precisely how he won and why. Was it because Freud's competitors were finally forced to concede defeat? Because a consensus emerged around his theories, despite the 'violent

oppositions' and the 'resistance to psychoanalysis' that he alleged? Or was it, quite simply, because he managed to make everyone forget the controversy itself, and even the existence of many of his rivals?

Freud: Neither speculative philosophy, nor descriptive psychology, nor what is called experimental psychology . . . as they are taught in our Universities, is in a position to tell you anything serviceable of the relation between the body and the mind or to provide you with the key to an understanding of possible disturbances of the mental functions.²⁸

Freud: The theory of psychic life could not be developed, because it was inhibited by a single essential misunderstanding. What does it comprise to-day, as it is taught at college? Apart from those valuable discoveries in the physiology of the senses, a number of classifications and definitions of our mental processes which, thanks to linguistic usage, have become the common property of every educated person. That is clearly not enough to give a view of our psychic life.²⁹

'Make the past into a tabula rasa', chanted the French revolutionaries. It is in the nature of revolutions to do away with opponents, whether it be with the swipe of the guillotine or with epistemic breaks, and to rewrite history from the moment of 'year 1' of the new scientific or political order. Freud's parable of the 'three blows' provides a marvellous illustration of this purging of history, right down to its transcription. Indeed, this edifying story has its own interesting genealogy, which is passed over in silence by Freud. As Paul-Laurent Assoun has shown in his *Introduction to Freudian Epistemology*,³⁰ before being taken up by psychologists, the comparison of humiliations produced by the Copernican and Darwinian revolutions comes from the well-known Darwinian propagandist Ernst Haeckel, who popularised it in several of his works.

Ernst Haeckel: The two great fundamental errors are asserted in [the Mosaic hypothesis of creation], namely, first, the *geocentric* error that the earth is the fixed central point of the whole universe, round which the sun, moon, and stars move; and secondly the *anthropocentric* error, that man is the premeditated aim of the creation of the earth, for whose

service alone the rest of nature is said to have been created. The former of these errors was demolished by Copernicus' System of the Universe in the beginning of the 16th century, the latter by Lamarck's Doctrine of Descent in the beginning of the 19th century.³¹

Haeckel: Just as the *geocentric conception* of the universe – namely, the false opinion that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that all its other portions revolved around the earth – was overthrown by the system of the universe established by Copernicus and his followers, so the *anthropocentric conception* of the universe – the vain delusion that Man is the centre of terrestrial nature, and that its whole aim is merely to serve him – is overthrown by the application (attempted long since by Lamarck) of the theory of descent to Man.³²

Haeckel: In the same way that Copernicus (1543) gave the mortal blow to the geocentric dogma founded on the Bible, Darwin (1859) did the same to the anthropocentric dogma intimately connected to the first.³³

This 'genealogical schema' (Assoun) appears to have circulated freely in scientific circles, to the point where it was taken up without attribution by Thomas Huxley,³⁴ and by the physiologist Emil Du Bois-Reymond in a talk given in 1883 under the title 'Darwin and Copernicus'. This talk caused a sensation, and immediately made Du Bois-Reymond one of the favourite targets of the anti-Darwinians.

Emil Du Bois-Reymond: Hardly had I been presented by Haeckel as an adversary of Darwin, I suddenly passed in the eyes of the reactionary organs and the clerics as the most distinguished defender in Germany of the Darwinian doctrine and they formed a circle around me to throw at me rantings full of furious hatred.³⁵

Haeckel did not appreciate his position being usurped in such a manner.

Haeckel: Fifteen years ago I myself developed the comparison of Darwin and Copernicus, and showed the merit of these two heroes who had destroyed anthropocentrism and geocentrism, in my lecture, *Über die Entstehung und den Stammbaum des Menschengeschlechts* [On the development and family tree of the human race].³⁶

Haeckel: Darwin became the Copernicus of the organic world, just as I had already expressed in 1868, and as E. Du Bois-Reymond did fifteen years later, repeating my statement.³⁷

Seeing Haeckel's sensitivity to questions of intellectual priority, it is not difficult to imagine what would have been his response to Freud's lecture. The latter did not content himself, like Huxley or Du Bois-Reymond, with comparing Darwin to Copernicus. He took over the reasoning and even the terms of Haeckel, simply adding a third stage, which Flournoy had already done before him: after the critique of geocentrism, of anthropocentrism, that of egocentrism – with no mention of Haeckel or Flournoy, both of whom he read. Even within psychoanalysis, some were struck by the audacity of Freud's claims.

Karl Abraham to Freud, 18 March 1917: The other paper, which you sent me in proof ['A difficulty in the path of psycho-analysis' in which Freud took up the theme of the three blows] gave me special pleasure, not only because of its train of thought but particularly as a personal document . . . Judging from the most recent paper, you might after all be tempted to come to this furthest north-eastern corner of Germany, if I tell you that your colleague Copernicus lived in Allenstein for many years.³⁸

Freud to Abraham, 25 March 1917: You are right to point out that the enumeration in my last paper is bound to create the impression that I claim my place alongside Copernicus and Darwin. However, I did not want to relinquish an interesting idea just because of that semblance, and therefore at any rate put Schopenhauer in the foreground.³⁹

Here we see a commonplace presented as an 'interesting idea' which had simply occurred to Freud, who elides the history of this analogy. The manner in which these debates have been forgotten, leaving Freud as the sole claimant to the prize, is emblematic of the effects of the Freudian legend.

The Lancet, 11 June 1938: His [Freud's] teachings have in their time aroused controversy more acute and antagonism more bitter than any since the days of Darwin. Now, in his old age, there are few

psychologists of any school who do not admit their debt to him. Some of the conceptions he formulated clearly for the first time have crept into current philosophy against the stream of wilful incredulity which he himself recognised as man's natural reaction to unbearable truth.⁴⁰

Stephen Jay Gould: [A]s Freud observed, our relationship with science must be paradoxical because we are forced to pay an almost intolerable price for each major gain in knowledge and power – the psychological cost of progressive dethronement from the center of things, and increasing marginality in an uncaring universe. Thus physics and astronomy relegated our world to a corner of the cosmos, and biology shifted our status from a simulacrum of God to a naked, upright ape.⁴¹

'The powerful, ineradicable Freud legend'⁴²

The fable of the three blows provides a good example of what the historians Henri Ellenberger and Frank Sulloway have called 'the Freudian legend'. One sees here nearly all of the key elements of the master narrative woven by Freud and his followers: the peremptory declaration of the revolutionary and epochal character of psychoanalysis, the description of the ferocious hostility and irrational 'resistances' which it gave rise to, the insistence on the 'moral courage'⁴³ which was required to overcome them, the obliteration of rival theories, relegated to a prehistory of the psychoanalytic science, and a lack of acknowledgement of debts and borrowings.

Legenda is a story meant to be repeated mechanically, almost unknowingly, like the lives of the saints that were daily recited at matins in the convents of the Middle Ages. Just as the removal of these *legendae* from history facilitated their vast transcultural diffusion, so the legendary de-historicisation of psychoanalysis has allowed it to adapt to all sorts of contexts which on the face of it ought to have been inhospitable to it, and to constantly reinvent itself in a brand-new guise.

Each has his own version of the legend – positivist, existentialist, hermeneutic, Freudo-Marxist, narrativist, cognitivist, structuralist, deconstructivist and now even neuroscientific. These versions are as different as can be, but they have this in common: they all celebrate the exceptionalism of psychoanalysis, removed from context, history and verification. The longevity of psychoanalysis is not incidentally bound up with the manner in which the Freud legend continues to expand and adapt itself to changing intellectual and cultural milieux. In this sense, it is not simply a question of reducing the Freud legend to a fixed narrative, which would simply require a point-by-point refutation, as Sulloway attempted.⁴⁴ Rather, the legend has an open structure, capable at any moment of integrating new elements and discarding others whilst maintaining its underlying form, which remains recognisable. The elements can change, particular theories or conceptions of Freud can be abandoned or remodelled to the point where they become completely unrecognisable, but the legend survives.

James Strachey: Though it may flatter our vanity to declare that Freud was a human being of a kind like our own, that satisfaction can easily be carried too far. There must have been something very extraordinary in the man who was the first able to recognize a whole field of mental facts which had hitherto been excluded from normal consciousness, the man who first interpreted dreams, who first accepted the facts of infantile sexuality, who first made the distinction between the primary and secondary processes of thinking – the man who first made the unconscious mind real to us.⁴⁵

Strachey: [Freud's self-analysis,] like Galileo's telescope, opened the way to a new chapter in human knowledge.⁴⁶

Jones: Future generations of psychologists will assuredly wish to know what manner of man it was who, after two thousand of years of vain endeavour had gone by, succeeded in fulfilling the Delphic injunction: know thyself . . . Few, if any, have been able to go as far as he did on the path of self-knowledge and self-mastery – even with the aid of the pioneer torch he provided with his methods and previous exploration,

and even with the invaluable assistance of years of daily personal work with expert mentors. How one man alone could have broken all this new ground, and overcome all difficulties unaided, must ever remain a cause for wonder. It was the nearest to a miracle that human means can compass, one that surely surpasses even the loftiest intellectual achievements in mathematics and pure science. Copernicus and Darwin dared much in facing the unwelcome truths of outer reality, but to face those of inner reality costs something that only the rarest of mortals would unaided be able to give . . . It would not be a great exaggeration if we summed up in one phrase Freud's contribution to knowledge: he discovered the Unconscious.⁴⁷

Joseph Schwartz: [The development of the analytic hour by Breuer and Freud was] analogous to Galileo's use of the telescope to explore previously unknown structures in the night sky. Freud and Breuer were the first to permit the human subject to speak for him/herself . . . For the first time, a space had been created where the meanings of subjective experience could be purposefully sought until they were found.⁴⁸

Ilse Grubrich-Simitis: It can be asserted with some justification that the book [Breuer and Freud's *Studies on Hysteria*] so to speak ushered in the century of psychotherapy.⁴⁹

Jacques Lacan: I have come here [in Vienna] – not unfittingly, I think – to evoke the fact that this chosen city will remain, this time forever more, associated with a revolution in knowledge of Copernican proportions. I am referring to the fact that Vienna is the eternal site of Freud's discovery and that, owing to this discovery, the veritable center of human beings is no longer at the place ascribed to it by an entire humanist tradition.⁵⁰

Lacan: Indeed, Freud himself compared his discovery to the so-called Copernican revolution, emphasizing that what was at stake was once again the place man assigns himself at the center of a universe. Is the place that I occupy as subject of the signifier concentric or eccentric in relation to the place I occupy as subject of the signified? That is the question.⁵¹

Paul Ricoeur: In an essay written in 1917 Freud speaks of psychoanalysis as a wound and humiliation to narcissism analogous to the

discoveries of Copernicus and Darwin when in their own way they decentered the world and life with respect to the claims of consciousness. Psychoanalysis decenters in the same way the constitution of the world of fantasy with respect to consciousness.⁵²

Thomas S. Kuhn: In the nineteenth century, Darwin's theory of evolution raised similar extrascientific questions. In our own century, Einstein's relativity theories and Freud's psychoanalytic theories provide centers for controversies from which may emerge further radical reorientations of western thought. Freud himself emphasised the parallel effects of Copernicus' discovery that the earth was merely a planet and his own discovery that the unconscious controlled much of human behaviour . . . we are the intellectual heirs of men like Copernicus and Darwin. Our fundamental thought processes have been reshaped by them, just as the thought of our children will have been reshaped by the work of Einstein and Freud.⁵³

That even a philosopher of science of the caliber of Kuhn repeats the Freud–Copernicus comparison illustrates the extraordinary cultural success of the Freudian legend – in other words, of psychoanalysis itself. Psychoanalysis attempted to impose itself in the twentieth century as *the* only psychological theory worthy of the name and *the* only psychotherapy capable of theorising its own practice. In many circles, calling into question the existence of the unconscious, the Oedipus complex or infantile sexuality could provoke the same response as to creationists or members of the Flat Earth Society. In such locations, psychoanalysis became indisputable and incontrovertible. It was 'blackboxed', to use the language of sociologists of science, that is to say, it was accepted as a given that it would be simply futile to question.⁵⁴ The Freud legend and its acceptance are the expression of this successful blackboxing, of this supposed victory of psychoanalysis over rival theories. Better still, they are this blackboxing itself, which protects the contents of the black box from inquiry. Indeed, why would one want to reopen it? Why would one want, for example, to stir up the old controversies that accompanied the elaboration of Freudian theory, when everyone

knows it triumphed once and for all over the ‘resistances to psychoanalysis’, just as Copernicus and Darwin won out over the irrational prejudices that prevented man from seeing the truth?

Harold P. Blum and Bernard L. Pacella: At this time, Freud’s initial propositions, first findings and landmark case reports are no longer vital for the validation of psychoanalytic formulation . . . Freud is part of our culture, our way of comprehending personality development and disorder. All rational psychotherapy is based upon psychoanalytic principles. Psychoanalysis provides a fundamental mode of exploring and understanding art and literature, biography and history, etc. Concepts of repression, regression, denial, projection, and ‘Freudian slip’ have become part of our language.⁵⁵

Opening the black box

The success of the theory is explained by its truth, and its truth in turn is legitimated by its success. What we have here is an example of what the sociologist of science David Bloor⁵⁶ calls an ‘asymmetrical’ explanation, that is, one that argues from the victory in a scientific controversy to beat the vanquished hollow and refuses to listen to their arguments. Who would give a ‘symmetric’ attention to points of view which have already been condemned by the tribunal of history?

It is precisely this which historians, critics and scholars of psychoanalysis have been attempting for several decades now. They have been reopening the black box of psychoanalysis, and have attempted to understand *how* psychoanalysis triumphed over its adversaries, *how* for many it succeeded in establishing itself as the science of the psyche, without awarding the title in advance. Despite decades of relativising and contextual studies, the history of science today still continues to be dominated by the study of the prestigious hard sciences, which have comparatively secure societal positions. The contestations of psychoanalysis provide a unique window onto how certain ideas about the mind and human relations came to be

regarded as established knowledge, and formed the received ideas of several generations.

Good historical practice is characterised by close attention to contexts, the eschewal of hindsight and all forms of presentism. In this regard, contemporary historians are necessarily in conflict with ‘Whig history’, that is to say, history written from the perspective of the victor. This is particularly critical in the history of science, where there is always a strong temptation to read the past from the perspective of the current state of scientific research, conceived as the progressive unveiling of an essentially atemporal truth of nature. For quite a while, the history of science was written by scientists, with all the partiality which this supposes, or by philosophers attempting to award retrospectively the title of scientificity to the victors. Thus it is essential that historians resist this epistemocentrism to be able finally to speak *historically* of the sciences, at the risk of colliding with the certitudes of scientists themselves, or rather, with scientism. From this perspective, Bloor’s ‘principle of symmetry’ is nothing but the application to the sciences of a methodological principle which is common in good historical practice.⁵⁷

One finds the same problem and the same evolution in the history of psychoanalysis. This was started by Freud himself in 1914, in the heat of the dissensions and controversies which threatened to shipwreck the movement, and with obvious polemical intent. It was subsequently taken up by followers and fellow travellers such as Fritz Wittels, Siegfried Bernfeld, Ernest Jones, Marthe Robert, Max Schur, Ola Anderson and, closer to us, figures such as Peter Gay, Élisabeth Roudinesco and Joseph Schwartz. Whatever the respective merits and the sometimes considerable erudition of their works, it is not unfair to remark that their historiography remains profoundly Freudian, and does not put into question the general schema of the narrative proposed by the founder, even when their research forces them to abandon or revise this or that element of the legend. Even though these revisions have accumulated over the course of the years,

they have too often been treated as simple retouchings of detail which do not modify the basic legend, and not as invitations to reconsider Freudian theory. On the contrary, the validity of the latter continues to be presupposed, even when it is contradicted by history. Thus one had to wait for historians who were independent of psychoanalytic institutions for Freudian theory to be envisaged for the first time as a problematic construction, in need of explication, rather than an intangible *a priori*.

Admittedly, the Freudian legend had been criticised before, sometimes ferociously. Freud's adversaries at the time did not fail to stress the inaccuracy and tendentiousness of his historical self-presentations,⁵⁸ and there were a number of alternative histories of psychology and psychotherapy, such as Pierre Janet's admirable three-volume *Psychological Medications*.⁵⁹ But such rival versions by psychologists in their turn defended particular theoretical positions, and, at the end of the day, were no less partisan and asymmetric than Freud's.⁶⁰ Only historians not party to a particular psychological school could attempt to give non-partisan accounts of these controversies, without prejudging the results and the respective validity of the theories in question.

The first who set out to correct this situation was the historian of dynamic psychiatry Henri Ellenberger.

Henri Ellenberger: In Switzerland I knew two pioneers of psychoanalysis: the clergyman Oskar Pfister, a long-time friend of Freud, and Alphonse Maeder, who had been closely linked to the history of psychoanalysis. Both of these men told me of many events that they had either fathered or witnessed. Later, when Ernest Jones published his official biography of Freud, I was struck by the disparity with the two pioneers' accounts . . . In the second volume of his biography, there is a famous chapter enumerating the so-called persecutions that befell certain psychoanalysts. I drew up a list of the incidents, and checked each one of them with primary sources. Among the cases on which I was able to gather dependable information, I found 80 percent of Jones' facts to be either completely false or greatly exaggerated.⁶¹

Instructed by this episode, Ellenberger realised that Jones' biography was not an isolated occurrence, and that it illustrated, in a much more general fashion, the striking absence of a history of psychiatry worthy of the name. Written by the protagonists themselves, the history of psychiatry was often only a string of personal anecdotes and partisan rumours designed to promote this school or that theory. (Ellenberger gave the example of the legend constructed around Pinel by his disciples and elevated to the rank of the founding narrative of psychiatry.⁶²)

To remedy this situation, Ellenberger followed several simple methodological rules which he enumerated at the beginning of his monumental work of 1970, *The Discovery of the Unconscious. The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*. On the one hand, never take anything as given; verify everything (even if Rorschach's sister swears that his eyes are blue, ask for his passport). Always use original documents and, whenever possible, first-hand witnesses; read texts in their original language; identify the patients in this observation or that case history; establish the facts through mercilessly separating them from interpretations, rumours and legends; on the other hand, resist the theoreticism and spontaneous iatrocriticism of psychiatrists by replacing their theories in their multiple biographical, professional, intellectual, economic, social and political contexts, and by taking account of the role played in their elaboration by the patients themselves.⁶³

From this perspective, demythologising critique, which is the aspect which one most often recalls of Ellenberger's work, cannot be separated from the symmetrical gesture of contextualisation, insofar as it is the nature of psychiatric legends to efface historical contexts. In his unpublished notes on the problem of psychiatric legends, Ellenberger repeatedly stressed the link between these two aspects of his work.

Ellenberger: The legend becomes the property of a closed group, of a school, a family (Nietzsche), of a corporation and a family (Pinel). A closed school (cf. the Epicurians). Continual selection of documents: destruction, guarding, diffusion. Role of publishers, editors, readers.

Later, relative deformations, through the change of perspective, through the disappearance of the context, which render the works of the author unintelligible.⁶⁴

Ellenberger noted that the Freudian legend, which is clearly the major target of *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, essentially turns around two themes: that of the *solitary* hero surmounting the obstacles placed across his route by malicious adversaries and that of the absolute *originality* of the founder – two ways of negating the friendships, the networks, influences, legacies, readings and intellectual debts – in short, everything which would link Freud to his historical epoch. Ellenberger's book, with its 932 pages and 2,611 footnotes, is by itself a striking demonstration of the absurdity of this presentation of psychoanalysis. Ellenberger unearthed a century and a half of researches conducted by hundreds of magnetisers, hypnotisers, philosophers, novelists, psychologists and psychiatrists, without which psychoanalysis would have been unthinkable. And for good measure, he flanked his chapter on Freud by three others dedicated to his great rivals, Janet (placed first), Jung and Adler, so as to stress that this history of dynamic psychiatry neither commenced nor terminated with psychoanalysis, contrary to what the contemporaneous teleologically inclined histories of Gregory Zilboorg, Dieter Wyss or Ilza Veith contended.⁶⁵

Ellenberger: The current legend . . . attributes to Freud much of what belongs, notably, to Herbart, Fechner, Nietzsche, Meynert, Benedikt, and Janet, and overlooks the work of previous explorers of the unconscious, dreams, and sexual pathology. Much of what is credited to Freud was diffuse current lore, and his role was to crystallize these ideas and give them an original shape.⁶⁶

It is clear from the unpublished notebooks left by him after his death that in the course of his research Ellenberger became extremely critical with regard to psychoanalysis – more so than one would suspect from his published writings.

Ellenberger: Psychoanalysis, is it a science? It does not meet the criteria (unified science, defined domain and methodology). It corresponds to the traits of a philosophical sect (closed organisation, highly personal initiation, a doctrine which is changeable but defined by its official adoption, cult and legend of the founder).⁶⁷

One finds this same project of contextualising psychoanalysis in the work of Frank Sulloway, the second historian after Ellenberger to have radically changed the manner in which we perceive psychoanalysis. Freud claimed to be a new Darwin, a 'Darwin of the mind'. Sulloway proposed to take this slogan as literally as possible. In his book with an Ellenbergian subtitle, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind. Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend*,⁶⁸ he showed in a very convincing manner how the principal 'discoveries' were actually deeply rooted in the biological hypotheses and speculations of his Darwinian era. Behind libido, infantile sexuality, polymorphous perversity, erotogenous zones, bisexuality, regression, primary repression, the murder of the primary father, originary fantasies and the death drive, Sulloway unearthed the forgotten 'sexual theories' of Krafft-Ebing, Albert Moll and Havelock Ellis, Haeckel's vast biogenetic frescoes, Wilhelm Fliess and Darwin's speculations on biorhythms, or again the theory of the transmission of acquired characteristics of Lamarck. In so doing, Sulloway intellectually rehabilitated Freud's friend, confidant and collaborator Wilhelm Fliess, generally presented in Freud biographies as a dangerous paranoiac and crank with grandiose and extravagant theories. Not only were Fliess' theories perfectly plausible in the context of the biogenetic speculations then in vogue, but they were favourably received by a not inconsiderable number of his contemporaries (beginning with Breuer). Thus there is no need, as some have proposed, to imagine an irrational transference on the part of Freud towards his friend to explain how he could have chosen him as a privileged interlocuter for so many years: they simply shared the same colleagues, the same ideas and the same readings.

Sulloway: I am not saying that Fliess was a great scientist, I'm just saying that what he was doing was reasonably plausible and radical at the same time, and therefore appealed to Freud's own radical sensibilities. Obviously, Freud and Fliess intellectually stimulated each other a great deal and to discover that this relationship could be placed in a nineteenth century context in which it all made sense and took on respectability was a very fun thing to do in terms of the research involved.⁶⁹

Just as with Ellenberger, Sulloway's historical contextualisation clashes head on with the Freudian legend and notably with the idea that psychoanalysis was born when Freud abandoned the neuro-physiological and biological theories of his time to the benefit of a purely psychological science, founded on clinical observation and the self-analysis of its founder.

Sulloway: How is it possible, in a self analysis, not to be conditioned by all the scientific knowledge, reading and diverse evidence that you have gathered from half a dozen other disciplines? How could you prevent those relevant sources of information from steering your self analysis in a certain direction? If you begin to read in the literature that the infant is much more sexually spontaneous than you had ever thought, how could you not probe that issue in your own self analysis? So it shouldn't come as a big surprise if you then uncover a memory of having seen your mother naked at age two. If every book you are reading is telling you that and you then discover it in your own life, well, big news! It is obvious, not even profound.

The self analysis has been made into a causal agent of Freud's originality in traditional Freud scholarship, but that simply is not true. It is like an uncontrolled experiment: things that are going on in self analysis get credited for all of Freud's intellectual changes, but those things themselves are coming in from somewhere else. The self analysis is one of the great legendary stories in the history of science and although Freud himself really didn't spawn that aspect of the myth, he did nothing to prevent it from spreading.⁷⁰

For Sulloway, the 'legend of the hero' (following Joseph Campbell)⁷¹ elaborated by Freud and his disciples essentially served two purposes.

On the one hand, through presenting the image of an isolated Freud, it allowed one to assert the radicality of the new science of the mind whilst clandestinely recuperating the contributions of Darwin, Haeckel, Fliess, Krafft-Ebing, the sexologists, and other figures. On the other hand, and more profoundly, it effectively protected psychoanalysis against the vicissitudes of scientific research. Once transmuted into psychological discoveries, the evolutionary hypotheses which underlay psychoanalytic theory could be maintained in spite of everything, even when they were refuted in their original fields. Deracinated, psychoanalysis became a discipline apart, cordoned off and protected from the refutation of some of its founding presuppositions.

Freud: My position, no doubt, is made more difficult by the present attitude of biological science, which refuses to hear of the inheritance of acquired characteristics by succeeding generations. I must, however, in all modesty confess that nevertheless I cannot do without this factor in biological evolution.⁷²

Following Sulloway, the Freudian legend is not an anecdotal or propagandist supplement to psychoanalytic theory (which it remains to some extent for Ellenberger). On the contrary, it is the theory itself. Questioning the Freudian legend leads to questioning the status of psychoanalysis itself. Ellenberger, with Swiss prudence, characterised psychoanalysis as a half-science ('demi-science').⁷³ Sulloway, on the other hand, does not hesitate to describe psychoanalysis as a pseudo-science immunised against criticism by a very efficient propaganda machine and by historical disinformation.

Sulloway: Since I wrote this book on Freud, I have come to see psychoanalysis as something of a tragedy, as a discipline that evolved from a very promising science into a very disappointing pseudo-science . . . When I began the book, I approached Freud as most people do, as one of the great minds of the twentieth century, somebody on a par with Copernicus and Darwin, as he himself indicated. But the more I looked into the development of psychoanalysis, the more I discovered that it was based on outmoded 19th century assumptions that were

clearly refuted by the rediscovery of Mendel's laws in genetics, by the refutation of Lamarckian theory in evolutionary biology and by the discarding of the various sort of Helmholtzian physiological assumptions that were crucial to Freud's thinking about hysteria. So when I got to the end of this book, I found myself somewhat reluctantly having to admit that Freud was not the great discoverer I – and others – had thought. I became in spite of myself a critic not only of psychoanalytic theory, but also of what I increasingly saw as the act of construction of a historical legend to prevent this view of Freud from being widely understood.⁷⁴

Freud wars

The appearance of works by Ellenberger and Sulloway was followed by a veritable avalanche of 'revisionist' works,⁷⁵ each more critical than the last of the Freudian legend. Whilst, in the main, the works of Ellenberger and Sulloway were focused on intellectual history, Paul Roazen launched a social history of the psychoanalytic movement, through conducting oral histories, not unlike the anthropologists of science, who have attempted to study and distinguish what scientists actually do in contrast to their public statements about their work. Roazen's interviewees presented recollections of Freud which were radically discrepant from the image of Freud prepared by his biographer-disciple, Ernest Jones. Likewise, Peter Swales embarked upon a vast and meticulous archival investigation, only partially published, which reconstructed Freud's social and intellectual world in turn of the century Vienna, and presented a comprehensive account of the origins of psychoanalysis which was completely at variance with the Freudian legend. The philosopher Frank Cioffi showed how the key episode of the 'seduction theory', proposed in public and then abandoned in private by Freud between 1896 and 1897, did not unfold according to Freud's subsequent accounts, effectively deconstructing the official version of the discovery of the Oedipus complex and unconscious infantile sexual fantasies.⁷⁶

Such studies have shown to what extent Freud's 'observations' and case histories were at times selective, tendentious and even dishonest. Freud, one learns, did not hesitate to modify or to conceal this or that biographical element to fit his theory,⁷⁷ to take liberties with chronology⁷⁸ and translation,⁷⁹ to present self-analytical accounts as objective cases supposedly interpreted through brilliant detective work,⁸⁰ or to present imaginary therapeutic results whilst proclaiming the therapeutic superiority of psychoanalysis to other forms of psychotherapy. For example, there is no evidence that 'Anna O.' was ever cured by Breuer,⁸¹ any more than 'Emmy von N.',⁸² 'Cäcilie M.',⁸³ 'Elisabeth von R.'⁸⁴ or the 'Wolf Man'⁸⁵ were by Freud. Other patients, passed over in silence or mentioned anonymously, were hardly better off after their analyses, such as Emma Eckstein,⁸⁶ Elise Gomperz,⁸⁷ Elfriede Hirschfeld,⁸⁸ Anna Freud,⁸⁹ 'A. B.'⁹⁰ or the unfortunate Horace Frink.⁹¹ Conversely, some scholars have conjectured that 'Katharina' and 'Dora' may never have been ill in the first place.⁹²

The most immediate effect of this new Freud scholarship has been to reopen the controversy around psychoanalysis, which the domination of the Freudian legend in certain quarters had frozen for more than half a century. The unconscious, infantile sexuality, the Oedipus complex, repression, transference, all these notions which had been taken for granted became hot topics which were bitterly disputed. The 'Freud wars' raged. Journal covers were titled 'Is Freud dead?'⁹³ Works were published with titles such as *Why Freud Was Wrong*,⁹⁴ *The Freud Case. The Birth of Psychoanalysis from the Lie*,⁹⁵ *Despatches from the Freud Wars*⁹⁶ or again *The Black Book of Psychoanalysis*,⁹⁷ and articles on Freud in magazines regularly sparked off an avalanche of indignant letters of protestation from the adversarial camp, followed by responses.⁹⁸

Freudians resorted to dusting off the old arguments which had once worked so well (the pathologisation of adversaries, the imputation of 'resistance to psychoanalysis', of puritanism, of antisemitism)

and they invented new ones, which were better adapted to the new situation: claims to the so-called ‘progress’ of psychoanalysis since Freud to render all criticism out of date, critiques of the supposed ‘scientism’ and ‘positivistic credulity’ of Freud historians, without forgetting the unanswerable retort: ‘The never-ending backlash against Freud confirms the potency of his theories.’⁹⁹

Janet Malcolm: Roazen’s book [*Brother Animal*] is trivial and slight. Its scholarship, like that of many other works of pop history, does not hold up under any sort of close scrutiny.¹⁰⁰

Kurt Eissler: When Roazen writes . . . then I find myself forced to refer the reader to Freud’s comments on Daniel Paul Schreber’s self-revelations.¹⁰¹

René Major (concerning Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen): If he sticks to the archive and believes that it has no exteriority which permits it to be read or stops it from being ‘anarchived’ itself, he is prey to spasmodic convulsions worthy of Grand Mal. The Grand Mal of the archive. This illness is also of a sexual nature.¹⁰²

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi: The offensives against psychoanalysis have become confounded with attacks against the personal integrity of Freud which have attained a degree of defamation without precedent.¹⁰³

As for the new historians, they denounced Freudian dominance of the media, the press campaigns waged against dissidents, and the restriction of Freudian archives. How did it come about that so many documents deposited in public institutions such as the Library of Congress in Washington were officially inaccessible to researchers, and some documents until 2013 (or now indefinitely)? And why were these access restrictions, implacably applied when it came to independent researchers, suddenly lifted when it came to insiders of the psychoanalytic movement?

In 1994, a large international exhibition under the auspices of the Freud Archives and the Library of Congress in Washington was announced. None of the new Freud scholars figured in the organising

committee. In protest, forty-two of them (including the authors of this book) sent an open letter to the Library of Congress to express their wish that the exhibition reflect 'the present state of Freud research' and requested that someone representing their views be added to the organising committee.¹⁰⁴ The request was not considered. Then, for apparently completely independent reasons, the Library of Congress announced that the exhibition would be postponed to enable the organisers to raise the necessary funds. This inflamed the controversy. The letter, which would otherwise have sunk without a trace, was taken to be responsible for the postponement. The organisers attributed the Library of Congress' decision to the petitioners' political and media pressure and protested, claiming that they were defending 'freedom of expression'. The news was immediately reported in the international press: once more, Freud was the butt of censure! A counter-petition was organised in France by Élisabeth Roudinesco and Philippe Garnier. This gathered together more than 180 signatures, some of them prestigious, to denounce the 'blackmail to fear', the 'puritan manifestations', the 'witch hunt' and the 'dictatorship of several intellectuals turned into inquisitors'. The so-called inquisitors retorted by a press release, read by practically no one, in which they protested against the manipulation of the media by their adversaries.¹⁰⁵ At that point, the Library of Congress announced that the organisers had found the necessary funds to mount the exhibition and that it could take place as initially intended. In the meantime, the latest Freud war had taken place.¹⁰⁶ Once more, historians and critics had been misrepresented and slandered, and the media manipulated to present a heroic image of an embattled revolutionary science of psychoanalysis.¹⁰⁷

This book is about the Freud wars, old and new. It reopens the controversies which surrounded the inception of psychoanalysis and shows what we may learn from them about the fate of a once fashionable would-be science. It is striking to see the extent to which contemporary polemics around psychoanalysis repeat, in a

quasi-somnambular manner, those which took place at the beginning of the century. It is well known that, from 1906, Freud's theories were the subject of a fierce international controversy, in which the leading contemporary figures of psychiatry and psychology participated: Pierre Janet, Emil Kraepelin, William Stern, Eugen Bleuler, Gustav Aschaffenburg, Alfred Hoche, Morton Prince and many others. What is less known is the fact that this controversy came to a close with the defeat of psychoanalysis at the congress of the German psychiatric association, held in Breslau in 1913, where speaker after speaker rose up to denounce psychoanalysis in an unequivocal manner. The reason for this 'induced amnesia' is the fact that Freud and his followers acted as if the controversy ended in their favour. The apologue of the three blows with which we began perfectly illustrates this: what is widely known about Freud's adversaries is that they were motivated by irrational resistances as well as sexual repression and that they were definitively relegated to the scrapheap of the prehistory of science, just like the adversaries of Darwin and Copernicus. Consequently, we know little of the objections which they addressed to psychoanalysis nor do we know how Freud surmounted them. As we shall see, this was for a good reason, as one may question whether they were ever surmounted. When one places Freud's 'victory' over his adversaries in its historical context, one sees that it was imaginary, and that it rests on a negative hallucination concerning the critiques of psychoanalysis.

We propose, therefore, to reopen the files of these critiques and old controversies, consigned for too long in the 'prepsychoanalytic' attic, and restage the debates. Once the dust has been shaken off them, these files prove to be strikingly at variance with received opinion, which explains why some of them were so carefully censored, or classed as 'top secret' by the guardians of the Freud archives. Given how hard to retrieve much of this material is, we have deliberately chosen to cite excerpts *in extenso*, letting the historical actors speak in their own voices and creating a polyphonic text, rather than filter

through paraphrases. Taken together, they show a history which has very little in common with that which one finds in the works of Freud and his biographers, and which was taken at face value for so long. This history, as we shall see, demonstrates the extraordinary apparatus by which this would-be science of psychoanalysis installed itself in contemporary societies. Beyond psychoanalysis, it opens up the history of the constitution of the modern psychological sciences and psychotherapies, and how they furnished the ideas which we have of ourselves, and how these became solidified into incontrovertible 'facts'.

Privatising science

I find that one of the greatest bonds between us is our feeling for science and for what science really means. I hardly think that Freud *always* had a completely clear grasp of that.

Ernest Jones to Marie Bonaparte, 2 July 1954¹

Why do the current controversies revolve around the *history* of psychoanalysis and the manner in which it has been written? Why such vehemence on both sides, why a ‘war’? After all, the philosophical, epistemological and political critiques of psychoanalysis never aroused such passion. Psychoanalysis was reproached by Karl Jaspers for mixing up hermeneutic understanding (*Verstehen*) and the explanation (*Erklären*) of the natural sciences, by Jean-Paul Sartre for confounding repression and ‘bad faith’, by Ludwig Wittgenstein for confusing causes and reasons, by Karl Popper for avoiding all scientific falsification, by Adolf Grünbaum for proposing an epistemically inconsistent clinical validation and by Michel Foucault for producing sexuality under the cover of unmasking it. None of this affected psychoanalysts. Even the provocations and magnificent rhetorical violence of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* did not lead them to lose their composure. On the contrary, it is as if advocates of psychoanalysis were not perturbed by these debates because they