Britain on the Couch: 
The Popularization of 
Psychoanalysis in Britain  
1918–1940

The Argument

Despite the enormous historical attention psychoanalysis has attracted, its popularization in Britain (as opposed to the United States) in the wake of the Great War has been largely overlooked. The present paper explores the sources and fate of the sudden "craze" for psychoanalysis after 1918, examining the content of the books through which the doctrine became widely known, along with the roles played by religious interests and the popular press. The percolation of Freudian and related language into everyday English was effectively complete by the 1930s. Crucially, it is argued that in Britain the character of psychoanalytic theory itself demonstrably converged with the psychological needs of the British population in the postwar period. The situation in Britain was clearly different in many respects from that in the United States. This episode bears on numerous questions about scientific popularization, the distinctiveness of British psychoanalysis, and though it is treated here only peripherally the epistemological status or nature of psychoanalysis. More generally the present paper may be read as an exercise in reflexive disciplinary historiography, in which the levels of discipline ("Psychology") and subject matter ("psychology") are viewed as interpenetrating and mutually constitutive.

If often he was wrong and at times absurd,  
To us he is no more a person  
Now but a whole climate of opinion,  
Under whom we conduct our differing lives.  

W. H. Auden, In Memory of Sigmund Freud d. September 1939

Although the extent of its cultural domination is sometimes exaggerated,¹ psychoanalysis has unquestionably enjoyed greater popular success and cultural

¹ This is particularly so among some academics working in fields such as literary criticism, feminism, and cultural studies. A recent example is Richard Webster (1995).
influence than any other body of Psychological thought. None has seen such a large proportion of its technical language assimilated into English everyday psychological language (EPL). This paper is concerned with exploring how this came about, focusing primarily on the British scene in the period 1918–1940, although some events beyond this frame will be noticed. The number of historical accounts of various aspects of psychoanalysis is now formidable. Since H. Ellenberger’s *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (1970), a true *magnum opus*, these have included Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester (1993), Hannah Decker (1977), John Kerr (1994), Janet Malcolm (1984), J. M. Masson (1984), Eric Rayner (1990), Paul Roazen (1976), Frank Sulloway (1979), Richard Webster (1995), and on Jung, Richard Noll (1994, 1997). The genre had indeed begun with Freud himself (Freud 1925), other earlier treatments including Philip Rieff (1958), L. L. Whyte (1960), and Dieter Wyss (1966). These however are but some of the most prominent among a vast array of books and academic papers, several biographical studies of leading psychoanalysts figuring among these, most notably of course Ernest Jones’ 1953–57 three-volume biography of Freud, now much contested. The history of psychoanalysis in the United States has also become fairly extensive: C. P. Obendorff (1953) was partly autobiographical; D. Shakow and D. Rapaport (1964), the two volumes by Nathan G. Hale (1971, 1995), J. C. Burnham (1979), J. Gach (1980) and coverage in J. C. Burnham (1988), J. Pfister and N. Schnog, eds., (1997) and Edward Shorter (1997) are among the major contributions. Regarding the story’s cultural aspects, A. E. Rosenberg (1980) also examines the treatment of psychoanalysis in American religious journals from 1900 to the mid-1960s and K. and G. O. Gabbard (1987) the depiction of psychiatry (predominantly of the psychoanalytic kind) in the cinema. Extensive though this literature is, the issue under scrutiny here has attracted relatively little attention in relation to the British scene, two major exceptions being D. Rapp (1988) and an important unpublished doctoral thesis by Sandra Ellesley (1995), to which we will return later.

The popular adoption of psychoanalytic language and thought in Britain provides an ideal case study of the cultural suffusion of Psychological ideas, as well as complementing existing studies of the American situation. Britain, the United States, Germany, and France each encountered and construed the ideas of Freud and his early associates in different ways, their perceived meanings and significance being affected by these countries’ respective cultural, psychiatric, and Psychological traditions, as well as local psychological conditions. It should also be stressed at

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2 I am adopting my usual practice of using Psychology and Psychological to refer to the discipline and lower-case “psychology” and “psychological” to refer to its subject matter.

3 I use this expression rather than “folk psychology” to avoid the latter’s somewhat patronizing tone.

4 Ellesley’s thesis came to my attention after the first version of this paper was completed. There is considerable overlap between our concerns, although our time-frames are somewhat different and — in relation to the present topic — she is concerned primarily with the popular press and magazine literature, and does not discuss books. There is also a significant, if not large, difference in our intellectual agendas. I am especially indebted to her thesis for its coverage of the popular press and the British Medical Association Psycho-Analysis Committee.
this point that during most of the period under consideration there was, in Britain, little popular differentiation between those terms and concepts originating in Freud's own work and those introduced by Jung, Adler, Melanie Klein, and others among his early followers or apostates. My later use of the term "Freudish" should thus be understood in the broadest sense, referring to all the terminology which the public, rightly or wrongly, identified as being psychoanalytic.

We might provisionally distinguish four levels at which the dissemination of psychoanalytic ideas occurred. Firstly, the technical professional literature, of only marginal concern here, although some texts such as W. H. R. Rivers (1920) were widely read and border on the next category. Secondly, the popular texts produced by psychoanalysts and their sympathizers, intended to educate the public and promote the psychoanalytic cause. For our purposes the London Psycho-Analytical Society, its more specifically Freudian successor, the British Psycho-Analytical Society, and the International Library of Psycho-Analysis should also be included as factors operating at this level, being institutions concerned with, among other things, mediating, and as time went on, policing the popular propagation of psychoanalytic knowledge. Thirdly, the coverage of psychoanalysis in more general texts on Psychology and psychotherapy, not usually authored by partisan exponents of the doctrine. Fourthly, the presence and influence of psychoanalysis in popular culture such as the press, magazine journalism, novels, film, and theater. The last two include hostile as well as supportive treatment, since any airing of a doctrine signifies and promotes its cultural presence. While it is convenient to identify such levels we should however be wary of assuming that they reflect a simple downward radiation of the psychoanalytic message. As we will see later, things were a little more complicated than that.

A brief linguistic point should also be made. Anglophone psychoanalytic language very rapidly came to possess a distinctive, readily identifiable, technical character, comprising as it did numerous neologisms and co-options of terms that previously had been relatively uncommon. This was, however, far less true of Freud's original German. Even newly coined compound phrases like "wish fulfillment," "reaction formation," and "pleasure principle" probably sounded more distinctive than their typically agglutinatively created German originals.

5 Founded in 1913 by Ernest Jones and various others interested in the work of Freud, Jung, and Adler (see Rayner 1990, 11-12).
6 Founded in 1919 by Ernest Jones and J. C. Flügel.
7 This was primarily forged by Ernest Jones, James and Alix Strachey and other early translators, such as Barbara Low. Its official character was consolidated in 1928 with the publication, as Supplement I of the International Journal of Psychoanalysis, of a "Glossary for the use of translators of psychoanalytical works" (Jones 1928).
8 For example, Besetzung, translated as "cathect," has a fairly broad range of meanings including military occupation, filling of a vacancy and casting (of a play); Fixierung was closely related to the words for "stare" (fixieren) and fix possessed psychological meanings equivalent to alert and smart, the English "fixation" possessed no psychological meaning prior to 1910, when A. A. Brill used it in a translation of Freud's Three Contributions to the Theory of Sexuality; more crucially perhaps Ich (ego) simply means "I."
Background

As Bakan, Ellenberger, Whyte, and numerous others have shown, the origins of many of the ideas which came to be adopted by, or associated with, Freud and his associates lie deep in European philosophical and religious, particularly Judaic, traditions. For present purposes I am not directly concerned with these origins.9

Prior to the Clark Lectures of 1909,10 psychoanalysis would, for English speakers, generally have figured as but one among a variety of approaches to the “unconscious” or “subconscious” then flourishing in both psychiatry and Psychology, including those of Pierre Janet, Morton Prince, F. W. H. Myers,11 Paul Dubois, and Isador Coriat (who soon joined the psychoanalytic ranks).12 European and American psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychiatrists had been avidly re-exploring hypnotism and “suggestion” techniques since the early 1890s.13 In the United States the ground had partly been prepared by the work of S. Weir Mitchell and G. M. Beard, both cast as predecessors by Obendorff (see also Shorter 1997, 50). The distinctively radical nature of the ideas of Freud and Jung was not, therefore, initially that apparent. In 1909 Freud’s works began appearing in English, with A. A. Brill’s first translations and the publication in the American Journal of Psychology of the Clark Lectures by Freud, Jung, and others. The Interpretation of Dreams appeared in 1913, and the most accessible of Freud’s early works, The Psychopathology of Everyday Life, in 1914, although Boris Sidis had published a synopsis of this in 1906.14 In 1914 the British Journal of Psychology published a paper on “Freud’s Theory of the Unconscious” by William Brown, later an eminent figure, and prolific writer, in both psychotherapy and psychomet-

9 Some were noted in G. Richards (1992), notably in relation to Leibniz and German psychiatric thought.
10 The Clark Lectures were mounted by G. S. Hall to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the founding of Clark University. They comprised a series of guest lectures in several disciplines. For his own discipline, Psychology, Hall invited Freud, Jung, Ferenczi, Ernest Jones, and the American analyst J. J. Putnam. The episode has now achieved a legendary and almost mythical status. It provided the occasion for an encounter between Freud and William James and Freud’s own lectures were famously interrupted by the revolutionary and feminist, Emma Goldman. Obendorff (1953) identifies two earlier mentions of Freud. J. J. Putnam at Massachusetts General Hospital began using Freudian ideas in 1904 (ibid., 56), and a handful of other American psychiatrists began adopting psychoanalytic techniques around 1906, primarily at the Manhattan State Hospital, Ward Island (ibid., 41, 80–85; see also Hale 1971; Shorter 1997, 160–166 for further accounts of early psychoanalysis in America).
11 F. W. H. Myers is in fact credited with being the first person in England to refer to Freud in print (Myers 1893b) His own notion of the existence of “subliminal personality” was perhaps the clearest British anticipation of psychoanalytic doctrines. There is surely an even deeper background to this as he was a member of the short-lived Psychological Society of Great Britain (1875–1879), the doctrines of the founder of which, Edward W. Cox, would not have been uncongenial to such a notion (Richards forthcombina a).
12 See Shorter (1997 chap. 4) for a recent account of the emergence of “psychotherapy” in the late nineteenth century as a non-stigmatizing alternative to organic, usually degenerationist, psychiatric approaches.
13 It was of course during this period that the very notion of “psychotherapy” itself originated in the work of figures such as Paul Dubois (see Shorter 1997, chap. 4 for a recent account).
14 This appeared in the Journal of Abnormal Psychology, which also published original papers by Ernest Jones and Jung and Rockshen (on free association) in the 1907–1908 volume.
rics during the inter-war years. Ernest Jones also published papers by Sandor Ferenczi in the United States in 1916 (Ferenczi 1916), as well as plugging the Freudian case in journals such as *Child Study* throughout the war years, as did fellow analyst M. D. Eder (for listing, see Ellesley 1995, 268–269). The issue of child-sexuality had additionally been addressed in A. Moll’s *The Sexual Life of the Child* (1912), which referenced Freud extensively. One journal that began discussing Freud from as early as 1912 was *New Age*, vehicle for the occult sage N. Orage, which subsequently took an increasingly pro-Jungian turn (see Rapp 1988, 192), while the Society for Psychical Research published seven reviews of Freud’s books before 1913 (for listing, see Ellesley 1995, 268).

As is well-known, World War I saw Rivers, one of Britain’s most eminent psychologists, drawing on Freud’s ideas in treating shell-shock at Maghull and Craiglockhart hospitals, but more profoundly its psychological effect was to create an intense postwar concern with understanding the roots within human nature of that unprecedented collective trauma. Trotter’s *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* (1916), although not psychoanalytic, had already made a start in this direction. Trotter had, however, met Freud and in 1906 was the first person to bring him to the attention of Ernest Jones. As F. R. Barry noted in *Christianity and Psychology*: “the terrific strain to which all were subjected, and from which we have none of us as yet fully recovered, forced the mind back, as it were, upon itself, and created an unprecedented interest in the specifically mental sciences, as well as in spiritism and similar cults. We are all psychologists today” (Barry 1923, 1). Rivers would not have demurred: “The war has been a vast crucible in which all our preconceived views concerning human nature have been tested” (Rivers 1922, 252). Sympathetic though he was to psychoanalysis, for Rivers the lesson was that while the sex-instinct might be the predominating factor in peace-time, the war had brought even deeper “self-preservation” or “danger” instincts to the fore (ibid., appendix 7). Rivers also took issue with Freud on numerous theoretical points related to dream interpretation but he nonetheless joined the new British Psycho-Analytical Association, serving as president of the Medical Section in 1919, and his sympathy helped ensure that it received serious scientific and medical attention (see Slobodin 1978, 74–77 for more on Rivers’ involvement with psychoanalysis).

15 “Shell shock” has received much retrospective attention in recent years with the growth in concern with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, although equating the two conditions is anachronistic and in some respects radically misleading. The best analysis for our purposes is in Stone 1985. Rivers initially encountered Freud’s ideas while at Maghull Hospital as one of the group concerned with treating “other ranks” suffering from shell shock. He initially enlisted a colleague, the young T. H. Pear, later Professor of Psychology at Manchester, as his mentor.

16 A similar point was made by G. Coster: the Great War filled “the hospitals of Europe with shattered minds as well as shattered bodies, and in a few months psycho-therapy, the healing of the diseased mind, became the topic of the hour. The names of Freud, Jung, and Adler sprang into fame, and psycho-analysis, already the valued instrument of the psychiatrist, became the rather dangerous plaything of society” (Coster 1932, 1–2).

17 In the light of the material being presented in this paper Slobodin rather overstates the “courage”
found a receptive British public audience, becoming, as A. G. Tansley commented, a "fashionable craze" (Firth 1925, 6) — a verdict we will find echoed throughout the popular media of the day.

The complex relationship between psychoanalysis and evolutionary doctrines also requires some comment. One central linkage is the concept of "instinct," but Freud’s reduction of this to a single, sexual, libidinal energy was in stark contrast to William McDougall's detailed cataloguing of the various instincts (McDougall 1908). Freud also speculated, though not extensively, on human psychological evolution, often espousing a quasi-Lamarckian belief in the inheritance of ancestral traumas, notably in connection with the "primal horde" and his hypothesis of an original act of collective fraternal patricide. More profoundly it is now clear that recapitulationism was a major factor in his conceptualization of the psycho-sexual stages. In this connection it is worth noting that Freud’s usage of the idea differed markedly from e.g. James Sully’s. For Sully (1895) the primeval nature of the child’s mind signified a Romantic state of innocence; for Freud the child’s innate bestiality — providing, in Webster’s view, a secularized equivalent of original sin (Webster, 1995). Jung’s belief in some form of psychological heritability was perhaps even stronger than Freud’s and, at least as their theories became popularly understood, more central to his theoretical position. Proposing an instinctual basis for all human behavior and casting the rational civilized conscious ego as an insecurely stabilized late product of these primeval unconscious forces, the scientific appeal and plausibility of psychoanalysis by 1918 is hardly mysterious. In several of the popular texts discussed below we find the “primitive mind” idea assimilated easily into the exposition (e.g., Bradby 1922). One of the many paradoxical features of psychoanalysis was that it appeared to be using reason to dethrone reason while reinstating it in the very act of doing so. Since British Psychological thought had hardly yet been touched by behaviorism and remained fundamentally evolutionary in character this evolutionary aspect of psychoanalysis enhanced its palatability.

While the radical, even bizarre, nature of psychoanalytic doctrines had, by 1918, become evident, this was not necessarily a handicap — for had not the world itself...
become bafflingly bizarre? Besides the war itself, aircraft, radio, the Russian Revolution, the influenza epidemic, Picasso, X-rays and Einstein (to cite but a selection) had, in under two decades, overthrown all previous assumptions about the world — from what was beautiful to what was common sense, from the essentially civilized character of Europeans to the nature of the universe. One response to this, in Britain as in mainland Europe and to a lesser degree North America, was a flourishing popular occult "counterculture" seeking, in the face of the escalating success of materialist science, to reconnect with the non-rational and ancestral. Its diverse manifestations included spiritualism and psychical research (and note that British Psychology had previously had strong links with the Society for Psychical Research from the 1870s to the 1890s), Theosophy, the Celtic revival, the magical "Order of the Golden Dawn," a reawakened interest in astrology, and the antics of the Great Beast himself, Aleister Crowley. The ambitions of those engaged in such movements and cults were no less revolutionary than those of their materialist opposite numbers — to somehow raise human consciousness to new heights, to initiate a global spiritual regeneration, and in the case of those like Sir Oliver Lodge who straddled both camps to demonstrate scientifically the existence of a spiritual realm (or, more trendily, "dimension") and the posthumous survival of the soul. The religious yearnings signified by such movements only intensified in the postwar period, and Noll (1997) has argued that even earlier they provided part of the appeal of Jungian doctrines in Britain. All in all then it was hardly the time for cautious and conservative Psychological theorizing. Could psychoanalysis offer an image of human nature appropriate to this new world? Psychoanalysis was itself of course affected by the Great War, most obviously in Freud's postulation of a Death Instinct, "Thanatos," counterbalancing "Eros," the "pleasure principle," in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1922), which had appeared in German in 1920. The doctrine itself was not, therefore, a static entity during this period but rather one which was, at some level, actively responding (both centrally and, as we shall see, locally) to the traumatized European cultural climate and the psychological needs of its populations. This flexibility would give it an additional edge over rival theories.

**Popular Texts of the Interwar Period**

The years 1918–1929 see a wave of popular psychoanalytic texts, starting in Britain with Wilfred Lay (1918), M. K. Bradby (1919, 3rd imp. 1922), and,  

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21 Lodge's position in some respects paralleled that of Sir Alister Hardy in the 1960s. Lodge was of course continuing the project initiated by late nineteenth-century sympathizers with Spiritualism such as, most prominently, F. W. H. Myers for whom the "survival of bodily death" issue was a crucial scientific issue, especially, for Myers, for the new experimental Psychology (see e.g. the first two essays in Myers 1893a).

22 Although American, this is very frequently cited by the other popular writers at this period and clearly made a considerable impact in Britain.

23 M. K. Bradby is the "M. K. B." referred to in Constance Long's diaries, whom Noll (1997) was
though less doctrinaire and more "eclectic" Tansley (1920, 11th imp. 1929). As these "impression" figures indicate such books could enjoy considerable success, confirming the existence of a "fashionable craze." Geraldine Coster's *Psycho-analysis for Normal People* for example, first appeared in 1926 and reached at least the fourth impression of a third edition in 1939. Barbara Low's *Psycho-Analysis: A Brief Account of Freudian Theory* appeared in April 1920 and went into a second edition in October which was reprinted in March 1921. Violet Firth's *The Machinery of the Mind* (1922) was similarly reprinted in the same year and again in 1925. C. W. Valentine's *Dreams and the Unconscious* of 1921 was still in print in 1932 as *The New Psychology of the Unconscious*. In the United States this genre was represented by writers such as Coriat, W. S. Sadler (1929), A. Tridon (1924), and J. S. Van Tessler (1924) whose books were often also issued in Britain (e.g. Tridon 1921, 1922; Coriat 1919, 1921). Freud's own *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* was, meanwhile, reprinted pretty much annually between 1920 and 1930. Books more focused on childhood problems and education written from a psychoanalytically informed angle also appeared, such as G. H. Green (1923, 1927) on the daydream and "terror-dream" respectively, and Oskar Pfister's *Psycho-Analysis in the Service of Education* (1922). C. W. Kimmins' *Children's Dreams* (1920), while not explicitly Freudian in approach, cites him and utilizes many of his concepts, as does Julia Turner's largely unreferenced book *Human Psychology as Seen through the Dream* (1924). In another field, John C. Goodwin's *Insanity and the Criminal* (1923) is similarly heavily influenced by Freud and avowedly draws extensively on Barbara Low's book. Moreover, as we will discuss later, those psychologists concerned with the relationship between Psychology and religion, such as H. Crichton-Miller and R. H. Thouless, often deployed psychoanalytic ideas in a selective fashion, as did religious writers like Leslie Weatherhead.

What then do such works contain? To ascertain this I have examined the contents of 25 books published in the UK during the period in question. While unable to identify. In 1920 she published a further work, *The Logic of the Unconscious Mind*, which, despite its title, was less exclusively Freudian. Long wrote a preface for the 1919 book. Long's own *Collected Papers on the Psychology of Phantasy* appeared in 1920.

24 On the ecologist and botanist Tansley's encounter with psychoanalysis and analysis with Freud himself, see Cameron and Forrester (forthcoming).

25 These and subsequent figures are drawn from my own copies. A British Library catalogue check could well reveal further editions and impressions but my pedantry has its limits and these should be sufficient to make the point. At several points in this paper I have provided numbers of editions and reprints as evidence of popularity, although without knowledge of actual print-runs these are difficult to convert into sales figures.

26 These years cover the sixth to fifteenth impressions, gaps in 1925, 1927, and 1929 being offset by double printings in 1920 and 1922. Altogether sixteen impressions of A. A. Brill's 1914 translation appeared before the 1938 Pelican edition, two in 1917. Brill's translation of *Interpretation of Dreams* also went through six reprints over 1919–1927.

27 Who was John C. Goodwin? He is credited with having also published *Practical Musketry Instruction and The Visual Training Of The Soldier* as well as another work on crime, suggesting he was hardly some radical intellectual.

28 These comprise a group of seventeen fairly general texts plus eight more specialized or advanced
far from constituting complete coverage, this is large enough to be representative for the purposes of what can really only be a pilot exploration.

Passages aimed at dispelling widespread misconceptions, images, and myths about psychoanalysis and Freud are ubiquitous, since authors, especially of early 1920s texts, try to tackle a number of specific tasks. One, usually directly confronted in introductions or first chapters, is the sex issue. Packaging psychoanalytic sexual theory in a way that would be acceptable to an educated middle-class British readership was a task that considerably exercised the minds of its popular exponents. This readership already knew that sex figured prominently in psychoanalytic theory, but while sex was undoubtedly one reason for widespread interest, it was equally a source of cultural resistance. The tactics adopted are a mixture of reassuring clarification and enlightened attack on sexual ignorance. The term “sex” in psychoanalysis is, readers may be told, somewhat misleading since it refers to sensual pleasure in general, not just to sex in the strict sense. Nevertheless there is a broad consensus that the prevalence of sexual ignorance and lack of sex education is a damaging feature of British culture, the cause of much suffering and in urgent need of rectification, a need that psychoanalysis can meet. They are thus aligning themselves with the wider camp which had been promoting sex education and sexual openness since the turn of the century, represented by writers such as Havelock Ellis (particularly in his 1901–1915 papers, reprinted with later ones in 1936),29 August Forel (1908), and A. Moll (1912).30 The authors themselves are, texts. These were all either pitched at the popular audience or became particularly widely read, even if occasionally the publishers warn that sale is to members of the clergy and the medical and legal professions only. These were, respectively: (general group) D. N. Barbour (1923) *Psycho-Analysis and Everyday*, P. Bousfield (1920) *The Elements of Practical Psycho-Analysis*, M. K. Bradby (1922, 1st-1919) *Psycho-Analysis and Its Place in Life*, I. H. Coriat (1919) *What Is Psychoanalysis?*, G. Coster (1939 3rd ed., 1st-1926) *Psycho-Analysis for Normal People*, H. Crichton-Miller (1924) *The New Psychology and the Preacher*, H. Crichton-Miller (1950 ed. 1st-1933) *Psycho-Analysis and Its Derivatives*, V. M. Firth (1925, 1st-1922) *Machinery of the Mind*, J. C. Flugel (1932) *An Introduction to Psycho-Analysis*, S. Herbert (1923) *The Unconscious Mind*. A Psycho-Analytical Survey, R. H. Hingley (1921) *Psycho-Analysis*, I. Levine (1923) *The Unconscious*. An Introduction to Freudian Psychology, B. Low (1921, 2nd ed. 1st-1920) *Psycho-Analysis. A Brief Account of the Freudian Theory*, O. Pfister (1922) *Psycho-Analysis in the Service of Education being an introduction to Psycho-Analysis*, J. Ralph (1937) *How to Psychoanalyse Yourself*, A. G. Tansley (1929, 11th impression, 1st-1920) *The New Psychology and Its Relation to Life*, C. W. Valentine (1932, 1st-1921 as *Dreams and the Unconscious*) *The New Psychology of the Unconscious*; (specialised/advanced group); W. Brown (1922) *Suggestion and Mental Analysis*. An Outline of the Theory and Practice of Mind Cure, G. H. Green (1923) *The Daydream*. A Study in Development, G. H. Green (1927) *The Terror Dream*, W. McDougall (1937 2nd ed. 1st-1936) *Psycho-Analysis and Social Psychology*, K. Menzies (1921, 1st-1919) *Autoerotic Phenomena in Adolescence*, J. Rickman (ed.) (1936) *On the Bringing Up of Children*, W. H. R. Rivers (1922 2nd ed. 1st-1920) *Instinct and the Unconscious. A Contribution to a Biological Theory of the Psycho-neuroses*, F. Wittels (1924) *Sigmund Freud: His Personality, His Teaching and His School*.

29 There is a certain level of cross-citation between Ellis and Freud, between whom there was also a correspondence. But this appears to pertain primarily to dreams rather than sex, Ellis (1911) being cited in the 4th (1914) edition of *Interpretation of Dreams*, while Freud is most frequently cited (as, occasionally, is Jung) by Ellis in *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* Vol. 3, Part 2 which appears to date from 1913 (about half being a chapter on “The Synthesis of Dreams”).

30 There is clearly also a slender, but real, linkage, which I cannot explore here, with the late Victorian and Edwardian “moral regulation” discourse centered on masturbation and sexual education. See A. Hunt (1998) for a review of this.
however, not entirely immune from squeamishness, and often qualify their acceptance of Freud’s insistence on the exclusively determinative role of sex. Bousfield, for instance, rejects Freud’s view that sexual desire underlies all other desires and emotions but “this does not in any way affect our acceptance of his technique, his theory of dreams in the great majority of cases, and his theory of the etiology of most of the neuroses and psychoneuroses” (Bousfield 1920, vii). In doing so they frequently invoke McDougall’s 1908 Introduction to Social Psychology (already in its twentieth edition by 1926 and serving as a sort of sheet anchor for British Psychological theorizing), e.g., especially Hingley (1921), Bradby (1919), Levine (1923), Tansley (1920), or Rivers (1922) who had developed the argument against the exclusive dominance of sex more explicitly as a criticism of Freud. Freud himself soon in a sense followed suit in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1922), as mentioned earlier. A somewhat clinical, earnest, tight-lipped, almost embarrassed, tone often characterizes their discourse on this topic. The dust-cover blurb of D. N. Barbour (1923) informs the reader that “since the subject is here treated not as a branch of medical science, but as it affects every educated man and woman, unwelcome subject-matter has been reduced to that minimum without the consideration of which it would be impossible for us to form a correct judgment about ourselves or about other people.”

Barbour later feels it necessary to differentiate between “sex-libido” for Freud’s usage defined as “the force by means of which the sexual instinct achieves expression” and “libido” for “the totality of the instincts” (Barbour 1923, 23). Opening a chapter on “Perversions” he confesses “This chapter will, I am afraid, be most of all open to the accusation of ‘nastiness’” (ibid., 92), and a little later claims that masturbation and use of contraceptives should logically be included as perversions, although this is not the custom in current “scientific parlance.” Only sex for procreation is, strictly speaking, “natural” (ibid., 94). Nonetheless Barbour implicitly supports the legalization of homosexuality and repeatedly returns to the appalling state of sex education in public schools, as well as attacking religion: 31 “The mental and moral tortures, in this age of Science, of a sincere and trusting child who tries to reconcile with its common sense the religious theories presented to it, by those whom it most desires to love and honour, are appalling to contemplate” (ibid., 151). Violet Firth (1925), by contrast is quite dead-pan and unapologetic about the matter. The psychoanalytic view of sex was in fact interpreted both as legitimating the acceptance of the erotic and sensual and as providing a new, scientifically rational, method of curbing its power in the way traditional attitudes required. Webster (1995) argues that Freud’s own basic intentions were of the latter, traditional, kind, identifying in this one root of the theory’s appeal, but the former kind of reading equally contributed to its appeal in more radical, libertarian, intellectual circles.

31 Bradby (1919) is also sympathetic towards homosexuality, unsurprisingly perhaps given her emotional relationship with Constance Long (see Noll 1997).
The proponents of psychoanalysis succeed primarily by the dual tactic of stylistically conveying that they share their readership’s anxieties while simultaneously invoking “science” and the need to face unpleasant facts honestly. Many defend Freud’s personal character as a man very far from being the apostle of libertinage of some sections of popular contemporary imagination. F. Wittels’ *Critique of Love*, written for an American readership but also published in Britain, was still stressing this in 1930. Claiming that the very virulence of some of their opponents is due to resistance and ironically evidence in favor of the theory is also a common move. “The analyst knows, however, too well the meaning of such violent language to blame the author in question” observes D. N. Barbour (1923, 15). In general the more committed writers are to hard-line psychoanalytic doctrines the less they are prepared to, so to speak, beat about the bush. K. Menzies’ monograph for example, his morale patently boosted by Ernest Jones (who provided a no-nonsense foreword), is entitled *Autoerotic Phenomena in Adolescence*.32

A second task is explaining both the similarities and, more importantly, the differences between psychoanalysis and other doctrines or methods such as “suggestion,” “auto-suggestion,” hypnosis, or the numerous accounts of the “subconscious” which had been widely aired since the 1890s. What is distinctive about psychoanalysis in addition to its perhaps injudicious emphasis on sex? Two points in particular are frequently made in this respect.

i. The first point is that in psychoanalysis, unlike “suggestion” and hypnotism, nothing is imposed upon the patient. The analyst’s role is to guide the patient’s own self discovery. The contemporary popularity of the “suggestion” and “auto-suggestion” doctrines — rooted in the nineteenth century French work on hypnotism of the “Nancy School,” that was identified with A. A. Liébault and his apostle H. Bernheim and was now being advocated by Emile Coué (1922), creator of the “New Nancy School,” and Charles Baudouin (1920) — undoubtedly facilitated receptivity to psychoanalysis. But it was a major rival too. Much emphasis is therefore placed on the relative superficiality of “suggestion” techniques and the passivity of the patient’s role in suggestion-based therapies, as opposed to the profundity of psychoanalytic insights and the fact that obtaining them is an active achievement by the analysand. Hostility to “suggestion” nevertheless varies somewhat. Hingley (1921) for example is fairly sympathetic and views the two approaches as more complementary than opposed (Hingley 1921, 113–118). William Brown (Wilde Professor in Mental Philosophy at Oxford) also argued that

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32 Freud’s own view of masturbation was only marginally more tolerant than that of those conventional popular manuals of the time which inveighed against the appalling consequences of the “secret sin” (To see how absurd this could get, see Fowler nd c.1875, 801–823, originally dating from 1870 and 1875, but my later copy has a 1901 owner’s date stamp.) He certainly treated it as a pathogenic factor in many of his case histories. Again however, at the cultural level, the rise of psychoanalysis would be considered by most observers to have been a factor in the spread of more “enlightened” and tolerant attitudes towards it.

33 Baudouin’s position was somewhat eclectic however, and he was far from unsympathetic to psychoanalysis, indeed he published a book of 27 psychoanalytic case-histories (Baudouin 1922).
both hypnosis and suggestion had a useful place in the psychotherapist’s repertoire, even claiming that Freudian transference was a sub-variety of suggestion, rather than, as Freud held, suggestion being a kind of transference (Brown 1922, 38). The fact that Wilhelm Stekel, although a psychoanalyst, could still entitle a book Psychoanalysis and Suggestion Therapy in 1923 clearly indicates that the two approaches were often seen as closely linked and not entirely irreconcilable. Theoretically the relationship between psychoanalysis and these other techniques was nonetheless a major bone of contention between the stricter psychoanalysts and more eclectic writers like Brown. Even the latter however are fairly keen to clarify the unique character of psychoanalysis, if not always to its advantage.

ii. The second point is that Freud’s theory of dreams, while in some respects anticipated by previous writers, is quite unique and the great discovery that enabled him to unravel the structure of the human mind. Alongside the major defense mechanisms, the various dream processes of symbolization, condensation, displacement, censorship, etc. receive the greatest level of coverage in most texts, virtually all of which contain extensive discussion of dreams. Expositions of these ideas, usually with numerous examples, intensively educate the reader, providing a new vocabulary and clarifying conceptual distinctions (e.g. between unconscious and pre-conscious, or between repression and suppression) and provision of glossaries is not uncommon. Dreams naturally lent themselves readily to this purpose, but were supplemented by other examples of parapraxes. These, following Freud’s approach in The Psychopathology of Everyday Life, are gauged to illustrate how apparently outlandish psychoanalytic notions in fact refer to phenomena with which all are familiar.

A further purpose, and often the deeper aim of the whole exercise, is to advocate a case for psychoanalysis being a doctrine with potentially revolutionary implications for our understanding not only of mental illness and neurosis, but of human nature in its entirety, and all realms of human culture. In the first instance it obviously, via the light it sheds on the nature of the child, provides the basis for a wholesale reform of education and child-rearing, but beyond this it illuminates the nature of art, crowd behavior, literature, religion and myth, humor, ethics, crime, and philosophy. Leading British analysts Ernest Jones, James Glover, Flügel, M. D. Eder, and Barbara Low further endorsed such claims in a series of lectures “delivered under the auspices of the Sociological Society” which were edited by

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34 One should also note here A. E. Davis (1920) Hypnotism and Treatment by Suggestion. This includes discussion of psychoanalysis from the “suggestion” school perspective. Davis was an eminent psychiatrist and associated with the Liverpool Psycho-therapeutic Clinic.

35 See Interpretation of Dreams chap.1, which Freud continued to expand up to the 4th 1914, edition.

36 Glossaries are provided in Hingley, Pfister, Tansley, and Wittels. The first International Journal of Psycho-Analysis Supplement (n.d. c.1928, ed. E. Jones) was also a Glossary “for the use of translators of psychoanalytical works.” It should be remembered that the Ego, Super Ego, Id schema was not introduced by Freud until 1923 in The Ego and the Id, and thus does not figure in popular accounts prior to 1924.
Jones and published in 1924. Precisely what these revolutionary social implications are is nonetheless a matter of debate and, taking the popular literature over all, no consistent line is fully discernible. For example, the notion of “sublimation” can be co-opted by those seeking to preserve religion, such as Coster (1932, chap. 10), or C. E. Barbour (1931); even as others, like D. N. Barbour, see psychoanalysis as moving us beyond the infantile consolations of religious superstition. While the majority of the texts touch on these wider topics at some point, chapters explicitly on religion are included in around one-third of these works and education in about one-fourth, with several (e.g., Pfister 1922; Green 1923) being almost exclusively devoted to this.

As already indicated, this genre is not entirely homogeneous. There are clear variations in level of commitment to explicitly Freudian doctrines, although the emerging differences of approach within psychoanalysis are barely visible in the works of the early 1920s. Aside from the “party-line” Freudians (Coriat, Flugel, Herbert, Levine, Low, and Pfister) there are those (Tansley, Crichton-Miller, Rivers, and Firth) who present broad-ranging texts reviewing, in addition to Freud’s, the ideas of Jung, Adler, McDougall, Rivers and the “suggestion” school. Later, McDougall (1936), typically for him, argued that Freud had gradually backtracked over the years to a position approaching that which he himself proposed in 1908. Others, while offering what purport to be introductions to psychoanalysis, are to differing degrees critical of Freud (e.g., Bradby, Coster and Hingley). At the outer fringe we find works such as Joseph Ralph’s How to Psychoanalyse Yourself (1938) which is actually an attack on professional psychoanalysis as a waste of time, even though the terminology he uses is psychoanalytic in origin. Some writers (e.g. Rapp 1988) make an apparently clear distinction between psychoanalysts and “eclectics,” but the literature as a whole at this time is a continuum from doctrinaire support to outright hostility across every intervening position. Jung’s work received little independent coverage during the early 1920s, although it is frequently mentioned in the books presently under consideration, particularly the broader reviews, and Jung is usually given due credit for such concepts as “complex,” “archetype,” and “collective unconscious.” Bradby’s 1919 position was in fact fairly highly influenced by Jung, who receives considerable, though not uncritical, coverage in his own right. Alfred Adler actually fared somewhat better than Jung in the 1930s, having attracted several keen disciples.
who published a number of popular books and pamphlets and, in 1932, founded the Medical Society of Individual Psychology. Most writers carefully give him credit for the term "inferiority complex."

One further feature of these accounts should be noted: psychoanalysis is invariably presented as primarily a psychological rather than a biological theory. This is perhaps the most important respect in which, by the 1920s, even quite orthodox writers are drifting away from the theory's original character. While its groundedness in evolutionary thought is stressed, the extent to which Freud himself conceived of the psycho-sexual stages or the Oedipus complex, for example, as innately determined biological events is effectively occluded, as too is the Lamarckian nature of much of his theorizing. Neuroses are depicted as caused by environmental factors disrupting "normal" maturation, rather than in neurologically-based failures in maturation, genetic predisposition, or implicit in normal maturation itself. Which is not to deny that Freud's own conceptualization of the relationship between the physiological and psychological characters of neurosis is hardly straightforward or consistent. Had it been so the drift might not have happened. Again this psychological, rather than biological, reading of Freud enhanced the doctrine's popular appeal. These deviations (if they were such) from Freud's own position should not though be read simplistically as populist distortions of the "true" theory, occurring as they did as much at the "scientific expert" level as in the popularizing texts.

The number and range of books published on psychoanalysis, especially during the 1920s, clearly testifies to a high level of widespread popular interest. The publishers Allen and Unwin, Kegan Paul, Trench and Trübner, Methuen, Oxford University Press, and the University of London Press, supplemented by specialist medical houses such as Lewis, Brentano's, and the Hogarth Press itself, issued a constant stream of books either entirely or partly on psychoanalysis. Mainstream British Psychology during this period was in any case far from being entirely averse to Freud's doctrines, though McDougall's are frequently cited as offering a balancing, more sober, perspective. Besides Rivers and J. C. Flugel, who bridged both worlds more successfully than anyone else at University College, London, James Drever Senior (at Edinburgh), R. H. Thouless (at Manchester and Glasgow), William Brown (Oxford), T. H. Pear (Manchester) and Crichton-Miller (founder of the Tavistock Institute) were prominent among those who, if rarely

40 Adler's major followers were Philippe Mairet (Mairet, 1928, repr. 1930; Mairet et al 1938) F. G. Crookshank, Erwin Wexberg and W. Béran Wolfe, and his most eminent medical disciple was Sir Walter Langdon-Brown.
41 Allen and Unwin also issued a series "The 'New Psychology' Handbooks" primarily devoted to books by Couté and his followers promoting "Auto-suggestion," but including Firth (1925). Among their psychoanalytic publications were those by D. N. Barbour (1923), Low (1921) and Wittels (1924).
42 Kegan Paul, Trench and Trübner were the leading publishers of Psychology throughout most of the inter-war period, particularly in their International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method under C. K. Ogden's editorship. Of the texts looked at they published Coriat (1919), Green (1927), and Rickman (1936). Methuen was their main rival in Psychology publishing, issuing virtually all McDougall's works.
accepting psychoanalysis wholesale, at least discussed it with respect in their writings and found much of value within it. A. Wohlgemuth (1923), written when the author was already in his fifties, is the major academic exception during the 1920s. Wohlgemuth was an expatriate German introspectionist at London University (University College and Kings College). Who though were the readership for the works we have been considering here? Can we go beyond the obvious description of them as "educated middle-class"? The indications are that three major professional groups, in addition to psychologists and students, were especially interested: the medical profession, teachers and educationists, and the clergy. Among fiction writers and many dramatists, some knowledge of Freud's ideas was also de rigueur. For D. H. Lawrence, psychoanalysis served as a foil for his own ecstatic proclamation of a morality rooted in the life-force, the nourishing creative flow binding us one to another. The ego-controlled consciousness to which he saw Freudsians aspiring was, for him, yet one more sterile dead end. Caricaturing the public mood at the start of his 1923 essay *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* he jocularly observed:

> By this time psychoanalysis had become a public danger. The mob was on the alert. The Oedipus Complex was a household word, the incest motive a commonplace of tea-table chat. Amateur analyses became the vogue. ... A sinister look came into the eyes of the initiates — the famous, or infamous, Freud look. You could recognize it everywhere, wherever you went. (Lawrence [1923] 1961, 197)

Geraldine Coster's book ends with a list of over forty works of fiction "embodying new psychological principles," E. F. Benson, Brett Young, E. M. Delafield and Phyllis Bottome figuring prominently along with others now forgotten, I suspect, even by the English novel's most dedicated connoisseurs. A. D. Sedgwick, M. Sinclair, and F. M. Mayor — who were they? She also includes Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga*, but not James Joyce. Prior to the mid-1930s, British artists were, by contrast, somewhat less influenced than those in mainland Europe, where Surrealism was especially, if not exclusively, inspired by Freudian notions. We can thus readily identify what looks like a kind of textual hierarchy. At the top are Freud's latest pronouncements in German, promptly translated by James and/or Alix Strachey for the Hogarth Press, while the omnipresent Eden and

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43 These translations were rapidly acquiring official status (eventually becoming Standard Edition texts) and replacing the earlier translations by A. A. Brill. Others besides the Stracheys translated some Standard Edition texts — Katherine Jones for example translated *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), while Alan Tyson later translated *Leonardo da Vinci and a memory of his childhood* (1957). Nonetheless it was the Stracheys, with Jones' full backing, who set the standard tone of Freud in English from the early 1920s onwards, even though alternative translations remained available from other publishers (Allen & Unwin for instance continued issuing the Brill translation of *Interpretation of Dreams* at least up to 1948, as well as publishing the 1917 American translation of *Delusion and Dream* by Helen M. Downey in 1921). We consider the translation issue again later.
Cedar Paul are ever on hand to translate other relevant German works. Next are the major British analysts such as Ernest Jones and Flugel who are in positions from which they can process and transmit these to a somewhat broader academic and medical audience. From 1919 until his death in 1955 Flugel always taught a course on psychoanalysis on the University College, London undergraduate Psychology degree. Recently enlightened analysands, sympathetic educators, and fresh Psychology graduates with an eye for the action then provide a third tier, publishers being hungry for new texts which can explain psychoanalysis in terms congenial to a neglected “niche market” or demonstrate its relevance to specific issues. Consequently, whatever one's intellectual level or orientation, there was by the 1930s likely to be an exposition to suit one's taste. If you require a little catechism, Coriat (1919) will neatly fit the bill. If wanting a more philosophical approach, Levine (1923) might be recommended. For a literary, open-minded but enthusiastic account, Bradby (1919) would have done nicely, while for a broad picture acceptable to the devout, the Principal of Wychwood School, Oxford, Geraldine Coster's book was the obvious choice. Violet Firth (1925) was also safe and sensible. Low (1920), or, later, Flugel (1932) were reliable summaries of the hard Freudian position with no frills attached and for the curious but puzzled medical doctor, Bousfield (1920) could be safely prescribed. For the wary young Christian, works such T. W. Pym's *Psychology and the Christian Life* (1921) would provide at least an inkling of the nature of Freud's ideas even if they hardly advocated them. By 1930 Susan Isaacs was also propagating the Kleinian message in a form accessible to educated mothers. Having ascended these foothills the reader was ready, should he or she so wish, to tackle the master himself and his weightier acolytes, such as Hitschmann, whose solid 1917 exposition *Freud's Theory of the Neuroses* had considerable impact among psychotherapists; Wittels' substantial and highly informative *Sigmund Freud: His Personality, His Teaching and His School* (1924); Ernest Jones; or by the 1930s Melanie Klein. By the time the reader was immersed in such texts she or he was likely to be sufficiently hooked to blame any apparent inconsistencies, absurdities, and incoherence on their own intellectual shortcomings and as yet unconquered “resistances.”

It is important to stress that the picture I have drawn here contrasts with that of E. Kurzweil, who characterizes British psychoanalysis at this time as confined to culturally isolated dissident intellectuals and “the Jewish bourgeoisie,” observing that “this isolation did not encourage the spread of psychoanalysis to the public, and thus for a long time it was restricted to more or less intellectual circles.”

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44 I know nothing about this pair except that they were brother and sister and also translated works in a wide variety of other academic genres.

45 See University College, London Calenders. H. J. Eysenck (1990) describes the Department as being “very psychoanalytically inclined” during his time as a student there in the late 1930s, invoking also Cyril Burt’s founding membership of the British Psychoanalytical Society (Burt being the Professor of Psychology) and the Jungian inclinations S. J. F. Philpott, another staff member (pp. 49–50). This is possibly something of an overstatement colored by his subsequent loathings of both psychoanalysis and Cyril Burt.
Popularizing Psychoanalysis in Britain 1918–1940

(Kurzweil 1989, 31). The textual evidence presented here clearly belies any such conclusion. The misunderstanding arises, I suspect, from a conflation between actually undergoing psychoanalysis, which was perhaps restricted to such circles — though possibly less so in the case of child analysis after 1930, and incorporating psychoanalytic doctrines and concepts into one’s personal repertoire of ideas on the basis of one’s reading, which patently was not so restricted. Many medical, educational, and religious professionals — as well as non-psychoanalytically trained psychotherapists in places such as the Tavistock Clinic — were also clearly trying out psychoanalytic ideas and techniques in a pragmatic fashion.

Cultural Mediation

1. General

The British cultural climate between the two world wars has become somewhat too elusive to recapture. Though overworked, the phrase “in flux” is nonetheless the most apt. In the aftermath of the Great War there was an uninhibited passion for new ideas on all topics, as if the dominant pre-war world views could not be abandoned fast enough. This, as previously noted, was balanced by an equally intense hankering in some quarters for a recovery of lost ancient wisdoms. Yeats’ mystical hatred of modernism, Chesterton’s medievalism, and the quasi-Luddite economic theories of the Distributivists might be added to the examples given previously. Scientists such as James Jeans and Arthur Eddington eagerly propagated Einsteinian cosmology. Radical political ideologies could be espoused without embarrassment among the intelligentsia, while the musty world of Victorian spiritualism and psychic research was transformed by quasi-Einsteinian speculations about “the fourth dimension” and works like J. W. Dunne’s best-selling An Experiment with Time (1927). It was a phase characterized by both technological utopianism and a breakdown of the hard late-Victorian boundary between materialism and its opposites, in large part catalyzed by new developments in physics, and bolstered by the contemporary vogue for Henri Bergson. Utopianism was counterbalanced by deep dissatisfaction with the existing social order, although Britain’s postwar state was less ruinous than mainland Europe’s. The stress further intensified as the situation polarized after 1930. It is within this chaotic context — of the General Strike and the airship, revolution and radium, Marxism, Modern Art, motor cars, movies, Marconi and Mussolini — that psychoanalysis and

46 She cites none of the corpus of texts discussed here, not even Rivers, appearing to take more or less on trust the account in G. Kohon (1986). This is a pity because the promising opening sentence of the work is “Every country creates the psychoanalysis it needs, although it does so unconsciously” (Kurzweil 1989, 1).

kindred branches of the “New Psychology” sought to find their place. Psychologically the underlying anxiety was how, in such a confusing milieu, any sense at all was to be made of “human nature.” Traditional psychological (and Psychological) categories and concepts were simply insufficient to enable people to construe their self-experience in a world transformed almost beyond recognition. I am not of course arguing that every section of the community felt this anxiety with equal intensity, generational factors as well as social class and geographical location were obviously involved, but we can reasonably assume it to have been true for the majority of those, say, under forty, and especially those in the urban and suburban upper working and middle classes, as well as many of the older intelligentsia. The gender imbalance caused by the slaughter on the Western Front further exacerbated the psychological difficulties facing many women of marriageable age. On the other hand smugly urbane Punch readers appear, on the surface, to have dwelt as ever in a world of fox-hunting, golf, social gaffes, amusingly stupid parlor maids, and cheeky street urchins — although Rapp spotted a 1921 cartoon of an earnest courting couple captioned “Psychoanalysis: or, The New Game of Laying Bare One’s Inmost Soul” (Rapp 1988, 192). And yet, as we will see below, even Times leader writers occasionally, and to considerable effect, acknowledged the general unease.

The thesis I am offering here is, therefore, that British (though not only British) “psychology” was desperately seeking a modern psychological vocabulary appropriate to its situation, one in which the now glaring limitations and failures of “reason” could first be understood (“scientifically” one might add) and then rectified, one in which the underlying mechanisms of human sociality and harmony could be identified and harnessed in the face of radical social breakdown, and one in which the fading frontiers between sanity and madness, normality and deviance, could be re-established. To be Freudian about it, by 1920 the Reality Principle had indeed broken down — nobody was sure any more what reality was. The appeal of psychoanalytic ideas rested on more than its recent use by Rivers and others to treat “shell-shock.”

In considering the cultural mediation of psychoanalysis, we are not therefore dealing with a situation in which its ideas, eagerly and skillfully propagated though they were, are being forced upon a reluctant populace, conservatively resisting challenges to established folk wisdom. On the contrary, the challenge confronting psychoanalysis was whether or not it was up to the task of satisfying a profound

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48 The phrase “New Psychology” was a widely used umbrella term covering most branches of the rising experimental Psychology and new ideas regarding psychotherapy. As such it needs to be differentiated from its use in the US in the 1890s to refer more narrowly to empirical experimental Psychology. For a useful contemporary discussion of how postwar writers understood the expression, see Hingley (1921, chap. 1 “Introduction. The ‘New Psychology’”). By this time the Psychology of the founding phase was being widely viewed as over-intellectualized in its concerns, a bias which schools such as psychoanalysis were felt to be rectifying.

49 From Freud downwards the skillful propagation of psychoanalysis included of course the promotion of precisely this image, bolstering as it did a heroic version of events in which psychoanalysis triumphs over dogmatically entrenched conservatism.
and widespread craving for some new enlightenment. It is in this respect that the
reflexivity of the situation is most clear. The success of psychoanalysis will depend
on how far it can meet public expectations, how far its language and doctrines can
supply what this anxious populace is seeking. The popular texts discussed above
were, at heart, aimed, in their various ways and for various readerships, at
achieving precisely this. The trade in psychological ideas was a sellers’ market, but
adjustments had nonetheless proved necessary. Concessions had been made to
British middle-class sensitivities regarding sex and religion, one could to some
extent select from the extensive menu of Freudian ideas according to taste and
even mix in elements from other Psychological cuisines (such as auto-suggestion).
As it transpired, psychoanalytic and related language was widely adopted and had
by 1939 become substantially assimilated into EPL. For many it did provide
substantial help in meeting those needs that I just identified: it did explain the
fragility of reason and offer remedies, it did seem to shed light on the nature of
human social relations, and it did provide some kind of reformulation of the
sanity/madness, normality/deviance boundaries.

A number of factors facilitated the rapid cultural spread of this new language of
the mind. One, as alluded to earlier, was undoubtedly the nature of psychoanalytic
jargon. Some protested of course, but expressions such as “Oedipus Complex,”
“phallic symbol,” “the Censor” (war veterans knew all about that) and “sublima-
tion” had an irresistible intrinsic appeal while others — “repression,” “projection,”
defense mechanism,” “regression,” for instance — were readily grasped and, once
adopted, simply too useful to drop. “Libido,” “transference,” “ego,” “abreaction,”
“fixation,” and the like, while more technical, possessed the same appeal as any
other novel technical jargon, and were, in truth, not too difficult to comprehend at
a basic level. The use of such language immediately provided a fresh, advantageous,
angle on social intercourse. Instead of muttering a Shakespearean “Methinks you
doth protest too much” you could now come out with “I fear, my dear fellow, that
the intensity of your denial merely reflects the strength of your own repressed
desires,” while the harassed flapper might inform her beau that his yearnings for
her stemmed from his mother complex. Those on the receiving end of such
put-downs would have soon seen the wisdom of getting up to speed and knowing a
“Freudian slip” when they heard or made one. More seriously, mastery of psy-
choanalytic language opened up novel possibilities for diagnosing and analyzing
all kinds of personal and social issues. People were projecting their own feelings
onto others, regressing to infantile stages, defending their egos, symbolically
assaulting father-figures, suffering from fixations and complexes or blockages to
their libido, in the grip of unconscious wishes. A whole new way of navigating
one’s course through everyday life, of making sense of the behavior both of oneself
and others, was opened up. And it was, apparently, sanctioned by science itself. To
be able to speak Freudish marked one as modern in the same way as being able to
refer to electrons, endocrines or the “fourth dimension.” Freudish, as popularly
used, did of course indiscriminately incorporate Jungish, Adlerian, and Kleinish
(e.g. "projection," "inferiority complex," and "identification" respectively). While not the only Psychological schools in play, the range and systematic character of psychoanalysis and the schools seen as most closely associated with it, were, in this linguistic respect, unrivalled, while during the period we are dealing with its scientific (if not moral) character remained relatively uncontested, most scientific skeptics preferring to suspend final judgment rather than condemn it outright.

Interestingly, Rosenberg, writing of the situation in the United States claims that during the inter-war period “psychoanalytic terminology became a part of popular American culture before the theory itself” (Rosenberg 1980, 78). While, on her account, American religious authorities appear to have been more resistant to Freud’s doctrines than those in Britain, they too “were beginning to use the new psychoanalytic vocabulary, including words such as complexes, id, ego, and superego” (ibid., 77–78). One striking feature of Rosenberg’s story however is that the real impact of psychoanalysis on religion was apparently only felt after World War II, and for much the same reasons (to be discussed below) as underlay its post-World War I appeal in Britain — “Feeling the existence of a need which they were unable to fulfill, ministers and chaplains began to investigate the new psychoanalytic concepts” (ibid., 37). American cultural historians such as N. Schnog (1997) have located the appeal of psychoanalysis, and Psychology generally, in the context of a long-drawn out shift in the mentality of the white middle classes towards “interiority” in which the site and root of psychological problems was located ever more internally, requiring ever greater self-monitoring and control. This is related to the changing nature of American society over the late nineteenth century. The British situation cannot neatly be subsumed under this model. The sudden inward turn of the traditionally non-introspective British was a more rapid and intense response to the trauma of war and the ensuing social crisis, as Barry, Rivers, and many others testified at the time. Also, despite its early presence in the United States, the real heyday for professional psychoanalysis came from the late 1930s to the 1950s and was overwhelmingly the forte of immigrant European Jewish analysts. Inter-war British psychoanalysis, by contrast, was a much more home-grown affair.

50 As Bouwersse (1995) reminds us, the attitude towards psychoanalysis of members of the Vienna Circle such as Carnap was initially positive:

it is understandable that for proponents of the “scientific conception of the world” psychoanalysis might at first have seemed to be a rationalist and progressivist enterprise which would eventually, if not immediately, lead to a more scientific understanding of mental phenomena, and whose inspiration was flowing in precisely the direction indicated in Carnap’s *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt* (1928) and in the manifesto of the Vienna Circle. (Bouwersse 1995, 7)

Right from the outset those hostile to psychoanalysis did of course dismissively accuse it of being a farrago of unscientific nonsense, but serious and genuinely detailed critiques of its scientific character only began to be mounted in the 1930s.

51 Bakan (1966) notes that it was not until after World War II that membership of the American Psychoanalytic Association exceeded 200.

52 E. A. Kaplan (1990) for instance states baldly that it is “well known” that Psychoanalysis had a
As far as its literary dissemination was concerned British psychoanalysis fortunately, and fortuitously, had another advantage: the intimate involvement of the Bloomsbury Set via Leonard and Virginia Woolf’s Hogarth Press (Freud’s official British publishers, with a virtual monopoly on technical publications) and the fact that Freud’s primary British translators were Lytton Strachey’s younger brother James Strachey and James’ wife Alix. The connections were indeed intimate. Virginia Woolf’s sister-in-law Karin Stephen for example was among those closely involved with psychoanalysis (Stephen 1933). By the 1930s this linkage effectively ensured a familiarity with psychoanalysis throughout the British literary avant garde and the overlapping metropolitan radical political circles. Endless permutations of figures such as the Woolfs, Bertrand Russell, H. G. Wells, the Webbs, the Stracheys, Siegfried Sassoon, Arnold Bennett, Maynard Keynes, Lady Ottoline Morell, Cynthia Asquith, and Harold Laski (with D. H. Lawrence occasionally glaring at T. S. Eliot from behind a potted palm) seem, from accounts of British intellectual life during the 1920s, to have been ever co-present, along with a Sitwell or two, at the innumerable week-end house parties, salon gatherings, political meetings, private showings at art galleries and so on, around which intellectual social life revolved. This situation should be seen in conjunction with the perennially high visibility of the core group of British psychoanalysts from the mid-1920s onwards, ensured by the presence of Melanie Klein, who settled in Britain in 1926. Especially important was her 1932 book, *The Psycho-Analysis of Children*, and the numerous popular writings on child care and child development by Susan Isaacs (e.g. 1929, 1930, 1932, 1933), and in J. Rickman 1936. Ian Suttie’s *Origins*
of Love and Hate (1930) also enjoyed considerable success, particularly his notion of the “taboo on tenderness.” Meanwhile Ernest Jones now dominated the British scene as Freud’s surrogate, much as Freud himself dominated the movement in Europe.

The 1930s saw psychoanalysts responding to political developments with the works on war by E. Glover (1933) and Durbin and Bowlby (1939), while at the same time the Marxists began seriously locking horns with the Freudians (e.g. Osborn 1937; Bartlett 1938). It is not the present task to describe the internal politics of British psychoanalysis during this period, culminating in the feud between Anna Freud and Melanie Klein. What should be stressed is that throughout the period enough was going on in the way of controversy and productivity in the British psychoanalytic world to ensure its permanent presence in the cultural limelight. For the press, magazines, and popular literary and scientific journals there was always enough action by way of new books, ideas, and gossip to attract attention, while poets, novelists, and dramatists continually co-opted Freudian doctrines for their own (not always sympathetic) purposes and the Freud versus Jung clash hovered afar as a distant clash of titans. That between Anna Freud and Melanie Klein as yet lay ahead. And in 1938 Freud’s own arrival in exile, finally set the seal on the cultural prominence of his theory. Even so, while the movement’s expansionist momentum continued into the 1930s the publication of new popularizing texts declined. Perhaps the market was by then saturated in any case, but this was probably not the whole story.

During the early 1920s, as we have seen, psychoanalysis appears to have been making some serious inroads into mainstream Psychological and medical psychiatric thought, but this trend had, by the mid-1930s, largely petered out. The primary reason for this was that British psychoanalysis had come firmly under the control of Ernest Jones and the British Psycho-Analytical Society — a development aided in part by the British Medical Association Psycho-Analysis Committee’s report in 1929, discussed below. As a result it became increasingly insular and insistent on policing doctrinal developments, excluding outsiders from constructive participation. To some degree, by putting its energies into creating an autonomous profession, British psychoanalysis failed to capitalize on the flying start it had enjoyed in the decade immediately following World War I. While its presence and visibility grew stronger, it now assumed the appearance of a quite distinct project, rather than one among several contributors to a broader “New Psychology.” This was though part of the price it had to pay in order to be tolerated by the medical establishment — even if Jones himself had his own reasons for being keen to pay it. As we will see, the popular press had, during the early 1920s, been able to raise a virtual moral panic about the dangers of quacks and charlatans posing as psychoanalysts. Countering this required a more focused, and officially accepted,
medical definition of its aims, tighter control over entitlement to the use of the label “psychoanalyst,” and visible differentiation from a suddenly growing horde of self-proclaimed psychotherapists who had apparently found it profitable to sail under the Freudian banner. Popularizing texts now emanated almost exclusively from within official psychoanalytic circles (e.g. Flugel 1932), and were often aimed specifically at the child-rearing, child-guidance, market (e.g. the works by Isaacs, Klein, and Rickman cited earlier). On the other hand the kind of revolutionary utopian claims for psychoanalysis common in the early 1920s are now but rarely heard.

2. The Cinema

While there are some interesting, even intriguing, parallels between the Freudian dream and the film, and while a number of cinema historians have discussed both the cinematic portrayal of psychoanalysts and the screen-presence of psychoanalytic themes, the role of the cinema in mediating psychoanalytic ideas in Britain during the inter-war period is difficult to gauge. In any case popular film was overwhelmingly Hollywood in origin throughout these years. The issue of the parallels between the Freudian dream and the film is the most relevant to the present paper, but to consider it in full would take us too far afield.

Stating my position briefly, generally speaking I would want to argue that while Freud rendered dreams amenable to “scientific” analysis, the cinema made them publicly visible. Both were expressions, at different cultural levels, of the same underlying collective psychological dynamic, a dynamic by which the “machinery” of dreams was being raised to consciousness. In other words, both psychoanalytic dream theory and the film are surface manifestations or expressions of something more psychologically fundamental. What is important here is that in identifying what this “something” was we are drawn further into the issue of the contemporary contextual appeal of psychoanalysis.

In attempting to characterize this we are almost necessarily bound to do so (if not exclusively) in the psychoanalytic terminology which developed for the very purpose of rendering it accessible to public construal in the first place. One way of putting it would thus be to say that by the end of the Victorian era a “return of the repressed” was occurring. Evolutionary theory had already raised the specter of the savage “beast within” and rendered the over-rational white male ego increasingly insecure in the face of what was widely perceived as a rising tide of “degeneration.” At this stage, while conscious that something was profoundly amiss, the conceptual framework within which psychologists and non-Marxist social theorists attempted to understand the “beast” was the evolutionary “social Darwinist” one. A plague of primitive atavisms and degeneration was abroad among the “masses.” In the first decade of the twentieth century the return to consciousness of this repressed, “libidinal,” “instinctual” side of human nature was erupting across...
Europe on many fronts — from music and painting to the radical feminism of the Suffragettes, the popularity of Nietzsche, Bergson’s intuitionism, occultism, Anarchism and mystical Nordicism, followed by the synchronous, totemic, hubris of the sinking of the Titanic and then the Great War itself as a final culmination. The roles of psychoanalysis and film in this situation may be said to be, in the case of psychoanalysis, to provide a post-social Darwinist language in which to describe and analyze this unconsciously-rooted turmoil, to re-couch the nature of the “beast,” and in the case of film, to render it publicly visible (both as fantasy and newsreel or documentary).58 But, despite the pre-war challenges to old certainties mounted by artists, writers and musicians mostly outside Britain, it required the total disillusionment and unmanageable psychological confusion created by World War I to supply the conditions in which the need for these challenges could be culturally acknowledged, and the previous evolutionary framework (though not belief in evolution itself) discredited.

If the cinema’s role in promoting psychoanalysis in Britain is difficult to document in concrete terms, it is surely then reasonable to suggest a significant congruence between the newly fascinating mediums of the privately witnessed Freudian dream and the publicly witnessed screen dramas of the “Dream Palace” — as the cinema was popularly known.

3. Theater

The theater was involved too, although more obviously in the United States than in Britain. W. D. Sievers’ *Freud on Broadway* (1955) identifies a 1912 play *The Fatted Calf* by Arthur Hopkins as the first to portray a psychoanalytic concept of psychotherapy, although the text of this appears to be lost, while a 1914 dramatization of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* by Alice Gerstenberg consciously exploited their potential as depictions of the unconscious. Thereafter examples come thick and fast, first in what Sievers calls “wish fulfillment” plays and then, more maturely, in the work of Eugene O’Neill and Theodore Dreiser, followed by William Saroyan, Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams, and Arthur Miller. Sievers’ book systematically pursues the presence of Freudian themes on the American stage almost season by season into the early 1950s, citing several hundred plays in the process. While there is often some ambiguity as to how far these themes are being consciously explored from a psychoanalytically influenced perspective and how far Sievers is reading Freudian concerns into them, the cumulative evidence is impressive — not only in relation to the presence

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58 One might also note that both the Freudian dream and the film rise into cultural consciousness as it were ‘from the depths’ only fully emerging into the light after the Great War. Previously dreams had generally been considered a rather marginal phenomenon of little significance, while films began as popular entertainment in fairground side-shows. Pornography was in fact one of the earliest cinematic genres — so the sexual theme is shared too (Di Lauro & Babkin, 1976).
of psychoanalytic awareness *per se*, but regarding how extensively playwrights were tracking the ongoing social psychological life of American society itself (including, to some extent, its African-American component) from a psychoanalytically informed angle. D. Rapp refers to a quasi-Freudian American play *Suppressed Desires* having 27 performances in London in 1921 (Rapp 1988, 196), but, aside, arguably, from James Barrie's *Peter Pan* (and then unconsciously on the author's part) it would be harder to read such concerns into most inter-war British and Irish drama. George Bernard Shaw would never have let another guru of human nature in on his acts,⁵⁹ and while Sean O’Casey’s great plays might be amenable to Freudian analysis they were more rooted in a personal, intensely felt, tragic vision fused with political anger rather than in any psychoanalytic interests O’Casey may have had. Aside perhaps from Noel Coward, if the theater was a significant channel for promoting psychoanalytic ideas it is more likely to have been via British productions of American plays than of home-authored ones.

4. Religion

There was, though, another highly important, if less expected, route by which psychoanalytic ideas were reaching those echelons of the respectable British middle classes uninterested in, and even contemptuous of, literary and artistic fashion and disinclined towards intellectual reading — religion.⁶⁰ The complex relationships between Psychology and religion remain to be unraveled, but North American Psychology prior to World War I was certainly deeply infused with a need to reconcile the two camps and the majority of its American founders such as William James, G. S. Hall, G. T. Ladd, and J. M. Baldwin were either practicing Christians or sympathetic towards it (see also Richards 1995). Hall had actually founded a journal, *The American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education* in 1904.⁶¹ An early connection with psychopathology was the Emmanuel Movement, based in Boston, with which the psychoanalyst Isador Coriat was initially associated and which played a major role in promoting the idea of psychotherapy

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⁵⁹ Paul Whittle, in a personal communication, has drawn my attention to the following irresistible passage from one of Shaw’s Prefaces:

As I write there is a craze for what is called psycho-analysis, or the cure of diseases by explaining to the patient what is the matter with him; an excellent plan if you happen to know what is the matter with him, especially when the explanation is that there is nothing the matter with him. Thus a bee, desperately trying to reach a flower bed through a window pane, concludes that he is the victim of evil spirits or that he is mad, his end being exhaustion, despair, and death. Yet, if he only knew, there is nothing wrong with him: all he has to do is go out as he came in, through open window or door.

As often happens with Shaw it is a moot point whether we should read this as dismissive or supportive, but it certainly suggests an underlying skepticism regarding the grandiosity of the theory’s claims.

⁶⁰ For fuller coverage of the general relationship between Psychology and the church during the inter-war period, see Richards forthcoming b.

⁶¹ This survived until 1915, re-titled *Journal of Religious Psychology* in 1912.
in the United States. By 1920 however texts had begun appearing which adopted a more hostile stance. One by Theodore Schroeder, which appeared in Hall’s journal in 1912, argued for the sexual origins of religion from a psychoanalytic viewpoint (Schroeder 1912). Campbell Cohen (1919) picked up the same theme in his Religion and Sex, described by Thouless as “little more than an enumeration of all the connections the author could find between religion and the sex-instinct” (Thouless 1924, 129). More distressing however were such closely argued technical monographs as Ernest Jones’ “The Madonna’s Conception through the Ear” (1914) and “A Psycho-analytic Study of the Holy Ghost” (1922) in which he reached the conclusion that the myth of the Madonna’s conception through the ear by the Holy Ghost is rooted in a grotesque infantile theory of reproduction involving the transfer of the fathers’ intestinal gases to the mother via the anus (Jones 1923). It was in any case being increasingly understood that according to psychoanalytic theory all religion was based on infantile wishes such as desire to return to the womb and fear of the almighty father. And yet, despite the strong, reductionist, anti-religious arguments being proposed by many psychoanalysts, in Britain a head-on clash was largely avoided.

The mainstream Christian authorities were as sensitive as anyone else to the postwar psychological climate, while those returning from duty as padres on the Western Front were in fullest sympathy with the shell-shock work of psychologists such as Rivers and C. S. Myers. As fellow professionals in the task of “curing souls” Christian ministers felt acutely the need to understand the secular psychotherapeutic doctrines of the New Psychology. As Hearnshaw notes, there was “much doubt, hesitation and ambivalence in the first tentative theological flirtations with the new psychology” (Hearnshaw 1964, 294), but as early as 1920 the Anglican Bishop’s Lambeth Conference had recommended that the training of ordinands should include Psychology and “some acquaintance with methods and principles of healing” (cited in ibid.). One might observe in passing that the religious relevance of psychoanalysis in this role was not entirely coincidental in the light of D. Bakan’s exploration of the covert bearing of the Jewish mystical tradition on Freud’s thought (Bakan 1958), and that as an image of the topography of the psyche the Super Ego-Ego-Id triad was, when it was introduced, also readily glossed in orthodox Christian terms. In 1936 the Methodist Leslie Weatherhead created the City Temple Psychological Clinic in London. Weatherhead believed that the roles of minister and psychotherapist should resemble those between

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62 The fullest statement of the position adopted by this school was E. Worcester, S. McComb, and I. H. Coriat (1908) Religion and Medicine: the Moral Control of Nervous Disorders reissued in 1920 as The Subconscious Mind: Its nature and value for the cure of nervous disorders by means of suggestion and autosuggestion. Coriat’s association with the Emmanuel Movement presumably predated his adoption of Psychoanalysis. For fuller coverage of this and early American psychotherapy generally, see Caplan 1998 a and b.

63 Among his other extensive writings on the topic were two 1929 papers: “Guilt and inferiority feeling in the creation of religious experience” and “The Psychoanalytic approach to religious experience” (1929 a and b). A full bibliography of his writings is provided in Sankey-Jones 1934.
general practitioner and specialist in physical medicine (see Weatherhead 1934). The possibilities for compromise were enhanced by the fact that some psychologists were also committed Christians, notably R. H. Thouless, whose *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion* appeared in 1923 (going into a second edition in 1924), William Brown, and Crichton-Miller. The most popularly successful work from the Psychological direction was J. A. Hadfield’s *Psychology and Morals* of 1923, frequently cited and in print until the 1960s. A substantial number of religious works on the relationship between Christianity and Psychology, and more specifically “healing” and psychotherapy, appeared therefore during the inter-war years. Among the most important religious authors were F. R. Barry, L. W. Grensted, M. Gregory, E. S. Waterhouse, L. D. Weatherhead, and W. J. Wray, with other more generally radical figures such as Dean Inge and William Temple contributing to the intellectual mood. Anthony Howard characterized the inter-war situation of the church as an essentially conservative one, largely failing to respond to radical political pressures, and a “tendency to reduce political issues to problems of personal morality” (Howard 1960, 153). It is however evident that the church was nonetheless compelled to come to terms with the radical “New Psychology” if it was to retain credibility as an authority on this personal morality.

The numerous texts generated by both parties in this quest for a rapprochement between psychotherapy and religion almost always involve discussion of psychoanalytic ideas, indeed such discussion was virtually unavoidable. In Thouless (1924) this comes in chapters on “The Unconscious” and “The Sex-Instinct and Religion,” wherein he goes so far as to say of psychoanalysis: “On the whole, I am inclined to judge that it is very easily the most important contribution to the science of psychology that has ever been made by one man” (Thouless 1924, 107). Crichton-Miller’s *The New Psychology and the Preacher* of the same year, attempting to respond to the challenge of the New Psychology, addresses, among other things, “The Unconscious Motive and its Place in Life,” “Authority and the Mother-Complex: the “Peter Pan” Motif,” and “The Sex Motive and the Sex Analogy.” Barry (1923) cites Freud (along with Baudouin) more often than anyone except

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64 Relevant texts by these authors include the following: Barry 1923; Grensted (1930, 1933, 1939); Gregory 1939; Waterhouse 1913, 1927, 1930, 1939; Weatherhead 1929, 1934; and Wray n.d. Hardman 1925 was also significant as a representative collection of the religious establishment’s views on the church’s relationship to Psychology. See Vande Kamp 1984 for full bibliographic coverage of this genre.

65 An anonymous *Guardian* review of this dated 8 August 1924 was slipped into my copy and confirms the general picture I have been trying paint, referring to increased postwar lay interest in Psychology, the shocking character of psychoanalytic doctrines and the pressure on the Church to respond. He observes:

The educated layman is immensely interested in psycho-analysis. He is beginning to realise that his whole view of life and religion needs fresh orientation if it is to square with this fresh knowledge; and he wants guidance. For this reason, if for no other, we dare to express a hope that Dr. Crichton-Miller’s book will be read by every minister of every Church. (p. 737)

The *Guardian* in question is not to be confused with *The Manchester Guardian*, being an influential London broadsheet basically concerned with promulgating and publicising the High Church view of current affairs.
Jesus Christ. J. C. Flower (1927) focuses more on Jung than Freud in his chapter “Psychopathology and Religion,” but the entire text is colored by the author’s intellectual indebtedness to Rivers, while Part II (of two) of his 1928 *Psychology Simplified* is devoted to the “Psychology of Unconscious Processes,” with Freud receiving a separate chapter. Marcus Gregory, who was a protegé of William Brown and Grensted and had worked at Weatherhead’s City Temple Clinic cites Freud more than anyone else and gives a glossary containing numerous psychoanalytic terms (Gregory 1939). In the prolific Leslie Weatherhead’s *Psychology and Life* (1934) the psychoanalytic theme is carried in chapters on “The importance of the unconscious,” “Repression and self-control,” “The inferiority complex” and “The mind of a child.” W. J. Wray’s *The New Psychology and the Gospel* devotes three (of nineteen) chapters to critical but not dismissive discussion of psychoanalysis. William Brown, who figures frequently as a foreword and preface writer as well as recipient of warm acknowledgements, rarely tackles religion explicitly in his major writings on psychotherapy, which include much critical discussion of Psychoanalysis. However, he does so in his early *Science and Personality* (1929). He was a deeply religious man, supportive of Christian writers in their efforts at integrating Psychological insights into their thinking and practice. My own copy of his *Psychological Methods of Healing* (1938) contains an inscription by him to a previous owner which includes the lines “Have faith in God. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

One could continue multiplying such instances ad nauseam. The simple point however is that Christian psychotherapists and psychologists (Thouless, Hadfield, Brown, Crichton-Miller) and Psychologically-concerned Christians alike incorporate extensive critical, but rarely entirely condemnatory, discussion of psychoanalytic ideas in their texts alongside those of the “Suggestion” school, Janet, McDougall and others. The usual tactic is the simple one of accusing Freud of placing too much emphasis on “the sex-instinct” (at the expense, say, of Trotter’s “herd instinct,” or those identified by McDougall), and misunderstanding, or having a blind spot, regarding the nature of authentic religion. With these qualifications, the unconscious, repression, complexes, unconscious motives, Super Egos, association methods of dream interpretation and, especially, sublimation, can all be accepted. From the religious point of view, this receptiveness to the “New Psychology” was however to carry a serious penalty. To repeat what I have said elsewhere:

66 The work had its origins as a Ph.D. thesis begun under Rivers’ supervision and continuing under Bartlett and others. Flower is billed on the title-page as “Upton Lecturer in Psychology of Religion, Manchester College, Oxford”.

67 In its 16th edition by 1947.

68 Chapters 9–11, titled, respectively, “The Unconscious Mind and the Gospel,” “Psychoanalysis and the Gospel” and “Repression and Sublimation in the Gospel”.

69 An exception is Rev. J. C. M. Conn (1939) *The Menace of the New Psychology* which is quite vituperative. (Conn was however a trained psychologist and had studied under Thouless.)
It soon ceases to be apparent quite what remains as an authentic “spiritual” core and, even less, what is specifically Christian about this, once you start accepting (as Psycho-Christians routinely did) that some conversions are but expressions of adolescent Sturm und Drang, that some mystics probably suffered from sexual neuroses, that “suggestion” and “autosuggestion” might play a part in prayer and religious healing, that much of what happens in religious ritual and revivalism is explicable in terms of crowd psychology and that the religious beliefs of the uneducated and unsophisticated often contain a large regressive infantile element. (Richards forthcoming b)

This inter-war “Psycho-Christianity,” as I have dubbed it, was not the prerogative of any one denomination: Anglicans, Methodists, Congregationalists, and to a more limited extent Catholics all participated. One possible factor in play, as yet unmentioned, is that the mainstream churches may well have seen the new psychotherapies as offering a way to identify pathological fanaticism and enthusiasm, and the post-World War I resurgence in Spiritualism was certainly of very wide concern. These were mostly educated, worldly-wise, British males keen to retain a respected presence within intellectual and scientific culture. Even if religion itself was not a pathology, they were not averse to using psychoanalytic and related concepts to pathologize its embarrassing excesses.70 The readership for popular “Psycho-Christianity” was considerable. Weatherhead’s appeal was particularly strong, Psychology in the Service of the Soul, for example, appeared in July 1929 and was in a 4th edition by June the following year. Thouless’s Introduction to the Psychology of Religion seems to have remained in print throughout the inter-war period.71 Demand for even such a heavy-weight text as Psychology and God, by L. W. Grensted, Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion at Oxford, was such that a cheap edition was issued six years after first publication. Who was buying these books? While any answer must be to some extent speculative we can reasonably surmise that, as far as those emanating from the religious camp are concerned, the readership was almost entirely Christian. After all it is surely true that non-believers rarely buy religious books. If this is so it means that psychoanalytic ideas were reaching a section of the community rather different from those who would have been reading the doctrine’s own popular exponents discussed earlier. My best guess is that ministers, lay preachers, Christian students, Christians entering or working in the lower echelons of the “caring” professions, and similar groups constituted the best part of this audience. I imagine they would include such figures as a state school teacher responsible for teaching “Divinity” to adolescents, an active provincial Methodist involved in some aspect of pastoral care, and the educated wife of a vaguely radical young vicar freshly appointed to his first urban parish. They were also often the kind of books that might be given to

70 In his 1962 Wounded Spirits, Leslie Weatherhead nonetheless accepts, if reluctantly, the reality of demonic possession.

71 There were reprints in 1928 and 1936. A final 3rd edition actually appeared in 1961.
an incipiently bolshie adolescent intellectual rebelling against the faith. In terms of content these texts present psychoanalysis-plus-criticism as a single package, both promoting knowledge of the theory and offering inoculation against those aspects that the devout might find disturbing or offensive.

As discussed earlier, Rosenberg (1980) paints a subtly different picture of the American situation. American religious journals such as Religious Education and the Catholic School Journal occasionally published papers on psychoanalysis from the late 1920s onwards, and these ranged from being quite favorable to downright hostile. On Rosenberg's account there was, though, no "Psycho-Christian" literature comparable in character or extent to that which appeared in Britain, although the Psychology of Religion continued to attract attention — albeit becoming increasingly marginalized within the discipline by the 1930s. Also as previously noted, the main wave of religious engagement with Freudian psychoanalysis in the United States apparently occurs in the late 1940s and 1950s, when in Britain their honeymoon was clearly already over, indeed the British Psycho-Christians were more often in bed with the Jungians by the 1950s (see e.g. White 1952). This last trend was a direct response to the way in which Jung's thought developed from the early 1930s, with its increasing stress on the ultimately religious nature of humanity's profoundest contemporary difficulties.

5. The Press

A final route by which the public was taught about psychoanalysis was via the popular press and magazines. D. N. Barbour was already conscious of this, referring to "non-committal (but gently warning) little articles in the Daily Mail" (Barbour 1923, 14). D. Rapp has provided a fairly detailed summary of the findings of a comprehensive survey of coverage of psychoanalysis in 43 British general interest and literary magazines 1920–1925, which he finds peaked in 1921. He identified 400 relevant items of one sort or another in 27 of these. We may start with a brief reprise of Rapp's findings. Focusing on the 1920–1925 period his reading thoroughly confirms the existence of a "craze" for psychoanalysis which attracted much popular attention and debate. Statements similar to those cited earlier by Bradby, Rivers, Tansley and even D. H. Lawrence regarding the new postwar fascination with Psychology and the psychoanalysis "craze" itself are commonplace. The nature of this attention is predominantly, but not overwhelmingly, critical, particularly regarding Freud's own emphasis on the primacy of the sexual instinct. As one might expect it was this which aroused the most anxiety over the theory's potentially corrupting threats to morality and decency.

Prominent among these were Discovery, Saturday Review, Times Literary Supplement, Pearson's, Strand, Outlook, New Age, and London Magazine.

Freud's books, claimed the Saturday Review, were "discussed over the soup with the latest play or novel" (4th Sept. 1920, cited in Rapp 1988, 191).
This is however often mixed with acceptance of many other psychoanalytic concepts (such as "repression" and the "unconscious"), and more favorable attitudes to those Rapp calls the "eclectics" (such as Rivers, Tansley and Crichton-Miller) who display less emphasis on sex. The authorship of the material he is concerned with — primarily short articles and book reviews in literary and popular magazines — is also interesting. "The majority of the writers were authors and journalists followed by seventeen with medical degrees, thirteen educators [and] two clergymen" (Rapp 1988, 192). Only four however were actually members of the British Psycho-Analytical Society, and two more Associates.74 Those taking up the cudgels on behalf of the doctrine included H. G. Wells and Shaw Desmond, while G. K. Chesterton and the popular science writer J. W. N. Sullivan (in the Times Literary Supplement) were among its fiercest assailants. Rapp considers the peak of coverage in these magazines to have clearly passed by 1925, but this surely reflects less a decline in interest than the increasingly secure, and decreasingly controversial, status of psychoanalytic ideas thereafter.

A second, more extensive, study by Sandra Ellesley (1995) takes issue with the uncritical use by Rapp and others of a simple "pro" versus "anti" framework in analyzing popular responses to psychoanalysis. Ellesley's time-frame differs from that of the present paper in starting with the late nineteenth century and ending in 1925. Her coverage also includes some internal history of psychoanalysis during this period and discussion of the shell-shock episode. Of greatest value to us however are (a.) her location of the issue within four on-going cultural debates: feminism, modernity, secularization and sexual reform (to which we will return in the Conclusion) and (b.) her in-depth examination of the coverage of psychoanalysis in the popular press, especially the Daily Graphic and The Times.

First, integrating Ellesley's reading with my own, we will consider The Times' coverage during the 1920s as providing an interesting glimpse of how Freudian theory and practice were viewed by the establishment.75 The Times Educational Supplement also carried articles and reprinted lectures on the topic by people such as Barbara Low and William Brown from at least as early as 1919 (despite Sullivan's antagonism in the Times Literary Supplement) but it is the way in which it was treated in The Times itself which sheds more light on attitudes towards Freud's ideas in the higher social circles. Two episodes which generated exchanges of correspondence and, in each case, an editorial pronouncement, occurred in 1922 and December 1925 through January 1926. The first began with what turned out to be a seriously misleading report (9 September 1922) of a discussion which had taken place at the annual British Association for the Advancement of Science Meeting involving six members of the Educational and Psychological sections...

74 The four members were Edward Glover, Barbara Low, Adrian Stephen and Alix Strachey; the Associates were W. Brend and Tansley (Rapp 1988, 192).

75 This section was substantially complete before the author read Ellesley's thesis, which also covers the first episode in more detail. A few modifications have been made in the light of her discussion.
(including T. H. Pear, Kimmins and Crichton-Miller). These had, allegedly, proposed that psychoanalysis be introduced into schools and all teachers given psychoanalytic training. A fortnight later (23 September 1922) a letter appeared from J. Malet Lambert, Archdeacon of East Riding, fulminating against this idea in the strongest terms. Psychoanalysis was “a novel cult lacking confirmation by scientific investigation,” and teachers would be “required to saturate their minds with pornographic detail set forth with a particularity greater than that required for a medical student.” An editorial in the same issue endorses Lambert’s concern. Observing that an International Conference on Psychoanalysis will be starting in Berlin “on Monday” (25 September 1922) it accepts the reported version of events at the meeting and notes the “very rapid spread of the new doctrine” whose “converts” were “numbered today in thousands.” “It is no exaggeration to say that no other system of psychology has ever enjoyed so swift and wide a popularity.” The reason for this they surmise is that it “dethrones the will,” reflecting “what might be called a will-weariness, a tendency to turn away from order to disorder in search of an anodyne for exhausted nerves. Such abdication of the free spirit of man cannot but bring serious consequences in its train.”

Two days later Cyril Burt, in his capacity as secretary to the British Association Psychological Section, coolly straightened the record. No such proposals had been made. All present had emphatically rejected the idea of introducing psychoanalysis into schools and none of the participants were strict Freudians anyway. As Ellesley observes, this was somewhat disingenuous as Burt himself was at the time a leading member of the British Psycho-Analytical Society. On 27 September 1922 a further letter appeared from R. Fielding-Oud, M.D., M.R.C.P. commenting that at the previous year’s Headmasters’ Conference the idea had been prevalent that psychoanalysis was “a safe and easy way of probing into the souls of their pupils, and that the sooner its methods were introduced into all schools the better.” While accepting that Freud might be right on many things, Fielding-Oud (who also refers to Jung, spelling his name “Yung”) strongly warns of the danger of its use in schools by the untrained.

The correspondence initiated by an editorial of 31 December 1925, arising from the suicide of a young barrister who had been having psychoanalysis and complained of “the sense of degradation it had imposed on him,” was both more extended and, potentially, more serious. Again The Times invoked a “will” school of thought against “psycho-analysis.” The current application of psychoanalysis was “experimental.” “It is not surprising that occasionally men and women are found who cannot endure the idea that their most primitive instincts are in fact the dominant notes of their characters.” The writer then suggests that an inquiry by “competent persons” is “long overdue” and suggests that “the present position, which is giving rise to a great deal of anxiety is one of the consequences of the neglect of psychology by the medical schools of this country.”

Over the three weeks from 4 to 25 January 1926, nine letters were published relating to this. D. O. Malcolm kicked off by arguing that while psychoanalysis
could be "a terribly dangerous weapon in incompetent or unskillful hands," it would be impossible to find persons competent to conduct such an inquiry unless they were themselves "students or professors of psycho-analysis." The next day B. Donkin M.D. (long a leading medical opponent of psychoanalysis) entered the lists, urging that indeed a competent inquiry was overdue and expressing the belief that psychoanalysis was "an unsubstantiated fiction." "It is essential to show the unsoundness of its fundamental assumptions." The following sentence is also worth noting: "At present in the public mouth the word 'psychological' is practically synonymous with 'psycho-analytical'; and, through the spread of romances and plays dealing with this subject, 'psycho-analysis' is very widely known as the New Psychology'." (One would dearly like to know which "romances and plays" he has in mind here.) The educational psychologist Charles Fox adds his support for an inquiry (7 January) arguing that other therapies are more successful than psychoanalysis and that its apparent successes owe nothing to the theory as such. Miss W. H. Moberly then leaps to its defense, praising psychoanalysis from personal experience. Two further hostile letters (P. McBride, 11 January; Sir R. Armstrong-Jones, 15 January) appear before Ernest Jones and Douglas Bryan (as President and Secretary respectively of the British Psycho-Analytical Association) respond with aloof brevity that their previous silence was in line with General Medical Council rules that such medical controversies should not be conducted in the popular press, and that while attacks could be mounted, to respond would be to "advertise" their methods. "Analyst-baiting is ... both a popular and a relatively safe sport — harming no one but the unfortunate victims of severe neuroses." This nearly closes the matter as far as The Times coverage is concerned. The last word appears to have been that of Courtauld Thomson the following day, opportunistically offering — as its Chairman — the services of the National Council for Mental Hygiene. The Council would "satisfy all the requirements of the tribunal" proposed by B. Donkin. (A letter from Donkin on the 25th was a brief clarification of the nature of the inquiry he had proposed and added nothing to the debate.)

Behind the scenes The Times' campaign had not been in vain. Two months later the British Medical Association (BMA) established a Psycho-Analysis Committee, to address precisely the concerns raised in this correspondence, which broadly coincided with those being widely expressed within the medical profession itself, including medically qualified analysts fearful of non-medical practitioners bringing psychoanalysis into disrepute (Ellesley 1995, 128). The BMA Central Ethical Committee had in fact already become restive over psychoanalysis during 1925, and the "young barrister" case finally shifted BMA policy away from its erstwhile wary non-involvement (ibid., 131). After initial exclusion Ernest Jones and H. Godwin Baynes (for the Jungians) were appointed to the Psycho-Analysis Committee which also included, among others, William Brown and J. R. Rees, Deputy Director of the Tavistock Clinic (ibid., 133). A running battle between Dr. L. A.

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76 See pp. 128–138 for her full discussion of the activities of the Psycho-Analysis Committee.
Parry (of the Central Ethical Committee) and Jones ensued. It took until June 1929 for the final Report to be issued (Report of the Psycho-Analysis Committee 1929). Without evaluating the doctrine’s merits this hardened up the definition of “legitimate” psychoanalysis and confirmed the right of proper psychoanalysts (i.e. strict adherents of Freud’s technique) to practice. As Ellesley says: “The Committee in effect had been persuaded by Jones to sanction the position for which he had been fighting for years” (Ellesley 1995, 137). As discussed earlier, this episode was an important factor in enabling psychoanalysts to close ranks, under Jones’ direction, in the following decade. That *The Times* played a role in bringing this about is not without irony.

Occasional news stories of other kinds reinforce the image of an establishment anxious about psychoanalysis but unsure of its ground. As is clear from these two editorials, *The Times*’ leader writers had an insecure grasp of the nature of the theory, while psychoanalysis had some influential supporters in the medical profession as well as opponents. A court report on 18 March 1925 under the headline “Psycho-Analyst in Court. American’s Deportation Asked” was clearly gauged to raise doubts. Homer Tyrell Lane (aged 49) had appeared in Bow Street Magistrate’s Court charged with failing to report a change of address to the police. The prosecutor argued for his deportation as an undesirable alien, “a dangerous charlatan and adventurer.” Reading between the lines one suspects the change of address charge of being a technical pretext for expelling him. Lane was described as “a lecturer on the education of children and the philosophy of individualism,” but after giving some private lectures on psychoanalysis he had “of late acted as a consultant” charging two guineas (£2.10) per hour. (At this time Freud himself was only charging half as much!) Many of his clients were “of very high social position indeed.” He had allegedly been earning £2,500 a year (somewhere around £250,000 in current terms), and owed £958 in income tax. The defense offered numerous letters from his clients, plus one from “a dignitary of the Church” — actually the Bishop of Liverpool (see Ellesley 1995, 130). Lane was remanded for a week while the Magistrate perused these. There are clearly numerous tensions bubbling just under the surface of this story — obviously, for one influential party, Lane was a smooth confidence trickster and they had finally managed to get him in court on a pretty minor misdemeanor (he had hardly gone into hiding or on the run or tried to keep his new address a secret). Equally significant however are those influential supporters of “very high social position indeed.” No wonder the Magistrate is in two minds about it all. Attaching the label “Psycho-analyst” to Lane was, it seems, a chance too good to be missed, even if the whole point of the case was that he really wasn’t.

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77 For example, as D. O. Malcolm’s letter spelled out, the December 31, 1925 editorial had contained a quite inaccurate and misleading summary of the notion of “compensation.”

78 Ellesley refers to Homer Lane in passing (Ellesley 1995, 129), and although she does not cite *The Times* coverage itself, she does refer to five other newspaper stories covering his trial. He was the subject of a full-length biography (Wills 1964) which she references but which I have not consulted. According to this, however, the case was triggered by an alleged “sexual connection” with one of his...
By 1931 *The Times* had became more relaxed about the whole business. The fourth (humorous) leader\(^79\) of January 31, 1931, took its inspiration from H. D. Lasswell’s *Psychopathology and Politics*, jovially claiming that “a new and cheap substitute for the egg is now available and psycho-analysis is being brought into play to add to the many discomforts which public men endure.” Aspersions on the childhoods of the politicians will provide a new form of heckling “in the hands of those who have acquired, by evening courses or correspondence, the requisite mastery of a few offensive polysyllables.” The writer sarcastically proposes that since “painful early experiences” are necessary “to produce the persistent public man,” a “certain number of disturbed and hectic childhoods is necessary for the functioning of democracy.” Lots should be cast at birth to decide upon which children such childhoods shall be inflicted. The leader’s author was much more at home in “Freudish” than the author(s) of the 1922 and 1925 ones, and if hardly a convert, he no longer viewed psychoanalysis as a serious threat. Subsequent coverage of psychoanalysis in *The Times* during the 1930s was much diminished, although Freud’s 1938 arrival in England and death the following year naturally received attention. This again confirms that it was during the period from 1918 to the late 1920s that psychoanalysis was most constantly in the public limelight. By the 1930s the novelty was wearing off, Freudish had entered EPL, and, while continuing to flourish, psychoanalysis was gradually becoming a more insulated and self-enclosed profession.

At the opposite end of the daily press spectrum, the *Daily Graphic* was no less concerned with the psychoanalysis craze. In 1921 it mounted a “Psycho-Analytic Inquiry” (from 8 to 22 January). As Ellesley stresses this appeared in the context of “a jumble of current events, ranging over a wide spectrum of political, economic and social concerns” and was one of a number of campaigns mounted by the paper on issues such as the “Free Meal Fund” (Ellesley 1995, 176).\(^80\) Like *The Times*, the *Daily Graphic* was editorially anxious about the psychoanalytic craze, with an added “class” dimension — psychoanalysis being seen as a fashionable upper class preoccupation. It was also concerned about the susceptibility of women to its appeal (ibid., 177). Whatever the validity of “legitimate” psychoanalysis, the fear was that it had opened the door for “illegitimate quackery” and “cultism.” The headlines accompanying the launch of the inquiry are revealing: “Abuses of Psycho-Analysis,” “Charlatans Who Prey Upon Women and Weak-Minded Men,” and “The Latest Fashionable Cult” (ibid., 179). The inquiry was to be conducted by a “small committee of physicians and barristers,” while readers were invited to co-operate by communicating their own dealings with psychoanalysis to the editor

\(^79\) *The Times* “Fourth Leader” was a famous journalistic institution, collections being published periodically in book form.

\(^80\) This section is essentially a synopsis of Ellesley’s detailed account, which contains numerous ancillary references to other popular press and magazine coverage.
The vulnerability of women was constantly stressed, cases being cited such as “a woman of fashion” who was “wrecked” and warnings given of the dangers of them being stripped “of purse and self-respect” by the legions of “quacks” who had apparently sprung up all over London. There were additional fears of links with spiritualism and patients becoming vulnerable to blackmail (ibid., 182–3). It is clear however that the paper is, throughout, being careful to cast its aim as being the exposure of quackery and “abuse” of psychoanalysis, rather than opposing its responsible “medical” use, and it devoted much effort to advising its readers on how to tell the difference. Calling for a proper official medical investigation, it also anticipated the similar 1926 calls in *The Times*. While the thrust of such coverage might be, overtly, to “unpopularise” psychoanalysis, as Ellesley observes “by publicising the arguments of its critics, the newspapers were also aiding its popularisation” (ibid., 185).

Further systematic study of British press and magazine representations of psychoanalysis during the inter-war years, building on Rapp and Ellesley’s work, is still needed in order to provide a detailed tracking of precisely when and how different psychoanalytic ideas came into wider circulation (particularly after 1925), and how they were interpreted by and for various readerships.

**Popularization and Historiography**

While it is not the aim of the present paper to enter into the complex issues surrounding the notion of “popularization” (see ibid., chap. 1 for detailed discussion), it is clear, as Ellesley has argued, that the case of psychoanalysis raises questions for traditional conceptualizations of the process. In general the image has been of scientific ideas percolating down from “pure” scientific sources through the population at large, becoming diluted, distorted, and misunderstood in the process. This certainly fails to capture the complexities of the present case. In the first place the official British “scientific sources” were already presenting psychoanalytic theory in terms which, it is now generally agreed by those who have compared English translations with original German texts, differ considerably in register from those originals. The thrust of the critical case is that English psychoanalytic terminology was, as has been mentioned, more technical in character, and that, more profoundly, there was a shift in emphasis from “process” to “structure.”

81 For example, the recent first translation of the first edition of *Interpretation of Dreams* significantly reverts from the custom of using the past tense in passages reporting dreams to Freud’s original present tense. The translator, Joyce Crick, also noted, in an unpublished talk on the occasion of the book’s launch (4 November, 1999, Austrian Cultural Institute) that the Strachey’s standard translations of earlier Freud texts such as this utilized a technical vocabulary that had not really been developed or stabilized at the time they were first published, thereby retrospectively coordinating them with the later English psychoanalytic vocabulary.
throughout this period, both in Freud's own writings and those of his followers and associated schools, it is far from clear what would have counted as "correct" meanings of many psychoanalytic concepts or which among the numerous propositions to be found in the psychoanalytic literature remained currently operative at any given date. Thirdly, it is also evident that many of the important "sources" were, although "expert scientific psychologists," critical in various respects of what they understood psychoanalytic doctrines to be. Despite Ernest Jones' efforts, such sources themselves thus remained fairly diverse in character until the 1930s. Finally, stubbornly autonomous though Freud himself may have been, the English "sources" were frequently responding to the popular climate in their "expert" accounts of what psychoanalysis meant (e.g. most obviously in relation to sexual issues) and the topics of concern to which it had most to contribute (e.g. the prominence of education in this literature contrasts markedly with its almost total neglect in Freud's own writings). Despite our earlier identification of a textual hierarchy, the simple top-downwards picture needs then to be replaced by one which is far more sensitive to the existence of complex two-way interactions between the different levels and the internal diversity which existed within them.

This situation further muddies the waters regarding the utility of the simple "pro" versus "anti" framework in analyzing early responses to psychoanalysis. As Rapp (inadvertently) and Ellesley (deliberately) show, relatively few responses in the popular press and magazine literature were entirely one or the other. The very appeal of the doctrine lay, as we have seen, precisely in the fact that it provided a menu of ideas from which readers could selectively pick and choose, while many of its propositions and concepts were open to quite varied interpretations (as evident in the ways in which they could be used by religious writers).

In the broader history of science context this episode would bear an interesting comparison with other contemporary instances of scientific popularization regarding Einsteinian physics and astronomy for example. Is psychoanalysis (or Psychology as a whole) a special case? Or do analogous issues also arise in these other fields? It also reinforces a more general historiographic point which is emerging on several fronts in current history of the human sciences, namely that Psychological theories should be considered as signifying and initiating shifts in modes of subjectivity rather than as orthodox scientific theories. Only by adopting this orientation can we elicit the complex social and cultural functioning of the discipline "Psychology" in modernist societies, and how this interweaves with that discipline's "internal" events. Such a move also promises to take us beyond now sterile debates about the scientific status of Psychology by redirecting our attention in a more disinterested fashion to the examination of what kinds of project it has actually been engaged in — from the "governmental" to the self-liberatory and therapeutic, from the "pure scientific" to, on occasion, the social revolutionary. Surely, in no case is such a shift in approach more appropriate than the history of psychoanalysis and related schools.
Conclusion

An extensive body of post-World War II philosophical and Psychological critiques\(^{82}\) of psychoanalysis testifies to the problematic character of psychoanalysis from an orthodox scientific point of view, but it also suggests reasons why this need not be the end of the story. If, as many have argued, psychoanalysis was more like a mythology, a “system of reference” (as Wittgenstein had it), or, as I would term it “a system of meanings” then its evaluation has to shift to more pragmatic grounds.\(^{83}\) Once this is done we leave behind the simple dichotomous choice of wholesale agreement or rejection, becoming bound instead to test in a more personal fashion the rewards of construing our experiences of ourselves and others in Freudian terms. If we do this we are, I believe, still likely to find that there are occasions on which psychoanalysis definitely continues to have its moments. It has been its phenomenological, rather than its rational, validity which has kept the psychoanalytic show on the road. Our psychologies would certainly be much the poorer without the possibilities psychoanalysis and kindred schools offer, even if we choose not to accept them. But to return to a core theme of this paper, the penetration of psychoanalytic language into everyday psychological language has been such that in some respects we actually have very little choice. Even many critics of psychoanalysis frequently deploy its concepts in diagnosing its errors, Richard Webster (1995) for example effects a curious distancing between psychoanalytic ideas and language (which he is happy to use) and Freud’s own “scientific” doctrine. In the broader cultural history agenda current concern focuses on the role of Freudian thought in mediating the creation of the psychological “subject” and the “modes of subjectification” which have allegedly come to prevail, and been naturalized, in middle class white North Atlantic society.\(^{84}\)

Furthering this project must however involve closer scrutiny of specific sites, such as has been attempted in this paper, lest we become over-dependent on generalizations from the North American (and French) scenes.

In this paper I have attempted to sketch the routes by which psychoanalytic ideas entered into common circulation in Britain during the inter-war period. This episode may be taken as an illustrative case history of how Psychological concepts in general enter EPL, albeit rarely on such a dramatic scale. What we have seen is that the outstanding success of psychoanalytic language in Britain was apparently due to a convergence between the psychological conditions and needs of a substantial section of the post-Great War British population and the appearance, in

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\(^{82}\) H. J. Eysenck (1986) being perhaps the fiercest attempt at an \textit{ex cathedra} scientific closure of the whole Freud business. Somewhat amusingly it appeared on the Penguin bookstall at the following British Psychological Society’s Annual Conference above a shelf completely dedicated to the newly issued Penguin \textit{Freud Library} series.\(^{83}\)

83 On Wittgenstein’s view of psychoanalysis, see Bouveresse 1995. See also Richards 1996, 84–6, for a brief synopsis of the author’s own position.\(^{84}\)


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psychoanalysis, of a system of ideas which promised to meet these needs. Ellesley locates the emergence of British psychoanalysis at the intersection of four cultural debates which predated the Great War — those on feminism, those around the nature of “modernity,” those generated by the growing “secularization” of British society, and the issue of sexual reform. In doing so she successfully indicates that the range of concerns upon which psychoanalysis would come to have a direct (and integrative) bearing was already present in Edwardian Britain. However, while these debates and issues endured, they were all transformed by the experience of the war itself, and the argument of the present paper is that the popular appeal of psychoanalysis — so universally attested to by contemporary sources as a “craze,” “cult,” or “fashion” — was rooted more immediately and specifically in the trauma of that event. The publicity arising from the fact that many psychoanalytic doctrines were shocking, scandalous, or bizarre only promoted their wider circulation, rendering them more seductive to the large psychological constituency in the population hankering after something radically new. At the same time, the ambiguities regarding how psychoanalysis was to be construed enabled it to be co-opted by a range of quite divergent ideological and psychological camps. We were able to identify a number of levels or stages in this process, linking the technical and theoretical texts of Freud and his closest colleagues to the popular discourse of literature and the press. This should not though be understood as a simple “top-down” process, but involved more complex mutual inter-actions among all parties involved. Psychoanalytic ideas were, it is true, often treated in a cavalier and selective fashion, frequently being rejected altogether. Nonetheless the very act of adopting psychoanalytic language, however guardedly or selectively, involves psychological change for it provides new ways of experiencing and comprehending ones own behavior and that of others. On the evidence we have presented here it is also clear that, contrary to what appears to be a widespread assumption, the major British impact of this new language (and the doctrine which generated it) largely preceded that which it made in the United States.

The now manifest shortcomings of psychoanalysis as an orthodox scientific theory (and of Freud as an orthodox scientist) are of less significance than its evaluation as a psychological fact in its own right, and its vocabulary is surely unlikely to be abandoned any more quickly than that of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century physiology, which is with us yet whenever we become high-spirited, hot-blooded or simply irritable. We are likely to continue being harassed by our super egos and messed up by mother fixations into the foreseeable future. What should finally be stressed though is that our historically reflexive awareness of psychoanalysis is a major factor in subverting its totalizing aspirations. We live in a post-Freudian world, a world in which Freudian psychoanalysis and the related theoretical schools it inspired are but one part of our psychological legacy, one source of psychological meaning among many “under which we conduct our differing lives.” If no longer supplying a “whole climate of opinion,” its effect on the psychological weather thus endures.
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