



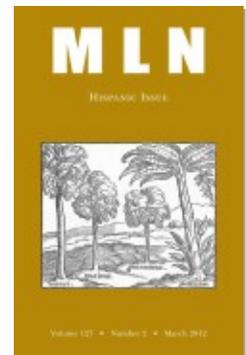
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Ariadne's Thread



Liliane Weissberg

You're dreaming of taking on a braid or a weave, a warp or a woof, but without being sure of the textile to come, if there is one, if any remains and without knowing if what remains to come will still deserve the name of text, especially of the text in the figure of a textile.

—Jacques Derrida,
“A Silkworm of One's Own”¹

In her memoirs, *My Three Mothers and Other Passions*, Sophie Freud describes a visit to her aunt Anna, an ardent knitter and maker of dresses. “You sew all your own clothes by hand?” Sophie recalled asking her aunt while looking at her garments with surprise. Anna Freud, in turn, could only wonder about her niece's question. “Of course,” she finally responded, “a bit impatiently,” no less: “it would after all not be practical to use a sewing machine while I see patients.”²

Many female psychoanalysts today are probably following the footsteps and handiwork of Sigmund Freud's youngest daughter, knitting or stitching during analytic hours. My questions here are very simple ones. Is this occupation of cloth making an accidental one, or is this practice in some way related, or already inscribed, in Freud's own work? Could such a practice or its history have possibly influenced

¹Jacques Derrida, “A Silkworm of One's Own (Points of View Stitched on the Other Veil),” trans. Geoffrey Bennington, in: Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002) 313.

²Sophie Freud, *My Three Mothers and Other Passions* (New York: New York University Press, 1988) 80.

psychoanalytic thought and psychoanalytic theory? And would it relate in any way to Freud's own Eastern European Jewish origins?

I. Handiwork

Let us forget for a moment the fashion designers of Paris or Milan, and even early twentieth-century tailor shops in Vienna or New York. For Freud, as for many of his contemporaries, actual fabric production and needlework—spinning, knitting, stitching, and weaving—were largely female occupations. Moreover, Freud's references to the craft of cloth making would concentrate mostly on its non-professional nature. Indeed, in much of his work, Freud seemed less interested in the professional occupations of weaver or seamstress but rather in the voluntary nature of each enterprise.

Thus, Freud had to adjust his views in regard to the perceived genderedness of these tasks. While tailor shops had been filled with female workers at the turn of the twentieth century, there were certainly male tailors as well, and especially male supervisors in urban sweatshops. And if tasks like spinning and knitting could have been integrated into a women's history, the craft of weaving often had a specifically male tradition.³ Freud, however, was less focused on the history of individual cloth making processes, and more attuned to the pastimes of the women in his family—his needle-working sister-in-law Minna Bernays, for example, and that of his female, bourgeois patients.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in the course of progressive urbanization, the number of women whose lives were more or less restricted to their homes grew. Bourgeois domesticity became a prevalent model. Men were supposed to earn the family's livelihood, while it was the woman's task to raise the children, provide for the meals, and keep the house in order. Freud's patients were often described as daughters of these bourgeois families—such as “Anna O.” (Bertha Pappenheim) or “Dora” (Ida Bauer)—who would try to find their place in this domestic world, and a modicum of independence in- and outside the house. In the well-to-do families of Vienna's middle class, hysteria seemed to flourish, no doubt supported by specific family constellations as well as the woman's need to comply with strict and

³See weaving customs in several African areas, for example, Peggy Stoltz Gilfoy, *Patterns of Life: West African Strip-Weaving Traditions* (Washington, D.C.: Published for the National Museum of African Art by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987).

restricted gender roles.⁴ Dora, for example, would complain about her mother's constant efforts to keep the apartment clean and tidy, an effort that Freud would describe simply as a "housewife's neurosis"—without having met her mother, and easily agreeing with his patient's view. Dora, however, was one of the few young girls and women who did not show much interest in needlework; she would prefer the card game, bridge, and even gain an Austrian title in bridge competition a few years after her analysis with Freud ended.

The late nineteenth century was not only the time of consolidation of the middle class that affirmed such gender roles, however; it was also the time of industrialization and the rise of the working class. While an increasing number of factories, often placed in the Eastern outposts of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, were responsible for the actual production of fabrics, dressmaking or the mending of cloth became occupations that were acceptable for Viennese women. Moreover, sewing a dress was a task that could be undertaken with the help of new technologies and further professionalized. Once the sewing machine—invented in 1830 by Barthelemy Thimonnier and improved upon by Elias Howe and Isaac Singer in the later nineteenth century—began to enter not only tailor businesses but also the private home, handiwork moved into the category of a luxury craft. Just like ornamental embroidery, which was once an occupation for aristocratic women only, knitting and sewing by hand became pastimes for well-to-do "modern" women now with leisure time at hand. The sewing machine, as a newly popular item of the industrial age, would make sewing easier, but it also separated the working-class seamstress from her mistress. Thus, in sewing her clothes by hand, Anna Freud not only silenced her stitches, she also rejected the machine for the bourgeois luxury of craft.

One of the earliest photographs of an American woman with her sewing machine—a double portrait of woman and machine rendered ca. 1853—speaks of the ambivalence of this development. Framed in a gilded setting, the daguerreotype shows a proud couple: a stern-looking woman with her luxurious machine. Despite the prominence of image, a seamstress like her is not part of a middle-class woman's picture gallery. It is probably a working woman who is posing here, with a prized sewing instrument that may or may not be owned by her. [Fig. 1]

⁴See, for example, Elisabeth Malleier, *Jüdische Frauen in Wien 1816–1938: Wohlfahrt, Mädchenbildung, Frauenarbeit* (Wien: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2003).



Fig. 1. *The Seamstress*, daguerreotype (ca. 1853). One of the earliest photographic images of an American woman and an industrial machine, here a Grover and Baker sewing machine. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Freud's association of women with the production of textiles was not only encouraged by the family members, friends, and patients of his surroundings, and thus seemingly associated with a leisure-time craft. It has its roots in Greek mythology as well as in the Roman tradition—a tradition alluded to in early advertisements where seamstresses were pictured as goddesses of sewing machines.⁵ Freud, whose interests encompassed the study of classical literature and archeology, was well aware of the figures that proved to be important in shaping this tradition—an ancient nexus, perhaps, of women and the task of making cloth.

There was, for example, the task of spinning. The Moirae—Klotho, Lachesis, and Atropos—were three sisters and daughters of Zeus. They were supposed to determine a person's fate by stretching and cutting the thread of life. There was also Ariadne of Crete, who fell in love with Theseus, and offered him thread with which he could find his way out of the Minotaur's labyrinth. Thus, yarn could both stand for life and save one's life. There was Philomela, an abducted and incarcerated woman, who decided to tell her story by producing a tapestry. "And what shall Philomela do?" asked Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*:

A guard prevents her flight; stout walls of solid stone fence in the hut, speechless lips can give no token of her wrongs. But grief has sharp wits, and in the trouble cunning comes. She hangs a Thracian web on her loom, and skillfully weaving purple signs on a white background, she thus tells the story of her wrongs.⁶

Thus, women would not only be responsible for a person's life, but also tell its story. The woman weaver would become a teller of tales. Arachne, too, competes with the goddess Athena in the task of weaving, and produces in her tapestry:

They both set up looms in different places without delay and they stretch the fine warp upon them. The web is bound upon the beam, the reed separates the threads of the warp, the woof is threaded through them by the sharp shuttles which their busy fingers ply, and when shot through the threads of the warp, the notched teeth of the hammering slay beat it

⁵Julie Wosk, *Women and the Machine: Representations from the Spinning Wheel to the Electronic Age*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) 32.

⁶Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vol. I, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971 [1916]), Book VI, 571–78. See also the discussion in Patricia Klindienst Joplin, "The Voice of the Shuttle is Ours," in: *Rape and Representation*, ed. Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) 35–64.

into place. The speed on the work with their mantles close girt about their hands, their eager zeal beguiling their toil.⁷

Depicting “some ancient tale” in cloth without any flaws, Arachne wins.⁸

Ovid is not the only ancient poet who conveys these productions of textures and texts. Blind Homer, too, is able to sing of women who write in fabric. Penelope does so, for example, in the *Odyssey*, and uses the task of weaving as an instrument of resistance. Left behind by Odysseus, she does not want to consider any new suitors, and claims to do so only after completing a burial shroud for Odysseus’s elderly father Laertes. Weaving by day, and unraveling the fabric by night, Penelope buys herself time. Thus, she remains Odysseus’s property, and defends herself from the suitors’ advances.⁹ A pattern becomes obvious. Male poets may sing, but women storytellers weave. Their stories have a material presence that needs to be deciphered, and are told not just in words, but in images, too. And while textiles and tapestries tell stories of power, they bestow power as well. “Because cloth took so long to produce, it became very valuable in the ancient worlds. Whether decorating floors, walls or bodies, cloth was woven with attention to *intention*, communicating not only cultural meaning, but also bestowing (or preserving) power,” Kathryn Sullivan Kruger writes [my emphasis].¹⁰ And the stories of these ancient weavers are carried far into German literary history and culture. “Honor the women!” Friedrich Schiller would pen, for example, in 1795,

They plait and they weave
Roses celestial in lives just terrestrial,
Plaiting the bond of the most blessed love,
Clothed in the Grace’s most modest veil.¹¹

⁷Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vol. I, Book VI, 53–60.

⁸*Ibid.*, 69. See also Elmer G. Suhr, *The Spinning Aphrodite: The Evolution of the Goddess From Earliest Pre-Hellenic Symbolism Through Late Classical Times* (New York: Helios Books, 1969) and Laurie Schneider Adams, *Art and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Icon Editions, 1993) 281–82.

⁹Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday & Co., 1963 [1961]) Book II, 22.

¹⁰Kathryn Sullivan Kruger, *Weaving the Word: The Metaphors of Weaving and Female Textual Production* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2001) 11.

¹¹Friedrich Schiller, poem “Würde der Frauen” (1795), beginning of first stanza, translation mine; in *Friedrich Schiller. Werke und Briefe in zwölf Bänden* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1992) vol. 1, 185.

In ancient Greece, women used the loom, and the loom was placed in the house, in the *gynaikonitides*, or the women's private chambers. It may not be surprising, therefore, if Freud refers to these private chambers, albeit indirectly, in his reflections on "Femininity," included in the new sequence of his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* of 1933.¹² Based on his previous essays "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Difference Between the Sexes" (1925) and "On Female Sexuality" (1931), Freud wonders once more about the "riddle of femininity"—a puzzlement that he would share with the men in his audience, as he suggested, but not with his female audience, as they were riddles themselves.¹³ Here, Freud dares to enter the *gynaikonitides* to describe not only a woman's most private "room"—her body—but to discover the contribution of women to the production of culture and civilization. "Women have made few contributions to the discoveries and inventions in the history of civilization," Freud writes, but "one technique which they may have invented," he cautions, is "that of plaiting and weaving":

We should be tempted to guess the unconscious motive for the achievement. Nature herself would seem to have given the model which this achievement imitates by causing the growth at maturity of the pubic hair that conceals the genitals. The step that remained to be taken lay in making the threads adhere to one another, while on the body they stick into the skin and are only matted together. If you reject this idea as fantastic and regard my belief in the influence of lack of a penis on the configuration of femininity as an *idée fixe*, I am of course defenseless.¹⁴

Thus, weaving and the production of textiles receive an explanation that does not only comment on a gendered tradition, but on the need of, or cause for, its invention. It is not the yarn that is important here, but rather the product of the cloth. And just as the production of textiles would cover the fact of an anatomical "lack," the ready material itself—the cloth, the dress—becomes a text, a child, and an organ covered up and simulated at once; it turns into the visual sign of a woman's incompleteness.

For men, this cloth can assume a different significance as well; it will

¹²Sigmund Freud, "Femininity," in: Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud et al. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–1974) vol. XXII: 113.

¹³Ibid., 116; see also 113.

¹⁴Ibid., 132.

take a privileged place in Freud's discussion on the fetish. Thus, the other gender enters the discussion, as the fetish can only be desired by men. "[T]he fetish," Freud explains in his essay "Fetishism," "is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and—for reasons familiar to us—does not want to give up."¹⁵ Here, in the essay on the fetish, Freud is also more explicit in the description of the kind of cloth that men may desire, and why. "Fur and velvet—as has long been suspected," Freud writes,

are a fixation of the sight of the pubic hair, which should have been followed by the longed-for sight of the female member; pieces of underclothing, which are so often chosen as a fetish, crystallize the moment of undressing, the last moment in which the woman could still be regarded as phallic. But I do not maintain that it is invariably possible to discover with certainty how the fetish was determined.¹⁶

II. Factories

But how would one enter Freud's own private room?

Freud was born as Sigismund Schlomo Freud in Freiberg [Přibor] in 1856, where his parents—Kalmann or Koloman Jakob Freud and his young wife Amalia Nathanson—occupied a one-room apartment over a smith's shop. [Fig. 2] Jakob's first wife Sally died early, and he was possibly briefly married to a second wife, Rebekka. Freud was the oldest child of his father's new marriage, and others would follow soon—his short-lived brother Julius and his sister Anna would also be born in Freiberg. Upstairs in the smith's house, there was not much privacy for a young family of two or three or four.

Jakob Freud had moved to the small Moravian town in the midst of fields and forests not much earlier because of his business; he was born in Tysmenitz [Tysmenice] in Galicia. His much younger wife's family lived in Vienna. Before moving to Freiberg, Jakob Freud had visited it often on his travels with his grandfather. [Fig. 3] This grandfather, Abraham Siskind Hoffmann, was a resident of Tysmenitz who made his living by traveling, trading in wool and woolen fabrics primarily, but also "suet, honey, anise, hides, salt and similar raw products."¹⁷

¹⁵Freud, "Fetishism," *Standard Edition*, vol. XXI: 155.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁷Renée Gicklhorn, "The Freiberg Period of the Family Freud," in: *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, vol. XXIV, i (1969): 38. See also Marianne Krüll, *Freud and His Father*, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1986) 71–180.



Fig. 2. Freud's family occupied an apartment in the house of J. Zajic in Freiberg, Moravia (ca. 1931). Freud Museum, London. Permission granted by the Freud Museum and Archives, London.



Fig. 3. Freiberg [Příbor] (undated photograph). Freud Museum, London. Permission granted by the Freud Museum and Archives, London.

Hoffmann was one of many Galician Jews in the wool and clothes trade. Until well into the twentieth century, clothing businesses and later textile factories sprouted in Southern Galicia and Moravia. Several of Freud's patients or their parents owned such factories, such as "Dora's" father, Philipp Bauer.

Hoffmann was buying wool in Galician towns and selling it further South, and already by 1844, he applied to the magistrate in Freiberg to settle there, together with his grandson Kalmann Jakob Freud. "I intend to settle in Freiberg," reads his application,

because this city offers several advantages for my business: 1. It is on the highway, 2. cloth making is the main industry, 3. Freiberg lies in the center of the cloth making district and its situation favors the traffic in the trade.

I buy woolen material in Freiberg and the neighboring regions to have dyed and dressed here, then sent as commercial products to Galicia. In exchange I import Galician goods such as wool, honey, hemp, and suet. I sell these products in stores which I rent here; even foreign merchants come to buy.¹⁸

Jakob Freud, 29 years of age at that point, settled first in a village outside Freiberg, leaving his wife and children behind in Tysmenitz. In 1848, when the strict laws limiting residency for Jews would change, Jakob Freud would move to Freiberg. He was one of the Jewish traders the Freiberg council reported on:

The woolen goods produced in Freiberg have a double market: the Jewish traders come here from Galicia to buy cloth; they have it dyed and dressed here, then send it to Galicia. Our cloth makers sell their fabrics in Hungary as well. The Jews have no share in this trade.¹⁹

In 1852, Jakob Freud's older sons Emmanuel and Philipp joined him in Freiberg and established residences nearby. Because of newly created taxes, there are records of the weight of wool traded in Freiberg. It seems that 1852 was also Jakob Freud's most successful business year. In 1852, he traded 1309 centner (143,990 pounds) of wool.²⁰ But the following years brought a decline in his business. In 1855, Jakob Freud married Amalia Nathanson and three years later, they decided to leave Freiberg—first for Leipzig, and then for Vienna, the Nathansons' home town.

While Jakob left his wool trade to his oldest son Emmanuel,

¹⁸Gicklhorn, "The Freiberg Period," 39.

¹⁹Ibid., 40.

²⁰Ibid., 40.

Emmanuel, too, soon decided to leave Freiberg and seek his fortune elsewhere. For Emmanuel, his wife Maria, and their children John (Johannes) and Paulina, as well as his unmarried younger brother Philipp, the choice was neither Saxony nor the Habsburg capital, however. Instead, they chose to move to the capital of the textile trade. At about the same time in which Jakob Freud and his family settled in Vienna, Emmanuel and his family, as well as Philipp, moved to Manchester.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Manchester was a center of the British industrial revolution, and the center of the European textile industry. Because of its excellent nearby ports it dealt not only in wool, silk, and linen, but also, and primarily, in cotton. Manchester became known as “Cottonopolis.” [Fig. 4] “I remember my earliest view of Manchester,” writes a traveler, William Cooke Taylor, in 1842, “I saw the forest of chimneys pouring forth volumes of steam and smoke, forming an inky canopy which seemed to embrace and involve the

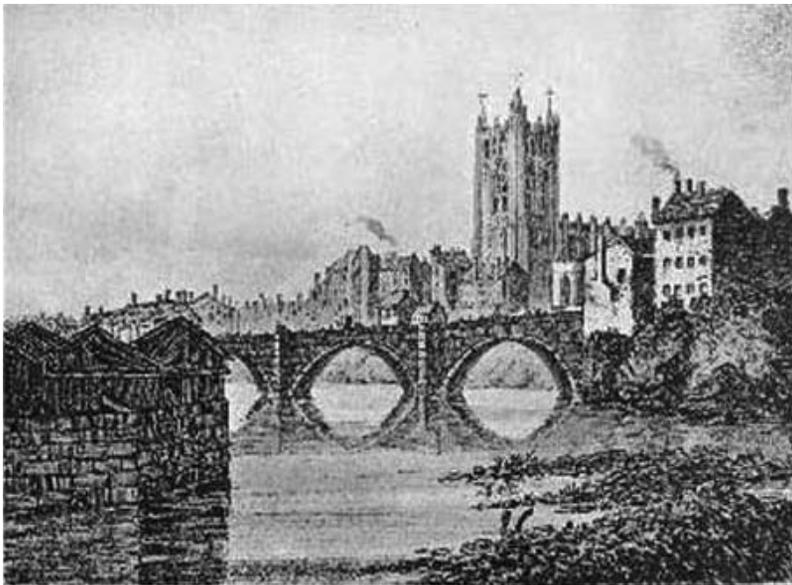


Fig. 4. Manchester, Nineteenth-Century Lithograph, from “Spinning the Web: The Story of Manchester’s Cotton Industry,” Manchester City Council; <http://www.spinningtheweb.org.uk>.



Fig. 5. "Little Ireland," Manchester, map (1849), from: Thomas Walter Freeman, *Pre-Famine Ireland: A Study in Historical Geography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1957); reproduced in Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. W. O. Henderson and W. H. Chaloner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968) 72.

whole place.”²¹ Indeed, by the mid-nineteenth century, Manchester had turned from a small Western coastal town into a bustling city of factories and textile companies. Large sections of the cities were taken up by warehouses and workers’ housing, and workers lived close to the factories, often under dire conditions. [Fig. 5] A map of 1849 shows cotton mills and workers’ housing for British and Irish immigrant laborers closely huddled together between a bend in the river and the new railroad station that would provide an opportunity to transport goods. Areas such as “Little Ireland” south of the city center developed into major slums. Indeed, Karl Marx’s friend and collaborator Friedrich Engels, who worked in his father’s factory there, would write a study of the British working class that would largely

²¹W. Cooke Taylor, *Notes on a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancaster* (London, 2nd ed. 1842), cited in “Spinning the Web: The Story of the Cotton Industry” (Manchester City Council) <<http://www.spinningtheweb.org.uk/places/cottonopolis.php>>. Taylor is the author of *Factories and the Factory System; From Parliamentary Documents and Personal Examination* (1844).

concentrate on the living and working conditions in Manchester, and on the textile trade; this social study would become a masterpiece in economic analysis.²²

Manchester not only boasted immigrants from Ireland and other British towns, however; it had a growing Jewish community as well. Many older members of this community were Sephardic Jews who had immigrated to Great Britain via the Netherlands, but there were also newer immigrants from Eastern Europe. These new arrivals were entering the textile trade as well, mostly on the retail level.²³ Emmanuel and Philipp Freud followed this trend. And here perhaps we will have to correct the common picture of Sigmund Freud. Freud was certainly an anglophile who named his son Oliver after Oliver Cromwell, who studied the works of Charles Darwin, who cited William Shakespeare often, and who admired a canonical, bourgeois English culture. But we should remember that Freud did not visit London first, and that the British capital remained unknown to him for some time. He saw the workers' quarters and warehouse palazzos of Manchester first. [Fig. 6]



Fig. 6. Advertisement, Barlow and Jones Ltd, Manchester; Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers. Images of Office and Warehouse, from "Spinning the Web."

²²Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, trans. W. O. Henderson and W. H. Chaloner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968). For further discussion, see, for example, Steven Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class* (New York: Random House, 1974).

²³Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry: 1740–1875* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976). See also Lloyd P. Gartner, "East European Jewish Migration: Germany and Britain," in: *Two Nations: British and German Jews in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Michael Brenner, Rainer Liedtke, and David Rechter (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1999) 117–33.

Already in August 1875, Freud traveled to Manchester from Vienna to visit his older brothers and his nephew John, his former Freiberg playmate. Freud had just finished his high school studies, and the trip north was certainly a well-earned reward. He reported home about his impressions as he contemplated his own future post-graduation. Once in Manchester, however, it must have been impossible for him to avoid seeing the textile factories and warehouses and the working class descendants of Philomela or Penelope: women at their looms. [Fig. 7]

Both of Freud's brothers, Emmanuel and Philipp, had set firm roots in Manchester by that time. Freud's brother Philipp established himself as a traveling salesman and businessman; he would marry a woman from the neighboring town of Birmingham, he would have a family, and in his older age, he would live on a pension. His older brother Emmanuel was more successful in business, and in the 1890s, he could afford to acquire a large house that would serve as a residence for his family and business quarters. It was used as a cotton warehouse. [Fig. 8]



Fig. 7. Women working at Manchester factory; photograph from "Spinning the Web."



Fig. 8. Residence and Cotton Warehouse, previously occupied by Emmanuel Freud and his family in Manchester. Photograph by Pilar Caballero-Alias.

In other ways, however, this family flourished less. Four of Freud's nephews and nieces in Manchester did not marry, one niece married late, and none of them had children of their own. Emmanuel Freud's son Samuel, who inherited his father's business, tried to stay in touch with Freud after his father's death, and contacted Freud again after his emigration to London.²⁴ At that time John's fate was unknown; he had left the family early and worked in a cotton warehouse, but the Manchester records bear no trace of his life beyond his early youth. He may have moved away, or emigrated.

Emmanuel Freud's business ventures are documented in the Manchester archives, however, including a minor legal case that was decided in his favor. One of his employees, Mary Callighan, had stolen twelve pounds of cotton yarn and was subjected to a court trial. [Fig. 9] But this may not have been the only legal problem that the Freud family had to face. In his *Interpretation of Dreams*, published in 1899, Freud mentions his uncle Josef, his father's younger brother.²⁵ Josef was

²⁴The correspondence is preserved in the John Rylands Library, Manchester.

²⁵Didier Anzieu, *Freud's Self-Analysis*, trans. Peter Graham (Madison, Conn.: International Universities Press, 1986) 214–18.

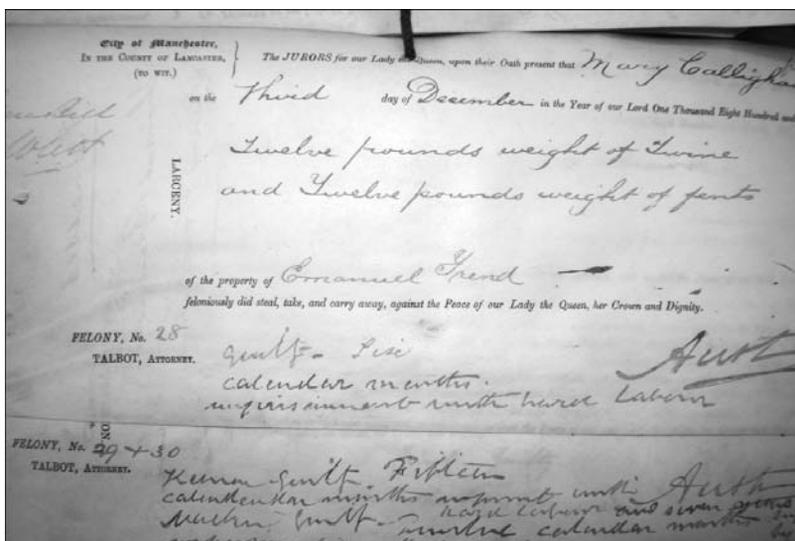


Fig. 9. Emmanuel Freud, Law case against Mary Callaghan concerning the theft of twelve pound of cotton yarn. Manchester City Archives. Photograph by Pilar Caballero-Alias.

caught by the police carrying false Russian ruble notes; he was tried for dealing with counterfeit money and was brought to jail. But the trial records deposited in Vienna offer a more complicated story. Uncle Josef apparently dealt with false ruble notes in Vienna as well as in Leipzig and elsewhere, and he was not the only family member caught in this endeavor. A son-in-law—Freud's cousin—in Czernowitz was also part of this undertaking, and convicted as well. Moreover, during his interrogation, Freud's uncle made a statement about the origins of these banknotes, and explained that he had received them from his nephews in Manchester. It is possible that Josef Freud received the banknotes from Freud's brothers, either during their visits to Vienna, or deposited within cotton bales that were shipped to the continent.²⁶ No police investigation was conducted involving Emmanuel or Philipp Freud, who were both safely located in England. But whether they were guilty of a crime or not, one should be aware of a simple fact: paper money, too, consisted of cotton fiber, and England was a center of the counterfeit industry at this time. Money, too, was textile.

²⁶ See Alain de Mijolla, *Freud: Fragments d'une histoire* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2003).



Fig. 10. Jacob and Amalia Freud and family, Vienna (ca. 1878). Freud Museum, London. Permission granted by the Freud Museum and Archives, London.

While the Freud brothers established themselves in Manchester, the new family of Jakob Freud settled in Vienna, and aspired to middle-class status. A family portrait, taken in Vienna, shows Jakob Freud with his wife and children as an established, well-off family man. The picture, taken in a photographer's studio, gives little evidence of the occasional financial help that the father expected from his far-traveled Manchester sons. [Fig. 10] In Vienna, just as in Freiberg, relatives lived close by. Most Jewish immigrants from the East settled in the Leopoldstadt, a section of town soon teeming with Jews from Moravia, Bohemia, Galicia, and Hungary.²⁷ Freud and his family did the same, and moved at first to the Leopoldstadt, a section of town that soon acquired the nickname *Mazzesinsel* ("matzo island").²⁸

Vienna itself was being transformed at that time. It shed its city wall,

²⁷ See Marsha Rozenblit, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867–1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), and Klaus Hödl, *Als Bettler in die Leopoldstadt: Galizische Juden auf dem Weg nach Wien* (Wien: Böhlau, 1994).

²⁸ See, for example, *Die Mazzesinsel: Juden in der Wiener Leopoldstadt 1918–1938*, ed. Ruth Beckermann (Vienna: Löcker, 1992).

and in its place, an elegant Ringstrasse was established that would soon sport, next to a new city hall, opera, theater, and university, various apartment buildings and mansions for the wealthy or at least the well-to-do. The Leopoldstadt was located outside the Ring. And many of the immigrant Jews who brought their trades with them dealt, like Jakob Freud, in wool and clothes. A section of the Ringstrasse—and one close to the Leopoldstadt quarter—was soon known as the “Textile Ring.” In the old town center, streets like the *Wollzeile* (the “Woolen Way”) gave evidence of the ongoing trade. An image of the Taborstrasse, close to the Freud’s family domicile in its early years in Vienna, documents the “urbanization” of a textile business that remained a “Jewish” trade. Thus, we view advertisements for a *Kleider-Magazin*, or “clothing store.” [Fig. 11]

In Vienna, too, Jakob Freud tried to make a living in his old occupation, trading with wool and clothes. But Freud had problems assuring a decent income for himself and his family; his business did not meet with great success, and money was scarce. Freud’s wish to study medicine was thus an attempt in upward mobility. However, in following this professional path and in joining Ernst Brücke’s laboratory, Freud did not entirely turn against a family trade. Freud exchanged the study of one fiber (*Faser*) with that of another. The nervous system provided a texture of its own, one that Freud was eager to sketch. [Fig. 12]

As for Freud’s analytic work, the metaphors of cloth making—that of weaving, spinning, unraveling—would become familiar ones. Interpreting Dora’s dreams, for example, Freud would soon take the fabric of her narrative, and analyze her language as well as the images that were woven into their texture to tell him of her story.²⁹ And curiously enough, not Ariadne’s thread, but a bobbin is placed into the young boy’s hand as he tries to come to terms with the absence of his mother in his seminal speculation on the death drive, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1927).³⁰

III. Tapestries

The images of spinning and weaving, of wool and yarn, thus join several histories together. Which is one to tell, and which is one to

²⁹Sigmund Freud, “Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria,” *Standard Edition*, vol. VII: 64.

³⁰Caroline Rooney, “Deconstruction and Weaving,” in: *Deconstructions: A User’s Guide*, ed. Nicholas Royle (London: Palgrave, 2000) 265.



Fig. 11. Taborstrasse, Leopoldstadt, Vienna II District (ca. 1899). Austrian National Library, Vienna.

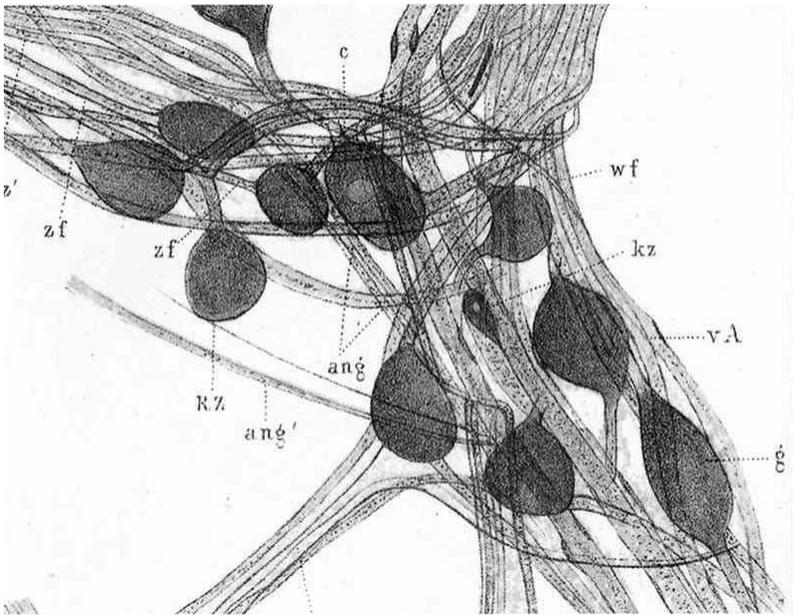


Fig. 12. Early Scientific Drawing of Neurons and Fibers under the Microscope, by Sigmund Freud (The New York Academy of Medicine). See also Lynn Gamwell and Mark Solms, *From Neurology to Psychoanalysis: Freud's Neurological Drawings and Diagrams of the Mind* (New York: New York Academy of Medicine, 2006) <<http://artmuseum.binghamton.edu/freudbook>>.

follow? On the one hand, there is the work of *Bildung*, and the land of Greek goddesses stretching yarn, using it as a tool for guidance, spinning and weaving. On the other hand, there is the wool and cloth business of Galician and Moravian Jews. The history of the nineteenth-century European textile industry refers to wandering male Jews as well as underprivileged female factory workers. There are women who spin and sew, there are men who trade in wool and sell cloth. The ancient world and nineteenth-century Europe, West and East, Gods and Jews, women and men: where then should we situate Freud, who can, with so much ease, describe both sexual difference and the work of culture with the example of the loom?

Can Freud, the storyteller, distance himself this easily from the weaving women? Or is he following the male tradition, and does he simply trade in cloth of sorts?

Perhaps we should not forget that, at the conception of psychoanalysis, Freud is offering us his story of Philomena as well. An ardent collector of antiquities, Freud favored not only ancient statues, but carpets and tapestries as well. One of his most prized possessions was a textile from Iran, a Qashqai Serkarlu wool rug, adorned with flowers and diamond medallions. [Fig. 13] Freud bought the rug in 1891, just when such carpets were becoming more available and more

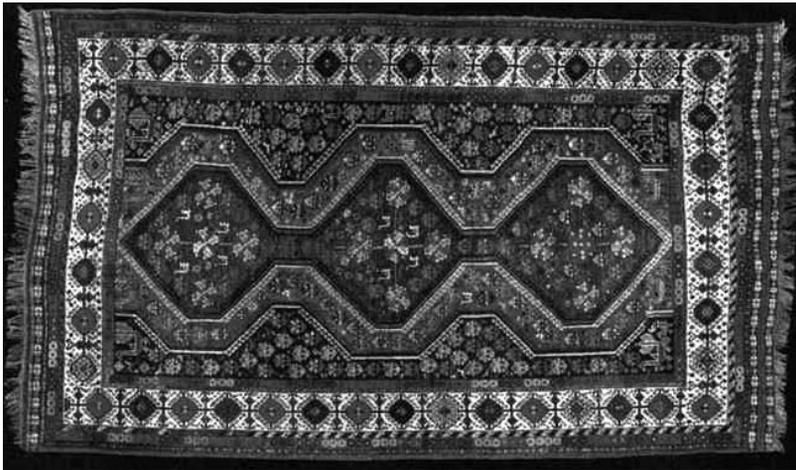


Fig. 13. Carpet, described as “from Smyrna (today Izmir).” Photograph by John Ross, Freud Privatstiftung, 2006; in: *Die Couch: Vom Denken im Liegen*, ed. Lydia Marinelli (Munich: Prestel, 2006) 6.



Fig. 14. Freud's couch. Photograph by Edmund Engelman (1939), in: Engelman, *Berggasse 19: Sigmund Freud's Wiener Domizil* (Stuttgart: Belser, 1976) plate 13.

fashionable in Vienna, and at that time, Vienna would turn indeed into a center of a new Oriental rug trade.³¹

Too precious to put on the floor, perhaps, or to hang on the wall, the rug found its place in a quite specific location, and as an object in a peculiarly liminal site. He placed it on a couch, or divan, on which his patients would rest during treatment time. Thus, it became not only one of Freud's most prized possessions, but quite literally the foundational object of psychoanalytic treatment itself. [Fig. 14]

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³¹Janine Burke, *The Sphinx on the Table: Sigmund Freud's Art Collection and the Development of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Walker and Co., 2006) 134–35.