Psychoanalysis, homosexuality and modernism

Was I ill? Have I recovered?
Has my doctor been discovered?
Nietzsche

Gay science?

Psychoanalysis has often been seen as complicit in dominant social constructions and constrictions of homosexuality, and there is certainly some evidence for this in the classic psychoanalytic texts, from the early works of Freud onwards. Certain parts of the psychoanalytic institution in some historical periods have been particularly wedded to such social orthodoxies, the post-war American school for instance; and even today, theories and practices of psychoanalysis at large are not entirely free of homophobic positions. As a whole, across its historical and geographical range, psychoanalysis has achieved rather ambivalent forms of recognition for gay and lesbian sexualities. As in its work on gender, in the field of sexuality orthodox psychoanalysis at once affords certain forms of emancipation for alternative models and retains an attachment to the conventions of the patriarchal culture that such models would challenge.

From the outset, psychoanalysis dared to speak the name of homosexuality, at a time when it was, often violently, unspeakable. Yet the psychoanalytic modelling of gay sexuality, derived from that which it constructs for gender, imposes discursive constraints of its own. Freudian psychoanalysis makes homosexuality speak its name in ways that are coloured by the suppositions of its broader project and constrained by those of the culture out of which it emerges. If, as Henry Abelove has argued, Freud resists the pathologization of homosexuality per se, and the assumptions about the functional viability of homosexuals as both analysands and analysts that go with this, the Freudian casebook certainly shows a tendency to assume that the neurotic or the psychotic may have a particular inclination to homosexuality. Indeed, in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), Freud suggests that homosexuality (the ‘tendency to inversion’) is a necessary feature of all
psychoneuroses, adding in 1920 that this should have a ‘decisive influence on any theory of homosexuality’. While homosexuality may not in itself be diagnosed as a pathology demanding therapeutic attention for Freud and most of his followers, it is seen as a ready vehicle for particular forms of mental illness, from hysteria and melancholia to paranoia. As such, it all too easily assumes, if only by association, a pathogenic character for the psychoanalytic project.

This chapter will take stock of how psychoanalysis, and in particular its mainstream Freudian version, has treated homosexuality. Psychoanalysis has been styled a ‘Jewish science’, both by its exponents and, infamously, by its detractors. What is proposed here is to test the leverage to be gained from considering it as a ‘gay science’, adopting this term freely – or queerly – from Nietzsche. Here I follow a cue from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in her reading of Nietzsche in Epistemology of the Closet, where she identifies a pervasive vocabulary of potential homosexuality as if from the pages of Proust’s Sodom and Gomorrah. She rounds off her inventory with ‘the “gay”’, which is drawn from the translation of Nietzsche’s Die fröhliche Wissenschaft as The Gay Science. The playfully misappropriated term serves as a device to expose the textual closet of Nietzsche’s writing. The ‘gay’ finds subversive expression in the literary excess that marks Nietzsche’s ‘scientific’ discourse, establishing his writings as a key influence for modernist culture. To adapt, or queer, another of Nietzsche’s titles – the autobiographical Ecce Homo – his writing, however obliquely, displays masculinity as homo-erotically disposed.

Sedgwick resolves the elaborations of the Nietzschean text into a series of versions of the propositions that Freud draws out in his account of the case of Judge Schreber in order to establish a grammar of the intense denial of homosexuality at the core of paranoia. In his Memoirs of a Nervous Illness (1903), Daniel Paul Schreber describes an elaborate system of erotic and violent visions, at once personal and cosmic, constructed around a fantasy of becoming a woman in sexual union with God. And in Freud’s Psychoanalytic Remarks on an Autobiographically Described Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoidea) (1911), Schreber’s paranoid fantasies are seen to reveal the homosexual constitution of this illness. For Sedgwick, the Gothic fantasy world of the memoirs of Judge Schreber, as read by Freud, is a graphic enactment of the potency of homophobia, the paranoid control mechanism produced by ‘intense male homosocial desire’ as ‘at once the most compulsory and the most prohibited of social bonds’. In her reading this is the paranoid desire that informs Nietzsche’s profoundly ambivalent attachment to Wagner, but also that which binds the ‘gayness’ of his writing to a no less ambivalent attachment to Jewishness. It seems that Nietzsche’s
'gay science', which is also in some sense a 'Jewish science', prefigures the similarly hybrid condition of psychoanalysis.10

Homosexuality certainly figures very significantly in the elaboration of the psychoanalytic project by Freud and his collaborators. Indeed the origins of psychoanalysis can in a sense be understood as having been formed by homoerotic dynamics, a creation of knowledge born out of an erotic attachment between men. The key formative steps of Freud’s new science were framed by his charged relationship with the Berlin-based doctor Wilhelm Fliess, and described in the sentimentally heightened correspondence between the two men as if they were rather the product of acts of love than of science. It was to ‘private utterances’ from Fliess that Freud attributed his claim that the inclination towards ‘inversion’ should be seen as a constitutive feature of psychoneuroses.11 The shared theory of universal bisexuality was a mainstay of their passionate collaborative work at the origins of psychoanalysis, as was the assumption that homosexuality figures in all psychoneurotic conditions.12

As we have already seen in the example of the case of Schreber, homosexuality is also a key feature of many of the most significant texts of early psychoanalytic literature, texts that indeed stake a claim to being understood as literature, as creative science writing. And its presence arguably has an effect on the writing of the texts in question, lending them a tendency towards ‘gay writing’. Freud famously cast his case histories as literary, asserting more than once that they read strangely like novellas, rather than carrying ‘the serious stamp of science’ as he put it in the Studies on Hysteria (1895).13 In this chapter I shall show how the case history acts as a model for creative writing about homosexual conditions. I suggest that the case histories are, in part at least, readable as lesbian and gay novellas, and that they have a particular affinity with some of the popular cultural genres that have been co-opted for more recent lesbian and gay writing: the fairy tale, the detective story and science fiction.14 If Freud aligned his case histories with the popular nineteenth-century genre of the novella (not simply the short story, as the translation of the Standard Edition suggests), then it might be particularly interesting to consider the determining role of both detective story and fantasy or dream narrative in the genealogy of the novella. And this, in turn, may be linked to the particular affinity that those genres have with the writing of homosexuality.

At the same time, this chapter will consider how the fashioning of homosexuality in creative writing responds to psychoanalytic constructions of gay and lesbian sexualities. Its principal references will be drawn from German literature in the era of Freud, and the proposition will be that the texts in question have a special relationship to psychoanalysis that might be called queer. Those modernist texts may also be aligned with the fantasy structures
of fairy tale, detective fiction and science fiction. These aspects of fantasy and genre are also evident in much contemporary gay and lesbian writing. To give but one example, Jeanette Winterson’s *The Passion* (1997) undertakes a reworking of the fantasy scenario of Mann’s modernist fairy tale, *Death in Venice*.

As I have argued elsewhere, the relationship between Freud and the modernist canon can be understood through the figure of the *Doppelgänger*, a Romantic phantom that returned to haunt the culture of modernism and came, in part, to embody its relationship to the new science of psychoanalysis. The figure of the double is paradigmatic for the genres in focus here: a case-history figure that also operates in the speculative worlds of fairy tale, crime writing and science fiction. Freud famously identified his Viennese contemporary, the fellow-doctor and writer of fictions and dramas Arthur Schnitzler, as his uncanny double, and the ambivalent, libidinal investments that characterize that figure can be seen at work in the double-bound dialogues with psychoanalysis across a wide range of the leading modernist writers.

The *Doppelgänger* relation here, in its model form a narcissistically inflected and sexually charged relationship between men, is certainly understandable as queer in its implications. It embodies a particular version of the hom(m)osexual condition, the mirroring of masculinity (doubling *homo* into *hommo*) that Irigaray has seen as constituting the specular regime of patriarchy, its narcissistic power structures. It is a form of attachment to a transgressive form of self-sameness that also marks out the subject who hosts it as separate from heterosexual norms. In its mimicry of that general condition, it also represents its crisis in the form of a paranoid fantasy. The *Doppelgänger* subject, carrying shades of queer sexuality, is always, to borrow the title of a German silent film concerned with homosexuality (and one that doubled as the German title for the Hollywood film *Tea and Sympathy*), ‘Other than the others’ (*Anders als die Anderen*).

As these film references suggest, the double lives in question here also have the potential to transport homosexual life-stories or case histories into the domain of another popular cultural genre, melodrama.

While the *Doppelgänger* is particularly aligned with the sorts of fictions ‘between men’ that Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has read for their queer subtexts (Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Gray* serves as a classic case), it also has potential to act as an agent of desire between women. This is shown for instance in the scene from Schnitzler’s interior-monologue text *Fräulein Else (Miss Else)* (1924), where the protagonist responds to the seductive charms of the alluring young woman that is her image in the mirror. It is an encounter, however, with a logic that seems to be hom(m)osexual in
Irigaray’s terms. Else’s position in her eponymous text (the ‘Miss’ here indicates a socially limited entitlement of the young female subject) is to be an object of exchange between men. Her enjoyment of her image in the mirror is derived from her production as object of the voyeuristic male gaze, as she prepares to exhibit herself to Herr von Dorsday, the man who will save her father from ruin for this favour. It seems that Else, constructed as hysteric in her melodramatic case history of a novella, can only step outside of the frame of male desire by miming it. As ‘hysteric’, her destiny is to be constructed into an iconography of display for the at once diagnostic, or knowledge-seeking, and scopophilic, or pleasure-seeking, male gaze. If this scene from Else’s theatre of identifications can be seen as at least potentially a lesbian one, it is one of narcissistic exhibitionism, excluding the other woman and fashioned in a way that might give pleasure to the eye of the heterosexual male. Else, in other words, is subject to the sort of phallocentric pressures that are also brought to bear upon perhaps the exemplary case of hysteria for psychoanalysis, that of (Freud’s) Dora. We shall return to that much-reviewed case below.

In what follows, the relationship between psychoanalysis and literary homoerotics will be understood as that between doubles, a relationship of desire mediated through similarity, but also fraught with ambivalence. It remains to be seen whether this special relationship between a scientific discipline and a form of creative writing that are both ‘other than the others’, non-standard, ultimately functions as emancipatory or pathologizing. The melodramatic case of the hysterical Else, as scripted by the Freud double Schnitzler – the creative writer as a kind of wild analyst in his literary case histories – certainly appears to suggest the latter. The early twentieth-century female subject, Else, is caught here in a particular form of fantasy space: the mirror in the hotel room as narcissistic closet. And the closet, often fitted with both literal and metaphorical mirrors, also features as the recurrent habitat of her male contemporaries in the various texts to be considered here. To recall the warning raised by Sedgwick in her analysis of the elaborate work of aesthetic creativity and constraint, of human knowing and unknowingness, carried out through the framework of the closet, we have to beware of glamorizing what remains at base a structure of forcible limitation for its techniques of self-fashioning. The narcissistic fixation that psychoanalysis attributes to homosexuality may exert a certain effect of glamour, but it is extrapolated into psychical conditions with less glamorous implications, or where any surface appearance of glamour is won at the cost of deep psychological suffering in conditions of hysteria, melancholia and paranoia.
Closet cases

This chapter now considers a sequence of Freud’s most high-profile and intensively studied case histories. All have been subject to various revisionist readings, including some from queer critical perspectives. What is offered here is a synoptic review of the casebook, drawing on its implications for gay and lesbian writing and for the criticism that addresses that writing. The case studies are understood as ‘closet cases’, both hiding and showing the secret life of homosexuality. As ever, the closet is not some autonomous structure freely fashioned by the queer subject, but a function of social networks. It is co-constructed, that is, by the subject’s others (also including that significant other, the psychoanalyst). It is accordingly never fully fitting for the subject who is other than those others, but remains relatively heteronomous in its construction. A paradigmatic case would be the ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy of the US Armed Forces, as deconstructed by Judith Butler in her *Excitable Speech*, whereby the homosexual subject is under a continuous regime of what she calls, after Agamben, emergency or exception. This state of exception, the authority to legislate beyond the norms of civil law, is as powerful in its coercion as it is contradictory in its logic. And the closeted space of the armed forces (thinkable as coextensive with the dormitory of the barracks or battleship) exposes that coercive logic as operating in less exceptional forms in the social order at large.

The state of exception of the military clause also endorses the general rule; its closet logic likewise extends into more public spaces and their legal and behavioural codes. In Butler’s analysis, the clause exposes the paranoia of law in its relationship to homosexuality. It is a transposition, we might say, of the paranoid homophobia at work in the case of Judge Schreber. We might think of the scenario evoked by Sedgwick of a gay judge enacting homosexual laws: in a dramatic crisis for the law, Justice as embodied by the judge comes up before (and is potentially made to come out to) Justice. Schreber as both agent and subject of the law could be imagined in just such a position relative to another case of legislation by exception: Clause 175 of the German penal code, which, from 1871, outlawed sexual relations between men. It is a principle of double-bind from which, for Butler, the jurisdiction of psychoanalysis is also not free, as it illustrates, in part through its own workings, the character of its own epistemological closet.

Sedgwick inserts a sort of textual closet into *Epistemology of the Closet*: a page listing the definitions for ‘closet’ given by the OED, which is separated off from the rest of her text, a discrete place for a sort of private perusal of the system of spaces that the term can denote. In keeping with the logic of the ‘closet’, this closed off spatial inventory is defined by the fact of ‘belonging to

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or communicating with’ a larger space, one which ramifies the implications of its contents (as in Butler’s special or exceptional case of and against the US armed forces). The system of meanings provided by the OED includes variations with telling implications for the literary closet, not least given that one of the chief types of private room indicated here is that of the writer. This is the closet, then, as a more or less secret place of writing, but one that – according to one of the illustrative sentences supplied by the OED – is also susceptible to break-in (‘A sudden intruder into the closet of an author’). The motives behind such an intrusion into the space of ‘private devotion’ or of ‘secluded speculation’ may vary of course, and Sedgwick herself conducts an enlightening, critical form of such intrusion into the writerly closet (also in part an outing of a series of closeted writers).

The strategy of Sedgwick and other queer critical detectives working after her is to make knowable the functions of the closet, functions which can be adopted from the OED inventory: to expose the subjection to the other that is at work in the closet in its sovereign form (as ‘private apartment of a monarch or potentate’); to revalue the contents of the ‘private repository of valuables’, revise the catalogue of the cabinet of ‘curiosities’; to show that the closet of the writer, the potentate or the collector also relates to pent-up dangers (the closet as ‘den or lair of a wild beast’); and to examine its plumbing, showing that it communicates with the more mundane space of the ‘closet of ease’ or ‘water closet’ and thereby establishes a conduit between the larger space of habitation and the abject system of the ‘sewer’, between the social or domestic scene and the obscene. The closet cases considered here show various configurations of these types of spatial construction, not least in identifying the channels between subject and abject, scene and obscene. Sedgwick’s interpolation of a dictionary page is reminiscent of Freud’s strategy of semantic exploration in his classic essay on The Uncanny (1919), and there would indeed be potential to view the closet as a particularly acute definition of the uncanny: that haunting otherness which is concealed at the heart of the private domain or, with recourse once more to the OED entry, the ‘skeleton in the closet’.

Fairy tales

For Freud, sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular, have infantile origins, so that their knowledge structures are intimately linked to the culture of the nursery. This enclosed space of play and reading establishes, we might say, the architecture of the closet. The child, as premature epistemologist of sexuality, sexual difference and reproduction, is a figure of ironically framed identification for the research project of the adult science of
psychoanalysis. Thus, from the casework of Freud’s early career to the adult fairy tale of Hoffmann’s *The Sandman* (1816), as explored through his reading in *The Uncanny*, sexual identity is constructed through the generic conventions of the fairy tale. And homosexuality, as a strange case of human sexuality (at once a universal stage of development and a particular, queer identity), has a peculiar relationship to such tales, their rites of passage and more fixed conditions. Homosexuality is apt to take on both the shape of the valuable and curious secret in the closet and that of the beast, drawing on the ambivalent tension between these two generic conventions.

This fairy-tale logic can be seen at work in two of Freud’s classic child case histories: the ‘Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-year-old Boy’ (Little Hans (1909)) and ‘From the History of an Infantile Neurosis’ (The Wolf Man (1914)), both of whom are diagnosed by Freud as passing through stages of homosexual identity. Both are cast as infant researchers of (homo-)sexuality, both in quest of sexual curiosities, and both terrorized by a phobic relation to a menagerie of masculine animals that is bound up with that quest. Their imaginative worlds are based upon the fairy tale, most explicitly in the case of the Wolf Man, whose phobia takes root in a picture of a wolf exhibiting itself in a book of fairy tales and is animated by the Grimm tales of *Little Red Riding Hood, Reynard the Fox* and *The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats*. These are stories that feature narratives of curiosity and duplicity that end in encounters with the beast in an enclosed space: hiding-places are exposed and the space of protection is uncannily doubled into one of threat. It is the same generic structure as operates in Hoffmann’s adult version of the nursery tale in *The Sandman* and is adopted in the cases of Little Hans and the Wolf Man. The protagonists of the case histories enact in imagination the sort of experience that Nathanael, the protagonist of Hoffmann’s *The Sandman*, recalls from his childhood, when he hides in a recess in the family home to observe the strange nocturnal experiments conducted by his father and the uncanny Sandman, only to be outed from his hiding-place and exposed to gruesome acts of extortion by the fairy-tale bogeyman. By identification with the nocturnal fantasy scene performed in secret by the two men, the child thus becomes the skeleton in the closet of the family home, that uncanny figure which, to cite the definition of the uncanny that Freud adopts, ‘ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light’.

The closets of Hans and the Wolf Man are certainly host to versions of the beast that emerge in the Gothic fairy tale of the Sandman. The imagination of the nursery creates uncanny hybrids that are subject to repression and destined to return out of that repression: on the model of the Wolf Man, Nathanael’s Sandman also figures as a kind of Owl Man, and Little Hans could be seen as a Little Horse Man. The closets are also fashioned following...
other of the specifications from the *OED*. For the Wolf Man, it is the closet derived from the private apartment of the sovereign, and converted into a sado-masochistic cabinet, a ‘narrow room’ in which he as ‘heir to the throne’ is subjected as a whipping-boy to homoeroticized fantasies of punishment and in particular genital chastisement.\textsuperscript{31} This is fantasy in its model version, as described in Freud’s essay ‘A Child is Being Beaten’ (1919), where the punitive agent is the father, drawing on the little boy’s masochistic homosexual attachment.\textsuperscript{32} For Little Hans, the performance of homosexuality, with the father interpellated as witness, is located in the water closet or ‘closet of ease’. As part of his obsessive research into the ‘widdler’ or ‘wee- wee maker’, suspended in a protracted phallic stage, Hans establishes a closet for himself, not in the toilet which leads off the lobby of the family apartment, but in the neighbouring dark lumber room. His father reports this as follows:

Leading out of the front hall there is a lavatory and also a dark storeroom for keeping wood in. For some time past Hans has been going into this wood-cupboard and saying: ‘I’m going to my W.C.’ I once looked in to see what he was doing in the dark storeroom. He showed me his parts and said: ‘I’m widdling.’ That is to say, he has been ‘playing’ at W.C. That it is in the nature of a game is shown not merely by the fact that he does not go into the W.C., which would after all be far simpler, but prefers the wood-cupboard and calls it ‘his W.C.’\textsuperscript{33}

His toilet visits avoid the convenience of the closet of ease and adopt instead this *camera obscura* or dark room dedicated to another function. This, he declares, is ‘my closet’, a place of secrecy that is nonetheless designed for public exhibition, as he ‘plays’ water closet. The game in question involves a pantomime of ‘wee- wee making’, one which allows the young player to make a show of manipulating his penis (the German nicely enough describes the fictional ‘wee- wee making’ as being * fingiert*, pretended, or more literally, fingered or manipulated).

The choice of the neighbouring dark room for this play-acting for his own pleasure and his father’s spectatorial benefit is in keeping with the more general logic of Hans’s fantasies and the morbid fears that attach to them. In Freud’s analysis, the desires and fears of Little Hans are relayed through a systematic structure, as articulated especially through the transport system. They are thus transposed from horse to wagon through a particular logic of cause and effect; as Lacan points out, the slippage between * wegen* (because of) and * Wägen* (a Viennese form of the plural of wagon or carriage) that Freud notes in Hans’s usage indicates a principle of displacement at work in the signification of desire.\textsuperscript{34} The wagon is laden with the ambivalent cargo of phobic desire *because* of the horse, to which it is linked, and which also bears an ostentatious penis. Hans’s obsession with the penis as ‘wee- wee maker’
follows a similar metonymic logic (the part of the body for the whole, that part which is defined by its particular function). And the visit to the toilet indicates that the function in question is itself subject to displacement by manipulation into another – that of sexual pleasure through showing and touching. In the public-private space of his closet, Little Hans has the opportunity to make a show of that function, for himself, for his father, but also for the significant other that is ‘the professor’: the analytic master, Freud, to whom he knows his father will report all aspects of his behaviour, especially as concerns his wee-wee maker. That is, he manipulates himself for an exchange of knowledge between men, one which includes for the adult males the pleasure of seeing, of knowing, and indeed of manipulating, directly or by proxy, the half-open secrets of the closet.

The Wolf Man and Little Hans correspond to a whole series of protagonists in modernist writing whose formative scenes are located in a variety of closet spaces, between private and public exhibition, with more or less explicit indications of homoerotic attachment. There is Kafka’s para-psychoanalytic casebook: Gregor Samsa in Metamorphosis (1915), transformed in the locked space of his bedroom into a closeted beast; Josef K. in The Trial (1925), stumbling upon the sado-masochistic beating scene in the junk room at the bank where he works, one of a sequence of such closet fantasy spaces; the physician in ‘A Country Doctor’ (1919), whose libido emerges from a pigsty as a rapaciously heterosexual beast but who then gets into bed with his young male patient; or the protagonist of ‘Blumfeld: A Bachelor’ (1915), who is pursued in his bachelorhood by two strange celluloid balls which fail to stay closeted in his wardrobe. There is the case of Musil’s Confusions of Young Törless (1906), where homoerotically charged sado-masochistic fantasy scenes are played out in a theatrical hiding-place in the loft of a cadet school, a closet which houses a particular form of bestiality. There are the school-boys of Wedekind’s Spring Awakening (1891), who – like Little Hans – use a water closet for masturbation but also compete in group sessions in more public spaces. There are the many protagonists of Thomas Mann’s narratives whose sexualities are fashioned in forms of closet-theatre and are subject to more or less public forms of outing: most notoriously, Aschenbach in Death in Venice (1912) with his grotesquely late spring awakening; or the young Italian subjected to a kiss from the magician in the theatrical cabinet of Mario and the Magician (1929); or a more obscure figure from Mann’s juvenilia, the protagonist of the early short story ‘The Wardrobe: A Story full of Mysteries’ (1899), whose morbid travels in the decadent style lead him to an allegorical encounter with a sexually ambiguous wraith in the closet of his boarding-house room.35 And there are the male counterparts to Fräulein Else from Schnitzler’s casebook, ostentatiously

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heterosexual in performance, but in ways that are nonetheless ambiguous: the young Lieutenant Gustl from the interior monologue novella of the same name, whose male gaze is drawn to female members of the audience at the opera, but whose virility is put in doubt by a phallicly charged encounter with an old baker who challenges him to a duel; or the protagonist of Dream Novella (1926), whose heterosexual fantasy life takes the form of a series of failures to perform, and who is replaced by a woman as sacrificial victim at the orgy, as though he might have been the primary sexual object of the masked men.\textsuperscript{36} The homosocial worlds of modernist writing, and not least of the German modernist canon, are rife with such closet cases, along with their public-private epistemologies and neurotic symptomatologies.

Lesbian detective fiction

If male homosexuality is regularly teased out of its closets by Freud, only to be placed in another form of enclosure in the consultation room, lesbianism is located in a less accessible recess. Freud famously described the mystery of feminine sexuality as a dark continent for the psychoanalytic project of exploration, and lesbianism can be seen as the heart of darkness in this \textit{terra incognita}, a deeply invaginated space for the not always equally intrepid sexual explorer. Or, to adopt another fantasy role with a particular affinity for the psychoanalyst and his casebook, lesbianism remains a resistant, elusive mystery for the psycho-sexual detective.

The detective here is not the queer agent of contemporary lesbian crime fiction, for while Freud can adopt the homosexual position in the elaboration of his project, the lesbian version of it is where such queer performativity as he exercises is blocked. Freud here is the reader and writer of more conventional forms of fiction, as we can see in the case-history-as-novella, \textit{Fragment of a Case of Hysteria} (1901), also known as Dora. As many revisionist readings of the Dora case have shown, Freud is complicit in the construction of his analysand for male desire, unable or unwilling to give her lesbian desire its due. And in his return to Freud, Lacan concerns himself with the question of ‘who desires in Dora’, asserting that ‘the ego of Dora is Herr K.’.\textsuperscript{37} The lesbian subject seems unable to have an ego of her own, whether of her own gender or not. This is also one way of reading the ego-relation that Schnitzler’s Else performs in her mirror-scene. The feminine image is either there for a narcissistic female subject or a projection of an ego that has been taken over by the male subject of voyeurism. We might say, that is, that ‘the ego of Else is Herr von Dorsday’, to whom she is required to exhibit herself. While Dora has another woman in the text of her case history, one whom she can at least partner in alternation in what Lacan calls the ballet between four
dancers (Frau K., Herr K., Dora’s father and Dora herself), Else has only the phantasmatic surrogate of the lovely woman in the mirror. Her literary case history operates under the sort of camouflage that Sedgwick sees in the narcissistic scenarios common to Romantic and modernist writing: ‘Not everyone has a lover of their own sex, but everyone, after all, has a self of their own sex.’ Under the generically male authorship of the modernist canon, lesbianism seems destined to appear as a second-order duplication of the Doppelgänger relations that are constructed between men.

The criminal case of Fräulein Else, one of extortion of sexual favours in a deal struck between men (the bankrupt father and the louche voyeur, von Dorsday), belongs, like that of Dora, to a casebook of social crimes and misdemeanours against the person and the psyche of young women in the age of modernism, pointing up the limits to the emancipation that that age fosters. In Frank Wedekind’s Lulu plays (Earth Spirit (1895) and Pandora’s Box (1904)), when the eponymous protagonist performs as lesbian in the repertory of a sexual circus which is as much that of her creator as her own, she draws her lover, the Countess Geschwitz, into abjection (Geschwitz connotes sweating) and crime (ending in the murder of both by the hyperbolic phallic agent, Jack the Ripper). And in Alfred Döblin’s criminological-cum-sociological study, drawn from a true case, The Two Girlfriends and their Murder by Poison (1924), the lesbian lovers, caught in abusive relationships with men, commit a capital crime. Döblin, who is another modernist writer with a close, but also ambivalent relationship to psychoanalysis, presents the case of lesbian crime without any attempt to analyse it.

Dora and Freud’s other famous lesbian analysand, in ‘The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman’ (1920), are not driven to crimes such as those of Döblin’s two girlfriends against the men who constrain or violate them. Dora is subjected by Freud to a form of treatment that only mimics the structure of the abuse she has suffered: the analytic detective story turns here on the logic of lock and key. What Dora needs and desires, in Freud’s analysis, is the key that is the phallus. It is a form of unlocking treatment that seems to aim at discovering secrets in a case cast from the start as a sort of roman à clef, but in fact achieves no access to the secret knowledge of lesbian desire that Dora and Frau K. are seen to share. As much as Freud understands the symbolism of Dora’s sexual fantasy life as turning on the jewellery box of her genitals, she retains control of another kind of secret treasure, the sort of ‘private repository of valuables’ that featured in the OED definition of the closet. That closeted desire, where box and treasure are opened up to another such jewel-box rather than a key, can only take the form of a footnote to the case history, as Dora does the only thing she can do, short of criminal action, by breaking off analysis and removing herself from the social relations in
which she has grown up. And in the case of the ‘homosexual woman’, the protest against patriarchal constraint (her father’s fury at her walking out with the woman she loves) takes the form of crime against the self in a suicide attempt. This ‘crime’ may well have also been aimed at the father, but it is interpreted by the analyst in one of his most tendentious, not to say offensive, readings as an enactment of the desire for the father (jumping from a railway embankment in order to ‘fall’ pregnant — niederkommen). Freud’s ‘novella’ here adopts a fictional conceit that shows psychoanalysis in its most paternalistically identified form and at its most blind to the crimes of the fathers in which the analyst as master detective has a certain stake. It is the paternal transference on the part of the analysand that leads Freud to suggest that this is a case he will never be able to solve, one better suited for a female colleague. Perhaps the case and its analysis would be best elucidated by a lesbian detective with analytic training.

**Gay science fictions**

If Freud’s psychoanalytic project does indeed perform a kind of gay science, one that identifies homosexuality as a key disposition of the fantasies and anxieties that it addresses, and given that it casts the identification of that disposition in the shape of case histories as forms of docu-fiction, we might indeed like to think of his casebook as featuring a series of gay science fictions. In the case histories that have been considered here, systematic knowledge — Wissenschaft or scienza — is the crux of the analytic study and the creative writing of homosexual dispositions. Little Hans as precocious ‘researcher’ and Dora in her illicit reading practices are both epistemologists of sexuality, the one adopted as a model student by Freud, the other exploring dark, recessive territory beyond his ken. While Little Hans’s antics in the customized water closet can be opened up to view and understood as part of the journey towards mature psycho-sexual knowledge, Dora’s lesbian closet and its epistemology remain closed off. Freudian psychoanalysis may in some senses be a gay science, but it is not so able to be a lesbian one.

In the case of Judge Schreber, another figure with a compulsive attachment to the (water) closet, the intercourse between homosexuality and science in a highly speculative form is most fantastically developed. The Schreber memoirs, with their extraordinary visions of counter-worlds, built around a fantasy of submission to a divine super-lover and the penetrating powers of libidinal rays, could indeed be called gay science fiction. And Freud’s Schreber Case is intimately identified with the logic of that fiction, identifying in it a model for his own speculative science, and arguably also for his own homosexual fantasy life. The key scene in the memoirs where the Judge describes
himself stripped to the waist in front of the mirror, taking pleasure in wearing ‘feminine adornments’ and imagining himself to have female breasts,\(^4\) raises an interesting speculation: that Schreber, like Schnitzler’s Else, may have a closet fantasy life as a lesbian. But this would be an identification that would go too far for the detective Freud and his transferential methods. What all of the ‘science fictions’ discussed here show is the ambiguous achievement of Freudian psychoanalysis in its opening up of the closet of homosexual desires, a closet that is also, to some extent, built into its own project.

NOTES


5. That Nietzsche’s own project might have been a form of ‘gay science’ is supported by Joachim Köhler, in his psychoanalytically informed biography, _Zarathustra’s Secret: The Interior Life of Friedrich Nietzsche_, trans. Ronald Taylor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). Köhler suggests that Nietzsche found satisfaction only in the homoerotic world of Sicily, as recorded in the photographs of Wilhelm van Gloeden, and that the superman figure of _Thus Spake Zarathustra_ is readable as a kind of homosexual fantasy figure.

6. As Nietzsche records in _Ecce Homo_, the songs that accompanied _The Gay Science_, which were largely written during his stay in Sicily, followed the principle of the Provençal _gaya scienza_ in what he calls their ‘union’ of minstrel and knight. That is, one of the images of manhood on display here is a double one that would certainly be open to homoerotic interpretation. See Friedrich Nietzsche, _Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is_, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), 98.


10. For links between cultural assumptions about the Jewish and homosexual dispositions of decadence around 1900, see Sander L. Gilman, _The Case of Sigmund Freud: Medicine and Identity at the Fin de Siècle_ (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 164.

11. The _Standard Edition_ (vol. vii: 166) removes the reference to the _private Äußerungen_ in its translation of this passage.

13. Freud, _Standard Edition_, vol. ii: 160. The German can also be understood to mean that the case histories ‘should be read as novellas’.

14. See, for example, the gay retellings of traditional fairy stories by Peter Cashorali, the lesbian detective fiction of Sandra Scoppettone and the science fiction and fantasy writing of Nicola Griffith or David Gerrold.


16. See _ibid._, 335–6.

17. Irigaray works to release relationships between women from the mediation of this masculine specularization, a construction, as it were, of ‘femmosexuality’. See Luce Irigaray, _Speculum of the Other Woman_ (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

18. Richard Oswald’s film, _Anders als die Anderen_ (1920), one of the key _Aufklärungsfilme_ or films of educational enlightenment from the Weimar period, starred Conrad Veidt as a gay man being blackmailed by an ex-lover. Vincente Minnelli’s _Tea and Sympathy_ (1956), which was produced under the anti-enlightened strictures of the Hollywood Hays Code, encoded the homosexuality of its protagonist as ‘not regular’ and ‘sister boy’.

19. The hotel room also functions as her dressing- or undressing-room as she prepares for her rendezvous with the scopophilic blackmailer von Dorsday.

20. Sedgwick, _Epistemology of the Closet_, 68.


24. ‘Psychoanalysis not only sheds theoretical light on the tensions between homosexuality and citizenship, but psychoanalytic discourse is itself a textual allegory for how the production of the citizen takes place through the rejection and transmutation of an always imagined homosexuality’ (ibid., 108–9).


26. _Ibid._

27. _Ibid._

28. _Ibid._

29. _Ibid._ The _Doppelgänger_ text taken by Freud to illustrate the uncanny, Hoffmann’s _The Sandman_, is certainly open to reading as a case of the sort of queer Gothic paranoia that Sedgwick discusses (see Webber, _The Doppelgänger_, 121–48).


35. While the figure is ultimately shown to be female (or at least, to have breasts), its gender is initially derived from the term _Gestalt_ or figure, which happens to be feminine in German.
36. The queer subtext is taken up in Kubrick’s film version of the text, *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), where the protagonist, wandering the streets at night, is challenged as a ‘fag’ by a group of youths.


40. Ibid. Lacan overlooks the fifth dancer, Freud himself, who enters transferentially into the formation.


