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IDEOLOGY AND THE CONTROL
OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE:
THE CASE OF FREUD
AND HIS PSYCHOANALYTIC LEGEND

Riassunto. - La storia problematica della psicoanalisi come scienza, con le sue fonti criptiche nella biologia del diciannovesimo secolo e il suo atteggiamento narcisistico nei confronti del suo edificio teorico è un classico esempio del potere dell'ideologia. Fanno parte di questa storia alcuni miti (il mito del « timido » Breuer, il mito della « hostile reception ») e alcuni stereotipi (la figura di Fliess come pseudoscienziato); vi contribuiscono l'hero-complex personale di Freud stesso, la « politica » che ha circondato il movimento psicoanalitico, la natura circolare della storia psicoanalitica. Se la psicoanalisi non vuole ridursi ad ideologia e leggenda, deve confrontarsi con la propria storia e combattere la stessa ideologia di sè che ha contribuito a creare.

When we examine Freud's life, and especially the numerous biographical works about him written by psychoanalysts, we come face to face with one indisputable fact. Few scientific figures are as shrouded in historical misconception and legend as Sigmund Freud. In this paper I shall explore two different but closely interrelated problems in this connection. First, how and why has the Freud legend become so well developed? And second, what has been the ideological role of this legend if any, in the control and dissemination of psychoanalytic knowledge? I shall deal first with the fascinating topic of the Freud legend.

Above all, the traditional account of Freud's achievements has acquired its mythological proportions at the expense of historical context. Indeed, this loss of context is a prerequisite for good myths, which invariably seek to deny history. It is my contention,

moreover, that this expedient denial and refashioning of history has been an indispensable part of the psychoanalytic revolution itself. This denial process has followed two main tendencies in psychoanalytic history - namely, the extreme reluctance of Freud and his loyal followers to acknowledge the biological roots of psychoanalysis, thus transforming Freud into a cryptobiologist; and the creation and elaboration of the « myth of the hero » in the psychoanalytic movement. Virtually all of the major legends and misconceptions of traditional Freud scholarship have sprung from either of these two tendencies. Perhaps more remarkable still is the degree to which this whole process of historical censorship, distortion, embellishment, and propaganda has been effected with the cooperation of psychoanalysts who would instantly proclaim such phenomena as « neurotic » if they spotted them in anyone else. The following three myths, erected by Freud and his followers, are typical of the tendencies to which I refer.

The Myth of « Timid » Breuer

One of the most colorful stories of traditional psychoanalytic history seeks to explain why Josef Breuer, who treated the famous patient Anna O. and discovered the « cathartic » method of therapy, should subsequently have broken with Freud and psychoanalysis. As Ernest Jones reported in his biography of Freud, Breuer had apparently become aware of his patient's unhealthy attachment to him and decided to cut short the therapy one day - only to be called back that same evening to discover that his patient had suffered a severe relapse and was in the throes of a hysterical childbirth. The meaning of this « phantom pregnancy » was all too clear to Breuer, Jones recounts. Deeply disturbed, Breuer hypnotized his patient, « fled the house in a cold sweat », and the very next day departed Vienna for Venice on a second honeymoon with his wife - an occasion for rapprochement between his jealous spouse and himself that led to the conception of a daughter. Although Freud later explained to Breuer, Jones adds, the general « transference » nature of such an attachment, Breuer's subsequent cooperation in their two joint publications was insured only with the strict under-

standing that « the theme of sexuality was to be kept in the background ».

In spite of the manifest sincerity with which Freud, Ernest Jones, and most subsequent biographers of Freud have insisted upon this dramatic scenario of Breuer's rift with Freud, it is largely a myth. In fact, Breuer was quite outspoken on the importance that he believed should be accorded to the sexual factor in hysteria as well as in other nervous disorders. In his « theoretical » contribution to *Studies on Hysteria*, Breuer even cited the argument about the marriage bed as the source of most neurotic complaints that Freud, thirty years later, alleged was a purely private remark subsequently « disavowed » by Breuer. « I do not think I am exaggerating », Breuer wrote, « when I assert that *the great majority of severe neuroses in women have their origin in the marriage bed* ».

Nor did Anna O.'s phantom pregnancy cause Breuer to react to Freud's later discoveries in quite the way Freud himself was later to suppose. Breuer simply failed to connect his patient's growing personal attachment to him, as suddenly revealed at the termination of treatment, with the *causes* of her illness. At any event, even the delicate problem of Anna O.'s misunderstood transference relationship with Breuer did not stop him from openly supporting the sexual etiology of hysteria in subsequent cases whenever sexuality proved itself more obviously linked to the initial outbreak of the illness. (On this point, see Albrecht Hirschmüller's admirable biography of Breuer). As Breuer summed up his position in 1907, « I confess that plunging into sexuality in theory and practice is not to my taste. But what have my taste and feeling about what is seemly and what is unseemly to do with the question of what is true? ».

As for Breuer's break with Freud, it was actually precipitated by Freud's fanatical attempts to reduce hysteria and other neuroses to predominantly biological causes. Rather than admit to his own fanaticism on the subject or to Breuer's reasoned reserve, Freud attributed Breuer's criticisms to a personal repression of sexual matters. Thus, Josef Breuer, who in many important respects was both the first psychoanalyst and one of the most sympathetic Viennese supporters of Freud's psychoanalytic discoveries in the 1890s, also be-

came, in time, the first major victim of psychoanalytically reconstructed history.

Fliess and Infantile Sexuality

My second example of psychoanalytic myth concerns Freud's relationship with another important colleague. No figure has been victimized by as many myths and misconceptions in the service of the psychoanalytic cause as Wilhelm Fliess, a Berlin physician and biologist, whose friendship with Freud spanned the fifteen critical years from 1887 to 1902 in which psychoanalysis took form. According to Ernest Jones and other psychoanalyst-historians, Fliess was a baneful pseudoscientist whom Freud tolerated as a « listener » owing to his « isolation » during his heroic self-analysis. The self-analysis in turn is said to have led to Freud's revolutionary discovery of infantile sexuality, an insight that finally freed him of his need for Fliess. What the Freudians have omitted to report in their historical account is that Fliess was a pioneer in the field of infantile sexuality. His own ideas on this subject appeared in an 1897 monograph nine months *before* Freud's self-analysis.

Fliess believed that all life was regulated by two rhythms — a 23-day male cycle and a 28-day female cycle. This theory of vital periodicity implied the necessary existence of spontaneous infantile sexuality. The mother's two sexual periods were presumed to be transmitted to the child in earliest embryonic life and were supposed to determine the sex of the offspring and to regulate its further maturation and overall vital activities until its death. Fliess's theory therefore contradicted the contemporary scientific belief that sexual phenomena do not exist before puberty. And so it was that Fliess seized eagerly upon the little-recognized evidence for spontaneous infantile sexuality, and particularly for the periodicity of its manifestations, as a major corroboration of his overall system.

Thus, when Sigmund Freud later wrote in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* that one of « the most unexpected » findings of all his psychoanalytic researches had been the discovery that « sexual life does not begin only at puberty, but starts with plain manifestations soon after birth », he was in fact echoing one of Wilhelm Fliess's equally pioneering insights.

The « Hostile Reception » Myth

My third example of psychoanalytic myth involves the story of the hostile reception of Freud's theories. In denying Freud's numerous debts to his contemporaries, Freud and his movement found themselves in need of an alternative historical scenario for Freud's discoveries. The story of Freud's famous self-analysis supplied much of that alternative scenario by reinforcing the myth of Freud's absolute originality. The latter myth in turn demanded the myth of Freud's « hostile » and outraged reception by an unprepared world.

At first, so goes this traditional story, Freud's more creative discoveries, such as his theory of dreams, were « simply ignored ». We are told by Ernest Jones, for instance, that *The Interpretation of Dreams* had yet to be reviewed by a scientific periodical as late as eighteen months after its publication. This traditional historical scenario of isolation and rejection has served as a congenial model for most subsequent Freud biographers.

If we turn to the actual historical record, we find that the initial reception of Freud's theories was quite different indeed from this traditional account. In contrast to the picture painted by Freud, Jones, and others, Freud's two books on dreams received at least thirty separate reviews. Nor were these reviews predominantly hostile. The very first notice to appear described *The Interpretation of Dreams* as an « epoch-making » work. This is not to say that Freud and his theories met with no significant opposition whatsoever, for they did indeed, especially as the psychoanalytic movement gained organized momentum. The point I wish to make here is that strong opposition was not the initial reaction to Freud's theories; nor was any opposition premised upon the purported triumvirate of sexual prudery, hostility to innovation, and anti-Semitism that dominates the traditional historical scenario on this subject.

The three myths I have just reviewed are but a limited sampling from more than two dozen major myths and misconceptions about Freud's life that have been fostered by Freud and his psychoanalytic biographers. Elsewhere I have documented the process of mythification more extensively than I can do here. But I would like to outline the principal sources of the Freud legend and to show how they have influenced the « official » history of

psychoanalysis in ways that in turn reinforce a powerful ideology – an ideology that contrives to influence the psychoanalytic movement today. The first of these sources is Freud's own personal myth of the hero.

Freud's Personal Hero-Complex

Freud's entire life followed a heroic path so closely as to suggest his conscious (or unconscious) living out of heroic expectations. A perusal of his childhood, as well as of his Jewish family background, shows that this heroic pattern was indeed ingrained in Freud at an early age, and that he cultivated it as an effective life-strategy in later years. As is typical of heroes, both in myth and in actuality, the reasons for Freud's high expectations of himself date from events connected with his birth. Not only was he born with a caul, a circumstance often considered propitious, but an old peasant woman present at the birth announced to the proud mother that her son would one day be famous. This prophecy, in which Freud's mother placed great faith, was frequently repeated to young Freud. Throughout childhood, Freud's conviction that he was destined for greatness was reflected by his identifications with such heroic figures as Hannibal, the Semitic general who crossed the Alps with his Carthaginian forces and outwitted the Roman legions; Cromwell, who allowed the Jews to return to England; and Napoleon, also an emancipator of the Jews.

In his role as a neurologist and later as a psychoanalyst, Freud continued to live out these heroic identifications with great warriors and leaders of the downtrodden. Declining to envision himself as a brilliant thinker in the mold of Newton, Galileo, or Goethe, Freud instead emphasized his affinity with men of boldness and courage. « For I am actually not at all a man of science », he once told his friend Fliess, « not an observer, not an experimenter, not a thinker. I am by temperament nothing but a *conquistador*, an adventurer, if you wish to translate this term – with all the inquisitiveness, daring, and tenacity characteristic of such a man ».

Freud's highly ambivalent attitude toward autobiographical history grew out of his personal hero-complex. Twice, in 1885 and

1907, he ruthlessly blotted out the past by destroying most of his personal papers. As he revealed to his fiancée on the first of these occasions – in which letters, notebooks, private diaries, and manuscripts all perished – the holocaust was necessary so that the hero's past could be properly shrouded in mystery:

... I could not have matured or died [he wrote] without worrying about who would get hold of these old papers. ... As for the biographers, let them worry, we have no desire to make it too easy for them. Each one of them will be right in his opinion of « The development of the Hero », and I am already looking forward to seeing them go astray.

Thus to Freud the denial of history was a prerequisite of being and, above all, of *remaining* a full-fledged hero in the eyes of posterity. By destroying his past, he actively sought to cultivate the « unknowable » about himself and thereby to set himself apart from the more transparent non-heroes of humanity.

Psychoanalytic Politics

Another important source of the Freud legend is the constant politics that has surrounded the psychoanalytic revolution. Few theories in science have spawned a following that can compare with the psychoanalytic movement in its cultlike manifestations, in its militancy, and in the aura of a religion that has permeated it. Not only the opponents but even the movement's adherents were struck by the analogy with a religious sect. Max Graf, an early member of the movement, wrote of the weekly meetings of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society: « There was an atmosphere of the foundations of a religion in that room. Freud himself was its new prophet who made the theretofore prevailing methods of psychological investigation appear superficial. Freud's pupils – all inspired and convinced – were his apostles ». Gradually the religion became a church, Graf writes, and heresy was dealt with by excommunication: « Freud – as the head of a church – banished Adler; he ejected him from the official church. Within the space of a few years [Graf recalls] I lived through the whole development of a church history ».

Naturally, the more independent-minded analysts found it increasingly difficult to develop their own ideas under such circumstances. « The goody-goodys are no good », Freud wistfully remarked to a patient in the late 1920s, « and the naughty ones go away ».

Defections from orthodox psychoanalysis only served to heighten the movement's sectarian features. It was as a direct result of the defections of Adler, Jung, and Stekel that Ernest Jones proposed the institution in 1912 of a « strictly secret » committee of loyal adherents who could be charged with safeguarding the future of psychoanalysis. Freud presented each committee member with a special gold ring upon which was mounted an antique Greek intaglio from his private collection. The committee remained a secret organization until 1927, when it was merged with the official board of the International Association.

In the context of the sectarian politics of the psychoanalytic movement, it becomes easier to see why psychoanalytic history is so remarkably rich in mythology, ideology, and narcissistic politics. As loyal adherents to the cause, Freud's followers were an integral part of Freud's personal myth of the hero. Their history, like his, became modelled on « the hero » and was transformed in the service of an elaborate system of self-reinforcing defenses. Among Freud's followers-turned-biographers, the movement's belligerent, black-and-white attitude toward the world later translated itself into an equally black-and-white conception of history and thus contributed in large part to the various myths portraying Freud's absolute originality, his isolation, and his rejection by orthodox medicine.

The Circular Nature of Psychoanalytic History

A third and last source of the Freud legend is the inherently circular nature of psychoanalytic history, which has always demanded explanations neatly in accordance with psychoanalytic theory itself. It is to the events and influences of Freud's childhood, not those of his formative years as a biologist and neurologist, that psychoanalyst-historians have ascribed the sources of his genius. Similarly, Freud's major discoveries have repeatedly been attributed to

his heroic turning of the psychoanalytic method upon his own psyche during his famous self-analysis in the late 1890s. « Psychoanalysis proper », concludes one such spokesman for this traditional position, « is essentially a product of Freud's self-analysis ». The psychoanalytic method – not the many contemporary scientific assumptions upon which Freud built – is therefore what psychoanalysts have long celebrated as the source of Freud's theoretical edifice. Thus insulated from intellectual history, psychoanalysts have repeatedly failed to appreciate the problematic foundations of their science.

Legitimation, Nihilation, and Therapeutics

The three general influences I have just reviewed – Freud's personal hero-complex, the politics surrounding the rise of the movement, and the peculiarly circular nature of psychoanalytic history – have all combined to form a potent ideology that has shaped the « official » history of psychoanalysis, a history that has in turn helped to reinforce the ideological superstructure of present psychoanalytic knowledge. This ideology exhibits several features in common with the ideologies elaborated by other revolutionary movements. Such ideological machinery typically includes the strategic components of legitimation, nihilation, and therapeutics.

Legitimation helps to promulgate the leader's teachings as part of a ready-made tradition of belief. Scientists accept paradigms, especially new paradigms, largely on the basis of « ideological » commitments – principally a dedication to the unfulfilled promises of future scientific progress (T. S. KUHN, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 1962). As students, scientists begin their courses by accepting existing theories totally on faith – or rather on the authority of their teachers. The mechanism of legitimation plays a powerful and indispensable part in this process of scientific education. Through legitimation, the adherents of a new scientific paradigm seek to explain the superiority of their new conceptual order by presenting a convincing history of how this new order came to detect the basic flaws of its predecessor. In psychoanalytic lore, the stories of Anna O.'s remarkable illness and « cure » by Breuer, of

the revolutionary discoveries that ensued when Freud turned his new methods inward upon himself, and of Freud's lonely years of scientific isolation before finally emerging into world-fame — these stories and many others have all legitimated the heroic superiority of Freud's achievements and have granted him title as the sole creator of psychoanalysis.

The technique of legitimation nevertheless fails to explain why a particular reality is the *only* possible one; why, that is, this new reality should not someday be supplanted by another, as was the fate of the prevailing dogma before it. This is where *nihilation* (a negative version of legitimation) comes in. Owing to its importance, I shall discuss nihilation at some length. Through nihilation, discrepant events or persons are replaced by substitutes that serve the new dogma's purposes more effectively. So successful has the process of nihilation been in psychoanalytic history that even Freud's own disciples were long at a loss to imagine any other derivation for the discoveries than a sort of intellectual « spontaneous generation ». « Strangely enough », Erik Erikson confessed in the late 1950s, « we students [of Freud] knew little of his beginnings, nothing of that mysterious self-analysis which he alluded to in his writings. We knew people whom Freud had introduced into psychoanalysis, but psychoanalysis itself had, to all appearances, sprung from his head like Athena from the head of Zeus ». As a strategic tool in this nihilation process, the story of Freud's « mysterious self-analysis », to cite just one example, grew in importance with the years, serving as a key mechanism in the denial of history.

Above all, it was the training analysis, standardized during the 1920s, that helped to institutionalize a permanent method of historical nihilation within psychoanalysis. The training analysis has had several major consequences in the transmission and dissemination of psychoanalytic teachings. The first of these consequences stems from the circumstance that psychoanalysts typically learn and identify with Freud's teachings *from the inside*, as it were. They begin by reading *The Interpretation of Dreams* and by identifying with Freud's inner thoughts — his personal reports of his self-analytic path to discovery. Moreover, to the average analyst, who learns his discipline through a training analysis involving an enormous com-

mitment of time and expense, it is most difficult to imagine that Freud might have learned his own science somewhat differently, that is, in the physiological laboratory and from books and ideas that were to a large extent psychobiological. Compared with later psychoanalysts Freud's intellectual development was unique, and most of that uniqueness has remained little appreciated by psychoanalysts. Who, for example, among psychoanalysts today ever reads Freud's still-untranslated works in neuroanatomy and neurophysiology or studies in detail his pre-1900 publications? Indeed, the whole tenor of traditional psychoanalytic history has been to think and write about the past in such a manner that it appears to lead up to, and to confirm, the *present* conception of the « psychoanalytic experience ». This tendency, termed « Whiggish history » by Herbert Butterfield, has greatly enhanced the psychological and clinical perspectives that psychoanalysts have developed about their own history. But it has also provided a powerful means of historical nihilism that has in turn reinforced psychoanalytic ideology.

This process of retracing Freud's intellectual steps almost exclusively in terms of the emotional and introspective sides of his life has another serious drawback for students of his work. This form of psychoanalytic education engenders an intense idealization of Freud — a process that psychoanalysts relate to « the transference ». Heinz Kohut, in a valuable essay of 1976, has insightfully described the lack of objectivity toward Freud's ideas that universally arises under such circumstances. The typical idealization and transference reaction that the analyst-in-training soon develops toward Freud is in turn coupled with intense pressures to conform to the teachings of the training analyst, who becomes a surrogate Freud-figure as well as father-figure. Edward Glover, after sixteen years as director of research at the London Institute of Psycho-Analysis, has made the following critical comment about the indoctrinating influence of training analysis:

It is scarcely to be expected that a student who has spent some years under the artificial and sometimes hothouse conditions of a training analysis and whose professional career depends upon overcoming « resistance » to the satisfaction of his training analyst, can be in a favourable position to defend his scientific integrity against his analyst's theory and practice. And the longer he remains in training analysis, the less likely he

is to do so. For according to his analyst the candidate's objections to interpretations rate as « resistances ». In short there is a tendency inherent in the training situation to perpetuate error.

The training analysis is actually but the first of a series of « rites of passage » that psychoanalysis has institutionalized as a means of controlling and safeguarding the nature of psychoanalytic truth. As Arnold Rothstein has written in 1980:

As a young person, the future analytic creator finds himself facing a life cycle replete with way stations typified by well-defined narcissistically invested goals. He seeks admission to a good... [psychoanalytic] institute. He works hard to become a graduate analyst only to find himself, at mid-life, seeking the coveted narcissistically invested designation « training and supervising analyst ». In addition, he may seek positions of professional eminence within local and national professional organizations.

More importantly, by the time the average psychoanalyst has completed his medical and analytic training, which is usually in his mid- or late thirties, he has long since passed the peak age at which creative work is usually done in science. Indeed, young psychoanalysts are not only not innovative, but they are often among the most conservative members of the analytic community. Innovation, when and if it ever comes, usually does so from within the ranks of older and established analysts whose minds are already irrevocably dominated by certain basic psychoanalytic propositions. Whatever creativity such older analysts are able to manifest is therefore usually within certain fixed limits. In this way, the mechanism of nihilation has long since insured that psychoanalytic innovations proceed along prescribed (that is, narcissistic) lines.

Great revolutionary movements need not only legitimating and nihilating procedures, but also *therapeutic* ones, which help to keep the new order pure by placing the whole burden of blame for deviance upon those who defect. Indeed, the protective function of therapeutics was intimately bound up with the whole conception of Freudian « therapy ». The notorious « repression-resistance » argument was psychoanalysis' most effective propaganda mechanism in this regard. Had not Freud himself occasionally suggested to his

followers that they treat their scientific critics as they would an unanalyzed patient offering « resistance »?

Therapeutic procedures complement those of legitimation and nihilation in another important way. Both legitimation and nihilation ultimately lead to a certain degree of autonomy and even isolation of the scientific group from other groups in science. Therapeutic procedures help to maintain this isolation by further minimizing the potential for internal dissent and by insuring that those individuals who do dissent beyond certain prescribed limits are quickly ostracized from the movement.

Ideology and the Freud Legend

With its characteristic emphasis upon Freud's absolute originality, his lonely years of intellectual isolation, and his hostile reception by the scientific world, the psychoanalytic movement's myth of the hero has made ample use of the ideological principles I have just reviewed. The Freud legend is, in fact, institutionalized in the present-day ideology of the movement. By legitimating the special and hard-wrought nature of psychoanalytic truth; by nihilating the achievements and credibility of Freud's critics; by fostering, through the lengthy training analysis, a totally Whiggish conception of history; and by offering a built-in therapy to explain defections from the movement — this powerful ideological machinery, together with the powerful hero myth that lies behind it, has inspired and sustained countless students of Freud's teachings. There is, in fact, no other theory in the history of scientific thought that can rival psychoanalysis for such an elaborate system of self-reinforcing defenses. Through legitimation, nihilation, and therapeutics, the psychoanalytic movement has sought to control the future by controlling, recasting, and institutionalizing the myth-laden past.

We are accustomed to such myths, mystiques, and ideological machinery in major social and political movements; but their manifestation in the objective world of science is more surprising. Since the evolution of myth and ideology have been particularly pronounced in the history of the psychoanalytic movement, we may well ask whether psychoanalysis is perhaps unique among the sciences in this

connection. Still, psychoanalysis may have exceptional features in this respect, but it is hardly exceptional within science for the general *trend* of its myths or the general *aims* of its prevailing ideology. Like psychoanalysts, all scientists hold a theory, however unspoken and implicit, about the proper route to scientific discovery; and that theory mythologizes the memory of every great achievement in science. Similarly, history's function for most scientists is merely that of an ideological reinforcement of present truth in science. This is why the history of science, insofar as it exists in the textbooks of science, must be rewritten following every scientific revolution.

Conclusion

To conclude, the problematic history of psychoanalysis as a science, with its numerous cryptic sources in out-moded nineteenth-century biology and its highly narcissistic attitude toward its theoretical edifice, is a fascinating example of the power that ideology can have when it becomes institutionalized within the educational mechanisms of science. Unfortunately, ideology of this sort inevitably undermines the purposes of scientific research, which can only progress by repeatedly exposing itself to potential refutations. Inasmuch as refutations become increasingly impossible within such defensive ideological frameworks, science eventually ceases to be practised. What is perpetuated under such conditions is simply a tradition of belief, one increasingly without the potential for new discoveries or the power of correcting errors that have long been considered irrefutable truths. The possible tragedy for psychoanalysis is simply this. When Sigmund Freud, who was an indisputable genius, initially created his psychoanalytic paradigm, he was indeed practising science as we know it. But when he and his movement – increasingly rejected as they were from orthodox European medicine – developed their own independent training institutes with formalized training analysis, elaborate rites of passage, and ever greater isolation from other disciplines, they began to put intellectual self-protection ahead of science. What were once a crucial series of steps taken for the survival and growth of the psychoanalytic movement

have become, in retrospect, one of its greatest threats to continuing existence as a natural science. Like the many creatures in evolutionary history that have retreated to a successful life in caves or on isolated oceanic islands, what sometimes begins as a highly fruitful step in organic adaptation can lead in the end to blindness, loss of vital functions (such as flight in certain birds on oceanic islands), and even eventual extinction. If psychoanalysis does not wish to have the same fate as the Dodo and the dinosaurs, it must come to terms both with its own history and with the powerful ideology that this legend-dominated history has spawned.

Abstract. - A classic example of the power of ideology is to be seen in the history of the problems of psychoanalysis as a science, with its cryptic origins in nineteenth-century biology and its narcissistic attitude to the edifice of theory it has reared. Certain myths form a part of this history (the myth of the «timid» Breuer, the myth of the «hostile reception») and so do certain stereotypes (the figure of Fliess as a pseudo-scientist); the hero-complex of Freud himself, the «politics» that has surrounded the psycho-analytic movement, the circular nature of the history of psychoanalysis, all make their contribution. If psychoanalysis does not want to be reduced to myth and legend, it must look squarely at its own history and struggle against the very image of itself that it has helped to create.