

# A History of Psychoanalysis in Australia:

*From Freud to Lacan—an Extract*

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*‘The psychoanalytic patient that Freud invented is, in his view, suffering from a dogmatic relationship to his own history that he is unable to examine. The question is whether psychoanalysis has been able to avoid having a dogmatic relationship to both its own history, and the histories of the individuals it has treated’ (Phillips, 2004, p. 145).*

## **A Love of Beginnings**

There are innumerable ways of recounting a life—both to ourselves and to others. They all toy with memory and describe childhood as a fraught love affair. And no matter how truthful they attempt to be, all depend on reconstructions from the perspective of the present. This does not make them inauthentic but it should make us wary. Both history and psychoanalysis point to how memory is full of holes, and how, faced with infinitesimal small wounds, we lie to ourselves. All of which makes the writing of a history of analysis (which I will use

synonymously with psychoanalysis) problematic. How should it be told and who can be trusted to tell it? One analyst who, after a lifetime of listening to other peoples' stories, tried to tell his own, faced this dilemma and chose to explore a love of beginnings, that is, finding another space from which words might come. This work too is a beginning of a writing that is concerned with space, that within the human subject and that outside, in this case, Australia. Being a history of psychoanalysis it is a space full of words, ongoing beginnings, yet with an end in sight. Both are frontiers arising from language and the way that it serves as our boundary and the only possibility of beginning afresh.

## Overview

Psychoanalysis has existed in Australia—at least as an idea—since the early 1900s. Its history, in the sense of a past, stretches back more than a century. But in as much as a history is a written record the account is more recent, only beginning after the Second World War. From that time—the period of institutional psychoanalysis—a substantial number of Australians have been 'analysed' and terms such as *ego*, *unconscious* and *repressed* have entered the language. In the arts and culture, psychoanalysis has shaped the imagination of painters from Albert Tucker to Juan Davila, engaged the interest of writers such as David Malouf and Murray Bail, and provided a spur to creative endeavours from architecture to filmmaking and music. It has been significant in the academy, providing inspiration for a number of discourses and thinkers, the University of Sydney's influential philosopher, John Anderson, prominent among them. The impact has also been felt in perhaps unexpected quarters, including politics, the Catholic Church, courts, kindergartens, schools and media. But while the word *psychoanalysis* and the cultural narrative it evokes is commonplace, the therapy is less so, having declined from being the most persuasive force in Australian psychiatry in the 1960s to one of the more marginalised. The waning medical status of psychoanalysis—which some link to the rise of post modernism, and others see as evidence of the method's failure—is not, however, my focus. While the general place of psychoanalysis in culture and medicine will be touched upon, the weight of this work is directed elsewhere. In framing a history of psychoanalysis in Australia, I am interested in what psychoanalysis might be, and what it has been in Australia. US historian of psychoanalysis, Eli Zaretsky named his purpose as exploring the '*emancipatory dimension of analytic thought*', while UK counterpart, Joseph Schwartz, explained his desire as showing the strengths and weaknesses of psychoanalysis and '*how interesting it really is*'. My question, in a sense, precedes both, as I am curious about what the treatment and texts devised

by Freud amount to and, in Australia, how they were interpreted. My premise is that a century after psychoanalysis could be said to have landed in Australia, with the reading in Sydney of the only paper Freud ever wrote specifically for Australasia, it remains unclear what we mean when we speak of psychoanalysis, and whether a distinctly Australian (or any other sort of national) version of it is possible. Psychoanalysis has a presence in Australia, but little definitional clarity. This is a result of a number of factors, including the tendency of analytic schools to be partisan, at times secretive and convinced that they alone speak for Freud's creation. There is also the problem of a field that owes its origins to one man, and is unsure how to interrogate, let alone revise, his formulations. The temptation has been to take—within a loosely agreed terminology—psychoanalysis as a given and not to consider what it may be, textually, conceptually and clinically, and how, in the light of the way that psychoanalysis reconfigures the idea of the past, a history of it might be written.

I am drawn to this task because of my interest in psychoanalysis as a possible way of explaining subjectivity, what one historian of Freud and his creation has called '*the structure and dynamics of the inner world of the experiencing human being*' (Schwartz, 1999, p. 1). It is a question that, like psychoanalysis itself, cannot be corralled into categories such as clinical or conceptual, any more than concepts such as 'inner world' can be seen to draw on anything other than a privileged vocabulary. While psychoanalysis is frequently divided into 'pure' or 'applied'—terms whose meaning is usually taken to indicate Freud's therapeutic method and the application of analytic theory to topics like literature—such divisions impose imaginary boundaries, subsuming, as one analyst has argued, the ideal under the fact. My suspicion is that analysis cannot be reduced to an exhaustive definition.

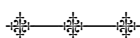
## The Specificity of the Topic

To address the question then, it has three noteworthy terms—*history*, *psychoanalysis* and *Australia*—none of which can be assumed. The first term, history, is addressed briefly in this section and in detail in the next. The second term, psychoanalysis, is the key question and, while it cannot be contained definitively, it is relentlessly explored. The third term, Australia, raises the issue of place, geographic and psychic, and is discussed in detail in Chapter Three, and, by way of introduction, here. To that end, I want to draw attention to language, and the way that analytic terms such as *inner world*, *internal object* and *introjection* evoke space without themselves occupying a physical dimension. They are ways of inferring a model of the mind, one that began with the seeing mechanisms of the

eye (camera obscura), rather than the thinking capacities of the mind. Australia, too, was a place inferred by its white settlers from a model in their mind's eye, a model that was colour biased when it came to seeing the indigenous population (a failing that Freud, who famously referred to Aborigines as the '*most backward and miserable of savages*', shared [Freud, 1913, p. 54]). I am interested in the way spatial and cognitive presences have been conflated—in psychoanalysis and Australian history—and how concepts of *internal* and *external* influenced both entities. Australia has been a country where the notion of an inner life and an inland (associated with indigenous inhabitants) has been equated with emptiness. Terms such as '*dead heart*' to describe the core of the country and '*outback*' to refer to regions outside the coastal cities, suggest that the inner is on the outer in Australia. One sign that the country's first and largest psychoanalytic organisation, the Australian Psychoanalytical Society (APAS) was becoming less of a hostage to this fortress mentality occurred in 2000 when a diversely attended conference was held in the Northern Territory desert at Uluru, which addressed '*geography and meanings*'.

From a different starting point, the French interpreter of Freud, Jacques Lacan, devoted his later teaching to topology, specifically that of the subject in relation to the Other.<sup>1</sup> Lacan, who will be important to this work, began by gauging the topology of surfaces (torus, Moebius strips, Klein bottles) in the 1950s, then from 1972 studied the topology of knots (Borromean, Sinthome)<sup>2</sup> in an attempt to demonstrate that both bodily life and mental life function topologically. Interestingly, these sorts of concepts intersected with notions of history when Australian intellectuals attempted to invent a national identity from the country's colonial past. It is an identity in which a romanticised version of the outback took centre-stage, although not for the psychoanalysts who arrived before and after World War II. With their Central European sensibilities, they had little to offer to such a project, a factor that retarded their acceptance in some circles.

I am curious about what was required for psychoanalysis to prosper in Australia. Was it, as the analytically informed political historian, Professor Judith Brett (1982), has argued, a matter of people and ideas penetrating Antipodean



- 1 The (big) Other, in contrast to Lacan's (little) other, is the registration of culture in the unconscious. Thus the unconscious is the discourse of the Other, composed of all it is possible to say at any one time of the history of a subject. As the locus of the linguistic code, the Other arbitrates meaning for a subject, a meaning that because it arrives through speech is distorted and transformed by having to pass through the fantasy structure of the ego. See Lacan (1954–55).
- 2 Literally an old French way of writing symptom, but for Lacan from the time he introduced it as part of his topology, it pointed to how each subject enjoyed the unconscious in so far as it determines him or her (Lacan, 1974–75).

boundaries so that to understand the history of analytic thinking in Australia, one had to assess ‘*the fluctuating firmness*’ (p. 339) with which psychoanalytic ideas were and are maintained? If that is the case, the question remains, how do we define and evaluate analytic ideas? A generation before, the British poet, W. H. Auden, noted, in 1939, that we are all Freudians. Australian painter, Norman Lindsay, thought local artists (in the 1920s) were ‘*all badly infected by Freudianism*’ (McQueen, 1979, p. 79). Was Australia ahead of Europe in wrestling with what psychoanalysis might be, or was Lindsay’s remark just another mistaken response to what, in fact, constituted Freud’s invention?

My initial attempt to write this work arose from the position I had occupied previously, that of a journalist and writer; that is, the position of one, who because he is present at events, believes, and is credited with, a knowledge he does not possess. It is the mastery attributed to the eyewitness. Freud came across this at the beginning of his psychoanalytic inquiries, questioning what he called the astonishing blindness of the seeing-eye. It is an observation that has not lost its relevance. More than a century later Irish novelist, John Banville noticed how: ‘*one’s eyes are always those of someone else*’, while the Australian historian, Bain Attwood observed that we live in the ‘*era of the witness*’, an era that puts experience on display and privileges affect rather than analysis. Affect is a tool in trade of media, playing as it does on the mistaken belief that emotions convey a higher, or perhaps more malleable, truth than reason. But this is not a good enough basis for assessing the history of psychoanalysis in Australia. While those who have witnessed important events and participated in telling discussions have valuable insights, these have to be weighed against the bias that such perspectives involve. The place of the witness, and the process of witnessing, has to be re-thought, especially since many of Australia’s analyst-historians have censored their accounts so as to not offend their institutions or colleagues, and my own position as writer is also touched by the partisan.

Freud was alerted to the slippery nature of eye witness accounts by the way patients were unreliable and only self-corrected by speaking in a way opposed to the objectivity asserted by journalism. In this, Freud, as the American writer, Paul Robinson (1993) has pointed out, ‘*virtually invented a new way of thinking about the self*’ (p. 116). So any analytic history has, in my opinion, to take account of what psychoanalysis has discovered about testimony and time, and how these might reflect upon theories of the self, given the self can be a metaphor for a process that we do not understand. There are two sorts of histories of psychoanalysis: *official histories*, usually by analysts, and *revisionist histories*, usually by historians. In Australia the first category is represented by six short histories—all by analysts, half of them from the establishment Australian

Psychoanalytical Society (APAS) and half from the Lacanian Freudian School of Melbourne (FSM)—while the second category consists of a book-length cultural history by a professional historian<sup>3</sup>, University of Melbourne Professor, Joy Damousi, that is discursive more than revisionist.

Questions about psychoanalysis addressed to analytic groups often result in defensive, one-sided accounts. With the history of psychoanalysis in Australia, such responses, where they occurred, are compounded by the histories being not just thin, but mostly uncontested, a record of agreement. This is in part due to a reliance on shared, usually secondary, sources, and the way psychoanalytic institutions often defend their version of events by, as the British analyst, Darian Leader observes, wheeling out their ‘*token historian to do the work*’. The ‘work’ in relation to histories by APAS analysts is—significantly—largely narrative driven, rather than theoretical. With the FSM there is a narrative but it is accompanied by a criticism of the status quo, and, in one case the narrative defers to conceptual argument. Lacanian histories, like those of the APAS, are, however, not immune to trumpeting their own version of events.

All the histories rely on a template more or less established in the first of the short histories (Dingle, 1980), wherein Freud is cited to support the account being put forward and events unfold in a linear fashion. The formula begins with the 19th-century pre-analytic era when the ‘insane’ were held in prison-like conditions beginning with the first asylum in 1811 of Castle Hill, Sydney. The focus then shifts to the work of enlightened doctors such as Beechworth asylum medical officer (and later AMA president), Dr J. W. Springthorpe, who, while not analysts, employed more humane treatment options that some see as leading on to an analytic outlook. Adapting the 1953 account by Freud’s faithful biographer, Ernest Jones, psychoanalysis is said to enter Australia in a number of stages—first through an individual—clergyman and doctor, Donald Fraser (1909), then medicine in 1911, through Dr Andrew Davidson, secretary of the local arm of the psychological medicine and neurology branch of the British Medical Association (BMA), and then academe in 1919, with H. Tasman Lovell’s<sup>4</sup> introduction of the first English translation of Freud (Brill’s 1909/1910 version of *Studies*



- 3 Half of the six short histories are by analysts of the Australian Psychoanalytical Society (APAS): Gold (1982), Bloomfield (1986), and Martin (1990); half are by analysts of the Freudian School of Melbourne (FSM): Dingle (1980), Riebl (1992), and Rotmiller de Zentner (1998a). The cultural history is by Professor Joy Damousi (2005).
- 4 Lovell, Associate Professor of Psychology, wrote on *Psycho-Analysis and Art* for the 1923 issue of *Art in Australia* before branding Freud’s psychobiography of Leonardo Da Vinci (S. Freud, 1910) ‘preposterous impertinence’ McQueen (1979, p. 79).

on *Hysteria* and *Three Contributions to Sexual Theory*) to students at the University of Sydney's new psychology course.<sup>5</sup> In this way Dingle established the chronological and narrative pathway for others to follow. All of the subsequent histories would, to varying degrees, echo his timeline and characters, especially that of the two pioneering analysts, Dr Roy Winn in Sydney and Dr Paul Dane in Melbourne, along with the non-analysts who smoothed the way, notably Drs Reg Ellery, Albert Phillips and P. G. Reynolds. Less attention is directed to the political and social uses made of Freud's creation. Thus, there is no mention, for instance, of the Workers' Education Association in Sydney acquiring four of Freud's books for its lending library in 1922, nor do the histories record that four papers on analysis were presented to the inaugural meeting of the Australian Association of Psychology and Philosophy in 1923.

By contrasting what Freud was writing in the early 20th century with subsequent developments in Australia, Dingle did what all Lacanian histories after him would do, that is, highlight what for Lacanians is the betrayal of Freud. The tone is set with the claim that the 'desire of the analyst' is in Australia replaced by the potential '*short cuts being offered by the new reflex theories of Pavlov*'<sup>6</sup> (McQueen, 1979, p. 27) and the genetic, developmental and ego psychology therapies of 'so-called post-Freudian ideas'.

The desire of the analyst is a central notion for Lacan and will play an important role in this work. It is not an easy concept to define. Lacan, as he often does, describes it by what it is not (the impossible) as much as for what it is. Most emphatically, it is not identification, that is, the way that an analysand can identify with the analyst, nor is it a 'pure' desire in the sense that analysts in Australia imagined a 'pure' psychoanalysis.

Rather it is the desire to obtain absolute difference. The notion, articulated in the 1950s, is surrounded by complex conceptual ideas, but is essentially practical—recasting psychoanalytic technique as belonging properly to the field of ethics and human desire; that, for Lacan being the Other's desire—and desire being irreducible to the demand that constituted it. The analysts' desire, like psychoanalysis itself, must be examined, so that the analyst is well-versed enough in it to untangle their desire from the transference relation. The point for Lacan is to configure analytic technique as analytic ethics. Lacan's reworking



5 Psychology became a separate course in 1921 and Lovell the first full Professor of Psychology at Sydney University (and in Australia) in 1929.

6 Roy Winn drew on Pavlov for a book he wanted to write, and which Freud, in the first correspondence to an Australian analyst, refused to preface.

of Freud was a formidable challenge to established psychoanalysis, notably the APAS, and remains a controversial and contested reading of Freud and other seminal psychoanalytic texts. I will track how this challenge was mounted and what response it elicited, bearing in mind just how foreign Lacan appeared to Australian analysts, both as a French speaker and someone who enunciated an interpretation of Freud influenced by philosophy and linguistics. While this interpretation is one with which I have some sympathy, it is also one that, notably in Lacan's later work, differed from aspects of Freud, or took Freud in a direction he himself did not go, and for that reason, could be seen, especially by those who had not read either author closely, to be heretical, as it was indeed alleged to be.

Lacan can be hard to read and understand. If the psychoanalytically-informed *New Yorker* writer, Janet Malcolm, found him difficult, then it is no wonder Australian analysts of the first and second generation baulked at his output. In *The Purloined Clinic*, Malcolm (1983) likens reading Lacan to '*being trapped in a cave whose entrance is blocked by a huge rock. Outside one hears the hammerings and heavings of the rescue mission that has rushed to the scene—the explicators and annotators of Lacan's texts, who wield the heaviest of modern intellectual equipment (the structural linguistics of Saussure, the philosophy of Hegel and Heidegger, the metapsychology of Freud)—but which makes no headway against the monolith of Lacan's magisterial hermeticism*' (p. 3). While amusingly cornering some of the features of the Lacanian world, this metaphor-rich description also illustrates some of the traps into which even the most literary critic can fall when it comes to Lacan. Yes, readers of the French Freud do face challenges, not the least being Lacan's refusal to summarise or simplify his teaching. Missing in this, however, is the reason why such apparent obfuscation exists. Lacan wrote, or more correctly spoke, as most of his writing derives from his Seminar, to inspire more than explain. This was how he thought learning occurred. Despite Malcolm's cave reference, he was not enamoured with Platonic notions of abstract goodness, or spiritual power. He was focused on—his critics would say obsessed about—the unconscious. This is an agency that Freud in 1923 saw as the only 'beacon-light' in depth psychology. But seventy-six years later, Robert Pyles, a president of the American Psychoanalytic Association saw it as a 'black hole'. The unconscious, which does not lend itself to neat formulas or convenient schemas, will play a central part in this story.

But, to return to existing accounts of Australian analysis, the next history, chronologically, is that from APAS analyst, Dr O. H. D. (Bill) Blomfield. While not published until 1986, it was first aired in Sydney in 1980 in a paper presented to the Historical Vignettes Section of the annual congress of the Royal



Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP). As the event for which it was written indicates, it was not meant to be a scholarly or exhaustive work, and its eight and a half pages of A4 present a necessarily cursory account. It begins with the medical congress to which Dr Andrew Davidson invited Freud (along with Carl Jung and Havelock Ellis), already referenced by Dingle, but with more elaboration. Blomfield quotes Freud's remarks in the paper he sent to Sydney (neither Freud, nor Jung or Ellis attended) wherein psychoanalysis is—significantly for this work—defined as unfinished and open to further investigation and development. Blomfield unfolds a narrative similar to that of Dingle, but affords more attention to Dr Clara Lazar-Geroe, the country's first training analyst and a formative influence on him and other APAS analysts. He also names important APAS analysts, such as Drs Frank Graham, Reg Martin and Rose Rothfield, who would play a pivotal role and, unusual in the APAS short histories, he cites the internal conflicts that dogged the early years of the embryonic APAS and prompted London to dispatch two Site Visiting Committees (SVCs) to settle differences. He highlights the outreach work pioneered by Geroe that led to psychoanalysis having an influence in child psychiatry, social work, the courts and schools.

Blomfield's colleague, Melbourne-based APAS analyst, Dr Stanley Gold, wrote two histories: the first was based on a talk to the Freud Conference in Lorne, Victoria in 1982; the second, an edited version of the first, was published in the literary magazine *Meanjin* in 1998. Gold does not reference Dingle, but relies on some shared sources, notably, and unavoidably, Ernest Jones' three-volume biography of Freud. The most interesting feature of Gold's history for this work is the introduction, which cites Lacan's term 'symbolic' (one of three registers Lacan proposes, in part in relation to Freud's topography), but not from Lacan, but rather from the US clinical psychologist Michael Eigen (1981). Eigen wrote about 'faith' in the work of Lacan, and the British analysts, D. W. Winnicott and Wilfred Bion. It is a theme that Gold (1982) takes up, advising that his history is '*not so much about historical facts as about a series of acts of faith by a number of individuals, based often on little more than a vague awareness of some "ultimate reality" as Bion called it*' (p. 1).

It is an interesting—if somewhat sketched in—beginning, with Gold pointing out that to talk about the development of psychoanalysis is not psychoanalysis, and may not tell us what it is. He, like me, is intrigued by what psychoanalysis might be and in his opening paragraphs opts for the tripartite 'body of theory, research tool and method of treatment', arguing that the first two, body of theory and research tool, hold the key to the '*understanding of the past*'. His history, he emphasises, '*might be more accurately described as the early history of the development*

of a particular way of thinking in Australia'. The two definitions that he believes explain the history of psychoanalysis in Australia—*body of theory* and *tool for research*—do not, however, assume more than a passing role in what follows. His history is, as he states, a descriptive 'narrative' without any theoretical exposition, or conceptual exploration, and as such, is typical of the other histories, all of which, with the possible exception of Rotmiller de Zentner (1998) rely on a retelling of events to account for the evolution of psychoanalysis in Australia.

## Psychoanalysis or Psychosynthesis?

The result is that nowhere is psychoanalysis in Australia critiqued at any length. Psychoanalysis, one might say, is not analysed, its history lacks a psychoanalytic sense. Theory is elusive. If every country creates the psychoanalysis it needs, Australia has mostly acquired an analysis that avoids informed scrutiny, which raises the question of why, if psychoanalysis is '*the grandest and purest of those apparatuses for the generation of knowledge-power*' (Forrester, 1990, p. 288), was it not critiqued seriously by those who claimed to know about it? And, to the extent that the writer and academic, John Forrester's description is accurate, what knowledge-power has psychoanalysis generated in Australia? Such questions have rarely been asked and when they have, the questioner has tended to be someone outside the psychoanalytic establishment. So, to take one possibility, if analysis is, as has been suggested, a program for radical cultural upheaval, why has this never occurred in Australia, as it has in other places, notably Argentina and France? Are the reasons to do with the culture of Australia and how the psychoanalysis it implemented was perhaps wary of discourses of the self? Judith Brett (1982), quoting Australian poet Judith Wright, mentions the way Australians are constantly turned away from '*the quality of the inner life*'. For Brett, Australia's indifference to psychoanalysis may be part of a wider indifference. As she argues: '*Psychoanalysis, like poetry, is one way of attending to that inner life, one way of understanding emotions, one way of approaching the self as it is constructed and deconstructed in language*' (p. 340)

In 1992, the Melbourne psychiatrist and Lacanian analyst, Dr Luis Riebl, wrote a short history that echoed both Lacan's and the FSM's disdain for psychoanalytic institutions. His question was how—given the resistance generated by the '*passion for not knowing*' of the unconscious—were analysts, analytic groups and analytic theory, to function. For Riebl, much of what went by the name psychoanalysis was 'psychosynthesis', ego-bolstering that elided the subversive conception of the unconscious. It was adaptation, not analysis, and needed the re-emergence of the desiring subject, a subject that, as Lacan had insisted, was

divided between knowledge and truth by speech. Riebl saw the heritage of Geroe in transference terms, arguing that what she inspired in her followers was nostalgia for her as a person, rather than interest in psychoanalysis as theory. For him, Lacan's teaching, when it arrived in Australia in the 1970s, was met by 'an attempt at suppression which proved to become repression of a message that was unpalatable, hence the return of that repressed'. Riebl's history provided, on the one hand, an outline of a theory to critique psychoanalysis and analytic orthodoxy, while on the other, advocacy for Lacan over his rivals. The advocacy is either sound or shrill, depending on whether one believes Lacan exposed psychoanalysis to a rigorous, required re-assessment, or claimed erroneously to be the one able to correct Freud's mistakes.

## The Lacanian Challenge: The Place Where a Neurotic's Passion is Played out

The above is the view of Lacan, notably in the text where he lays down the gauntlet to the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) in his 1953 address in Rome. There his argument is against psychoanalysis as an exercise of power—for him power being analysts engaging in 'emotional re-education', in which the patient's allegedly weak ego is bolstered by identification with the allegedly stronger ego of the analyst. From the Rome address, published as *The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*, Lacan was scathing about what psychoanalysis had become. By 1958, in *The direction of the treatment and the principles of its power*, he was targeting the mystical notion that 'the analyst cures not so much from what he says and does as by what he is', a notion that found expression in admired IPA figures such as the senior New York analyst Otto Isakower and his claim to possess, or to be, an analysing 'instrument'.

The power at issue here is that of the *transference* (the unconscious process by which a patient displaces onto the analyst feelings to do with early, often parental, figures). It is a power that reveals one of the paradoxes of psychoanalysis, that is, the wish, on the one hand to be a science, against the unwillingness on the other to give up the apparent interference of the transference, a phenomenon that renders it, at least in the eyes of many scientists, unscientific. Lacan regarded treating the transference as a form of resistance, as was common among Australian analysts, as relevant only if it was recognised that the resistance comes from the analyst. For Lacan, the analyst is better advised to weigh his own desire, to 'take his bearings from his want-to-be than from his being'. This metaphysical notion draws on the work of the philosopher Martin

Heidegger to refute the Cartesian idea of a subject marked by self-knowledge, and as such indicates Lacan's debt to philosophy.

It is a debt that disaffected Anglophone analysts, most of whom were medically trained, saw as irrelevant to clinical competence. Understandably perhaps, given the emphasis that Freud had placed on resistance, they were more interested in analysing the way a patient clung to his or her ignorance by resisting the one rule in analysis, that of free-association or saying whatever comes into your mind. For classically trained analysts this resistance, though an apparent barrier, was, as a result of indicating what was being protected, also a pointer to the unconscious. This went to the central idea that the trauma that lies beneath pathological behaviour is forgotten and repressed, and what is reproduced by the patient is not a memory but an action; he acts out his symptom without knowing it. Lacan took this into account, but he was less interested in resistance than he was in desire, both the desire of the analyst and the desire of the analysand or patient. Introducing new terms, he wanted analysts to see that more was at stake than mere reluctance to speak freely. For him, both speech and desire were derivative and resistance was more likely to come from the analyst.

The themes explored by Riebl are reprised by a founder of the FSM, Maria-Ines Rotmiller de Zentner in her account, the title of which begins with *The desire of the analyst*. Hers is the most theoretical of the short histories. Quoting Lacan, she describes the desire of the analyst as having two sources. One is clinical and relates to the challenge posed by the hysteric wanting their desire kept unsatisfied (to which Freud responded with the discovery of the unconscious), while the other is identified with the desire of Freud. Although this is expressed clinically as something in Freud that was not analysed, 'it is, strictly speaking, not clinical but to do with the concept of the names of the Father', which Freud, according to Lacan, did not allow himself to question. (The name of the father is the basis of the symbolic function of the law. It is the way Lacan reads the Oedipal complex, that is, as a paternal metaphor in which one signifier, the name of the father, substitutes for another, the desire of the mother).

This history touches on the familiar dates first published by Dingle, but with a wider cultural as well as conceptual, sweep. Originally an Argentinean, the author exposes the role of Spanish speakers in psychoanalysis: first Freud, who taught himself the language to read Cervantes; then the philosopher Ortega y Gasset, who translated Freud into Spanish; Enrique Pichon-Riviere, a pioneer of Freudianism in Argentina; Oscar Masotta, the most influential teacher of Lacan in Argentina; and the poet Jorge Luis Borges, whose novels revealed the debt of psychoanalysis to literature. There is, as well, mention of anthropologist Geza Roheim, who defended Freud against the theories of Bronislow Malinowski after

World War I. As explored in Chapter Four, it was Roheim who attempted to prove Freud's theories by 'analysing' Australian Aborigines in the 1920s. Roheim is a central and overlooked figure in the history of psychoanalysis in Australia. Rotmiller de Zentner (1998a) concludes by describing the project of the FSM—and by implication, what she sees as the failure of an APAS, which saw its role as that of a 'secret society'—as '*the recovery of the Freudian unconscious from its abandonment into oblivion*' (p. 39).

The most widely distributed account of psychoanalysis in Australia is that of Sydney analyst, Dr Reg Martin, whose history was adapted by the APAS for its website. Martin, like Blomfield, touches upon the internecine warfare periodically waged within the APAS. As the leader of the Kleinian revolt against the teaching of Geroe in the 1960s, he notes how it took a Site Visiting Committee before broader-based instruction and a new constitution were achieved. Apart from that, his narrative covers familiar ground, while adding some detail to the role played by analysts Ernest Jones and Michael Balint, and adding to the cast of names those of Hungarian analysts, Vera Roboz and Andrew Peto, who came out in the 1950s. A version of Martin's history was adapted for the website of the Adelaide Institute of Psychoanalysis, but it is the way that his history is used on the APAS website that is most intriguing. In that version, the APAS's beginning is dated from the 1911 invitation that Freud, Jung and Havelock Ellis received to a medical conference in Sydney. The effect is to link, in a way that Freud explicitly did not, psychoanalysis with medicine. In fact the APAS first surfaced in an embryonic form after World War II with the Australian Society of Psychoanalysts (1952), then an Australian Study Group (1968), provisional status (1971), and full status (1973).

## The Cultural History

The only book-length account of psychoanalysis in Australia looks at analytic praxis in its own right, and as a way to further understand '*the complexity of cultural life and the history of ideas in Australian society*' (Damousi, 2005, p. 1). In a premise she shares with fellow historian, Judith Brett, the author points out that, in contrast to some other countries, Freud has never been a dominant force in Australia, and yet exercised important intellectual influence, most demonstrably in the arts, especially painting, but also religion, with Anglican bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Ernest Burgmann, so '*captured by the promise*' psychoanalysis held for self-knowledge, that he wrote that psychoanalysis was '*no enemy of religion*' (Damousi, 2005, p. 81). This was the 1920s and Burgmann was known as the 'Red Bishop' for his political leanings. He was a progressive, seeing

in psychoanalysis, a scientific approach ‘*to the counselling of troubled souls*’ (McQueen, 1979, p. 79). By the 1950s, however, with the Cold War and a split looming in the Labor Party, the Catholic Church in Victoria would regard psychoanalysis as an enemy to be banished from its hospitals. Damousi links Freud to modernity, a link that I argue has to be seen in relation to the connection psychoanalysis has with postmodernity. Damousi’s history traces in more detail the role of the major players introduced by Dingle, adding some new names and contrasting their practices with what Freud and others were doing in Europe and America. She highlights the way that psychoanalysis gained ground in medical circles through the explanation it offered for the puzzling trauma of shell shock in World War I, and the exciting resonance it sparked off in Left Wing politics and other intellectual movements. The work is not, though, revisionist in that it does not seek to challenge the prevailing APAS thesis of an essentially coherent psychoanalysis in Australia. For this to occur, psychoanalysis would have to be interrogated, and, as in other accounts, this does not occur, or only occurs cursorily. The cultural paradigm can be misleading. By linking psychoanalysis to the spread of radio in Australia from 1923, for instance, psychoanalysis is coupled with an evolving auditory culture. But while the speaking and listening in psychoanalysis may evoke the relationship listeners have with radio, a patient is not in analysis to hear the analyst. The job of analysis is for patients to hear themselves.

## Freud and Australia: A Relationship of Fantasy

What the weight of this writing shows, is not just the relatively minor role psychoanalysis is thought to have played in Australia, but the overwhelmingly marginal place Australia has in psychoanalytic history. The country is not mentioned in any of the broader histories of analysis (Schwartz, 1999; Zaretsky, 2004; Makari, 2008), although it is briefly noted in Jones’ three-volume biography of Freud and in the history of the psychoanalytic movement. Even when psychoanalytic luminaries visited Australia, as IPA president Dr Leo Rangell did in 1968, Australia is recalled in pictures rather than words. The only published place where Australian and psychoanalysis collide with any impact is that of fiction. Here, Australian writers, such as Brian Castro, create imaginative versions of analysis and Australia in novels, essays or other forms (Perlman, 2000).<sup>7</sup> And just as Australia for Freud was a fantasised place, Australia has made of Freud and psychoanalysis a fantasised presence. Freud, for instance, is said to have visited Australia in 1886,<sup>8</sup> during which time he toured the gardens of Mount Macedon,

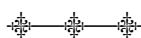
outside Melbourne, declaring the area a ‘civilized wilderness’ (Moulds & Burns, 1999, p. 17). In fact, Freud never came to Australia in anything other than his dreams. As he told fiancée, Martha Bernays, in 1884:

*‘I hope to become in eighteen months a doctor who people can have confidence in and will first try my luck in my native town. If I don’t get known here quickly enough, which is likely seeing that a young doctor needs capital of which I have none, I will emigrate to England or perhaps America or Australia’* (Jones, 1953, p. 179).

This daydream of Freud’s to come to Australia is matched by Australia’s dream of his arrival, conferring, as the Mount Macedon authors reveal, approval for subduing a land that white settlers saw as a wilderness. For some at least, there is an analogy of this to be found in the way that a number of analysts in Australia saw the wilderness of the unconscious in need of Freud’s blessing to render it civilised, when, for Lacanians and others, notably the followers of Melanie Klein that was impossible.

## Definitional Dilemma

Exploring what psychoanalysis might be is unavoidable. It is a, or perhaps, *the* question that haunts all psychoanalytic inquiry. There are many definitions but all beg rather than answer the question, which is why they must be wrestled with rather than accepted. This is a quality—despite the exceptional clarity of Freud’s exposition—of psychoanalysis. When Freud (1926), for instance, describes analysis as the science of the mental unconscious, he gives his best known, but far from exhaustive, definition. Earlier, he sees it as any inquiry that recognises, and starts from, transference and resistance (Freud, 1914a, p. 16)—transference, briefly, being the unconscious process by which a patient displaces onto the analyst feelings to do with early, often parental, figures; and resistance being opposition to making the unconscious conscious. These and other technical terms to follow will be further explored in succeeding chapters, but there are no precise or agreed formulas. There are, however, influential texts, not all of them, like Freud, innovative. Some, like the influential Otto Fenichel’s *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, despite, or possibly because,



7 Perlman’s piece appears to be fiction set in Melbourne, but may be true. It is juxtaposed against a photograph of Freud’s consulting room, Perlman, (2000).

8 Freud, then aged 30, had just returned from studies in Paris to get married.

of their atomistic structure, stressing content and detail at the expense of a comprehensive dynamic outlook, are codifying works. Fenichel, whose major text was published as Australia's first analysts were being trained, sees psychoanalysis essentially as a way to explain and to treat the instinct or drive, forces that, by being out of harmony, trigger disturbances in mind and body. His is an economic and, I think, limited, view, in which 'the common denominator of all neurotic phenomena is an insufficiency of the normal control apparatus'. This was the pathway to ego psychology. At the other end of the spectrum are innovators, such as Lacan who, contrary to other schools, holds that the only resistance is that offered by the analyst, not that of patient. Lacan disagrees with Anna Freud's notion that while psychoanalytic theory arose from a 'psychology of the unconscious' or 'id'—as therapy it concerns 'the ego and its aberrations'. Relying on Klein and Britain's Object Relations School, the UK analyst Harry Guntrip describes psychoanalysis descriptively, as a painstaking attempt to understand what is going on in the human mind, based on what individuals are able to say of their thoughts, feelings and impulses (Guntrip, 1973). The British Independent School analyst, Charles Rycroft (1968), echoes Freud, describing psychoanalysis somewhat circuitously as a treatment of neurosis that relies on transference. I found the definitional question and the possible means of tackling it engaging and elusive, with the quality Nobel prize-winning novelist Joseph Brodsky (1987) attributes to lies: an '*almost-ness which sharpens the outline of truth*' (p. 12). Perhaps any formula that seeks to answer comprehensively a query is a lie; in history and psychoanalysis there are grounds for thinking so. Freud, for instance, doubted biographical truth and regarded historical truth as problematic, mainly because the form it takes, in narrative and linear lines of development, does not adequately deal with the psyche. Similarly, for Lacan truth is only ever half said, and different to what the ego regards as knowledge. It has the function of cause, rather than answer, a cause that allows patients in analysis to establish the place of a human subject. It is a place that, due to the discourse of modern science, is under threat.

## What is Psychoanalysis?

There is no unified field theory among psychoanalysts, although there are many points upon which practitioners agree and it is possible to view the 'weary sons' (and daughters) of Freud as falling into broad groupings. These are inexact, but provide in an introduction a general sense of orientation. In one such overview, Australian academic, Anthony Elliott, and US analyst, Charles Spezzano, detect three groupings: One, which downplays the role of the unconscious and



emphasises Freud's structural model as arguing for the possibility of helping the ego sublimate the id. This 'rationalist' model nods to the unconscious while suggesting that its' paralysing grip can be undone through reason and self-mastery. It is the view that prevails in the US, notably via ego-psychology, but also in the European social theory of Jurgen Habermas and others. A second expression of psychoanalysis arises from the notion of English psychoanalyst, W. R. D. Fairbairn, of ego splitting, and Melanie Klein's idea of projective identification. This approach holds that splits in the object are followed by splits in the ego. Klein and her followers have argued that such a view was a natural extension of Freud. Others have disagreed, but inherent in this outlook is the idea that the self is not complete and achieves coherence through regaining and integrating lost and dispersed elements. The third view—that of Freud's French interpreter—Jacques Lacan, insists on the primacy of the unconscious, and sees the ego as formed via imaginary identifications. Lacan agreed with Klein on the need for psychoanalytic training to give primary importance to transference, and not to make the ego the site of an appropriation of the id, as Post-Freudians tend to do. Each group (and there are other more subtle divisions) calls itself psychoanalysis or psychoanalytic psychotherapy, and tends to see alternative schools as heretical or not really psychoanalysis. The result is that no one, or no school, speaks for psychoanalysis, which in my argument is not a bad thing, given that Freud envisaged a practice that would call into question categories and certainties, while being open to exploration, and some degree of what the world sees as chaos.

## The Psychoanalysis That is of Interest

While I will touch on all the major theories and some marginal ones, the so-called 'rationalist' school, as represented by ego psychology, the object relations school together with that of Melanie Klein and the teaching of Lacan, will—as a result of the primacy they have in psychoanalysis in Australia—garner the greatest attention. Specific focus, though, is directed to the work of Freud and Lacan. Freud, for the obvious reason that he is the creator of psychoanalysis and still its most authoritative and instructive voice; Lacan because his return to Freud provides an elaboration of Freud, and what is unfinished in Freud, along with a basis for thinking critically about the orthodoxy that prevailed in Australia. Inasmuch as this evokes the teaching of Lacan in a reasonably detailed way, it may be seen as out of step with mainstream psychoanalysis in Australia. Lacanians, after all, represent a minority of analysts in Australia, though they are a growing proportion of analysts worldwide, notably in Europe and South America. Lacanian ideas are employed because they provide a paradigm for thinking about

psychoanalysis in ways I have found stimulating. This will not suit everyone, and some may find my approach leans too heavily on Lacan. If that is the case, I apologise in advance and offer in my defence the fact that I have read most psychoanalytic authors, even if they are not all represented here, and I did my first training not with Lacanians, but with classically trained analysts at the Anna Freud Centre in London. Interestingly, during that training, the only teacher to mention Lacan was Adam Phillips, who has become that rarest of things, a best-selling author of works on psychoanalysis. He asked questions rather than offered answers which helped me to learn how to learn. It also led me to see that reading and re-examining theory is not wasted effort but analogous to the way analysis initially strives to fill in the gaps in a subject's history.

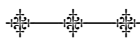
The result is an interest in psychoanalysis's unruly history, and a wariness about unified psychoanalytic theory. While appreciating the effort and antecedence involved for those searching out an agreed theory of psychoanalysis, the project seems to me reductionist. I am more attracted to the Kleinian approach of my first analyst and the Lacanian direction of my second, both of whom shied away from attempts to iron out diversity or follow psychology in the pursuit of cognitive coherence and manualised-style brevity. While Freud's one-time heir apparent, the gifted Swiss psychiatrist, Dr Carl Gustav Jung, is mentioned in this work, the therapy he left behind is not. This is because Analytical Psychology, as it is known, is distinct from Freudian psychoanalysis and I have wanted to focus on Freud and those who claimed to follow in his footsteps. There is a rich history of Jungian practice in Australasia and that story may later be told by someone else.

As a result this is a work that seeks to avoid sidelining the subject I believe is addressed by psychoanalysis, that is, the subject of the unconscious. My perspective on the history of psychoanalysis in Australia, therefore, addresses not just the way, for instance, that Freud wielded an ingenious metaphor—the story of ancient Rome—to represent the nature of personal history but also how he and others were able to restore the possibility, notably in medical circles, of a dialogue with the unconscious, often thought of as unreason. The psychoanalysis I will explore will not be limited to a clinical subset of medicine (the way it was often seen in Australia), or a social and cultural mediator (as it is in many histories). It will be thought of as praxis—a practice informed by theory—that is discreet and not contained within any other discipline. The emphasis on the unconscious as the *sine qua non* of psychoanalysis means I will try to keep the subjective in mind, which involves consideration of what an experience of unreason might be and what my motives are in asking the question. As the British analyst, Darian Leader (2000) has noted: *'If what makes someone turn to analytic history is*

*an enthusiasm, be it positive or negative, how can its results ever be uncontaminated by forms of passion?*' (p. 2). Passion is necessary, not just to formulate the burning question that drives an idea but also to psychoanalyse. This is so because it is what Lacan has called the desire of the analyst that governs psychoanalysis. But, as we shall see, the terminology is not just crucial, it is also misleading—the passion of the analyst's desire<sup>9</sup> being closer to compassion than enthusiasm; yet not that, but something else. Language then will be central, not just because it is a door to the unconscious but because the language of psychoanalysis in Australia has been so obscured.

## My Orientation

I began this work as a writer with an interest in psychoanalysis. I ended it as a psychoanalyst who also writes. These two threads while poles apart to some, seem to me complementary—which does not mean the same, but rather intertwined. To analyse is to try and decipher a text, be it written in the normal sense of the word, or inscribed as is the case with the unconscious. It is a pastime common to analysts and those they analyse. For me it began with questions I could not answer by reading, and sentences I heard spoken by those I found inspirational. Initially, these were analysts I met in London, notably those either associated with the Independent School (Eric Rayner) or independent in their own way (Adam Phillips). My first passion, and the subject of my Masters thesis at the Anna Freud Centre was John Bowlby. His Attachment Theory seemed to explain many things, including my own past. At that time I felt closer to the outside world that was of interest to Bowlby than I did to the interior world that interested Freud. By the time I returned to Australia, however, my interest had shifted to Lacan, and it is within that paradigm, always informed by Freud, that I have trained, and through which I now practice.



- 9 The analyst's desire will be further explored in the text. Essentially, it is a way that the analyst keeps the analysand working by offering an enigmatic desire, one that puts the analyst in the place of the Other, of which the analysand asks 'what do you want of me?' Such an arrangement allows the fundamental fantasy that occupies the analysand to emerge in the transference. The desire of the analyst is ethical in a number of ways, one being that it is not a desire to 'do good' or 'cure' and another being that it is, by being a desire for absolute difference, does not make an analysand dependent on, or derivative of, the analyst in the way that an identification can.

# How Might a Psychoanalytic History Appear?

This is a history, but one that begins by exploring what a history might be in the wake of Freud's rethinking of the past, and the intellectual trends that followed, particularly the thought organised within and around Lacan's teaching. This involves consideration of how psychoanalysis regards the past, as well as conceptual currents that have impacted on the idea of history: notions such as historicism, new historicism, ahistoricism and historiography. Historicism can be thought of as the theory that social and cultural phenomena are determined by history. There are different strands of interpretation, but one of the most fully developed is in Hegel, for whom all human activities, from science to art, are defined by their history. The history of any human undertaking builds upon and reacts against what has gone before. This led Hegel to declare that philosophy is the history of philosophy. Something similar applies to psychoanalysis. New historicism, the idea that that all questions must be settled within the cultural and social contexts in which they are raised, holds that there are only raw texts, markings and artefacts that exist in the present, along with the conventions used to decode them. In my argument, historicism is seen as a theory in contrast to that of psychoanalysis. Drawing on US theorist, Joan Copjec (1994), who defines historicism as the '*reduction of society to its indwelling network of relations or power and knowledge*' (p. 6) I contend that psychoanalysis while sharing historicism's wariness of treating the surface as superficial, heads in a different direction. In Copjec's terms, psychoanalysis, notably that of Lacan, sees appearance as supplanting being, with appearance and being never coinciding—while historicism '*wants to ground being in appearance*' and '*have nothing to do with desire*' (p. 14). Desire is central to the way that I address the question of what psychoanalysis is and how, and in what form, it took root in Australia. Ahistoricism refers to the failure to take history and historical facts into account. It is a way to disregard the implications of history. Historiography is the study of the history and the methodology of history. It is the way that historians do history, and is thus subject to change. It can be the body of literature dealing with historical matters as well as the critical manner in which history is developed.

If a task of the historian is to remember, those writing the history of psychoanalysis in Australia have tended to forget, often because it ensured collegiate harmony and the needs of the author's analytic institution. This indicates the chasm that exists between psychoanalysis as a field and as an institution—a gap that has meant that the discourse of psychoanalysis has had to struggle to survive against the patina of the analytic group. Either analytic bodies have become beholden

to leaders and the group dynamics that Freud identified and/or they have depended on Freud, not their own inquiries, for authenticity. Lacan sought to find a way around this by creating mathemes for the transmission of psychoanalysis that did not depend on a name (Freud) but without much success. Despite how aware Freud, Lacan and others have been of the impact of the group, the analytic institution has got in the way of psychoanalysis. As one Australian analyst has argued, the institutions *'failed to achieve an organization in harmony with the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis'* (Rotmiller de Zentner, 1998, p. 29).

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