

**WHO'S THE AUTHOR OF FREUD'S WORKS?
A CONFUTATION OF "A CRITIQUE OF FREUD'S
PRE-ANALYTIC AND PSYCHOANALYTIC DREAM-THEORY"
BY ADOLF GRÜNBAUM**

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1. Introduction

In a previous paper "Freud's Line of Reasoning – A note on the epistemic and clinical inconsistency of Grünbaum's argument pretending to confute Freud's therapeutic approach, with reference to Stengers' thesis on psychoanalysis" (Baldini, 1998: 936), I demonstrated the unfounded nature of Grünbaum's objections to Freud in his work *The Foundations of Psychoanalysis* (Grünbaum, 1984) with regard to the epistemic and clinical foundations of psychoanalysis.

I pointed out that his criticism is based both on a systematic distortion of the Freudian text, due to an insufficient knowledge of it, as well as on a frequently tendentious reading. As a matter of fact, Grünbaum does not criticize Freud's theory at all, he criticizes an *ad hoc* reinvention of Freud's theory.

I now propose to show that the criticism expressed in his essay "Is Manifest Dream-Content a Compromise Formation with Repressed Wishes? – A critique of Freud's pre-analytic and psychoanalytic dream-theory" is equally unfounded, as it is formulated according to the same model of systematic distortion of the Freudian text.^{1,2}

1. A. Grünbaum, "Manifest Dream-Content a Compromise-Formation with Repressed Wishes? – A critique of Freud's pre-analytic and psychoanalytic dream-theory", manuscript of the lecture presented at the International Conference on "Freud's preanalytical writings", May 1995, Gent. As Grünbaum's article was not yet published when this essay was written, the numbers of the pages of the quotations refer to a typescript that Gertrudis Van de Vijver of the University of Gent kindly put at my disposal.

2. This is the reason for this paper's ironic title. It echoes what some eminent professors currently ask about the authorship of Shakespeare's works.

The various reconstructions, presentations, and syntheses of Freud's thought which are produced both by his advocates and by his opponents, are all too often mistaken for his actual thought. In other words, *Sulloway's or Fancher's Freud is seen as the very same as Sigmund Freud's Freud*: that is, the name "Sigmund Freud" is considered as that of Nicolas Bourbaki, the *nom de plume* that designates the writers of a collective work.

However, if we simply ascribed it to its actual and only author, namely that obscure Jewish neurologist who lived in Vienna at the turn of the century, the creation of this apocryphal Freud, who – as a real *golem* – is slowly replacing the original one, would be hindered.

But this is not how things are happening, nor it is what I would expect and wish.

A ruthless criticism is essential to the development of a science, and today an exhaustive, lucid discussion of Freud's work is necessary if we want psychoanalysis to pass the stage of childhood and emancipate itself from its founder. However, if this criticism is to be *effective*, that is, to result in a contribution of truth, one must make reference to *Freud's actual ideas*, rather than to an unfaithful reproduction of them, however well devised it may be.

Hence, I must say that what initially seemed to me a great opportunity for psychoanalysis – i.e., the intervention of such a renowned philosopher as Grünbaum, who had already excelled himself in physical epistemology – soon proved to be a wasted opportunity.

Once again, historical contingencies force me to repeat the very sentence Freud himself bitterly pronounced on more than one occasion: "Psychoanalysis *will do it by itself*".

2. My arguments with regard to Freud's pre-analytic dream-theory

2.1. *What role did the value of the "Project of a Psychology" play in the building of Freud's dream-theory?*

First of all, I must vigorously stress that Freud did not just consign his "Project"-manuscript to oblivion in a drawer" as Grünbaum writes (Grünbaum, 1995: 11), but he openly disavowed it. In his letter to Fließ of

29 November, 1895 he even goes as far as describing it as "an aberration" (Freud, 1950a [1887-1902]: 100).

Therefore, an honest, well-balanced, fair reconstruction of Freud's doctrine should only consider the "Project" in philological terms, and not in theoretical terms. In spite of this, Sulloway's and Fancher's reconstructions, reformulated by Kitcher and largely accepted by Grünbaum, ascribe to the "Project" a theoretical validity *which Freud himself denied it*.

Their construction compels them to assume that there is a continuity between the "Project" and *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and that the latter is simply a continuation and development of the former. In fact, in the ninth chapter of Sulloway's *Freud, Biologist of the mind*, it is explicitly stated that Freud's dream-theory "passed through two different major stages and the latter formulation incorporated the former" (Sulloway, 1982: 361).

They emphasize this continuity in the wish-fulfillment thesis of dreaming. What is more in order to give definitive credit to their *theoretical revaluation* of the "Project" they (especially Fancher and Grünbaum) assert that this thesis *is based* on the building of the 1895 structural and neurobiological model. As Grünbaum himself states: "In a 1973 book entitled *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, Raymond Fancher explains in greater detail just how Freud *deduced* his 1895 wish-fulfillment hypothesis of dreaming from his postulates concerning the energy-economy of the nervous system" (Grünbaum, 1995: 2).³

It is only on the basis of this *assumption* that Grünbaum can maintain that Freud's abandonment of that model leaves the wish-fulfillment thesis of dreaming without epistemic foundation (*Ibid.*: 2-3).

Unfortunately, *this assumption is untenable*. Moreover, the *misconception* that Freud *deduced* the wish-fulfillment thesis of dreaming from *his structural and neurobiological model* is also shared by Pribram and Gill (Pribram, Gill, 1986: 172). These authors even assert that Freud should have published his "Project" and then put it away (*Ibid.*: 208).

As my title suggests, there is a reason for asking *who is the author of Freud's works*. In fact, all these scholars do not believe what Freud himself states in the second chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, i.e., that he arrived to the wish-fulfillment thesis *through his clinical practice, by developing the therapeutic method*.

3. Original emphasis.

Yet, his correspondence with Fließ bears witness to his sincerity. In fact, Freud's letter of March 4th, 1895 demonstrates that, at that time, *he already interpreted dreams in terms of a wish-fulfillment* (Freud, 1950a [1887-1902]: 85-86).

As Sulloway himself correctly states: "Freud compared this dream to an 'oneiric psychosis' with wish-fulfillment experienced by one of his patients" (Sulloway, 1982: 356). However, he overlooks this fact when he insists that the wish-fulfillment thesis of dreaming was created at a later date, while it is clearly already implied by Freud's explanation of that dream. Sulloway doesn't take into account that the date of birth of a theory is not that of its baptism (i.e. of its standard formulation), but that of its *conceptual formation*. In fact, the theory which, in the "Project", is crystallized in the sentence "dream is a wish-fulfillment", is already *conceptually* present in the above-mentioned letter.

The first hint of the writing of the "Project" can be traced back to a letter dated April 27th, and, as Freud deals with the question of sleeping and dreaming in the later part of that work, it is correct to state that the wish-fulfillment thesis of dreaming was *conceived of before formulation in The "Project", and therefore that it was not deduced from anything Freud had not yet thought*.

Indeed, in the "Project" Freud tried to do *exactly the opposite*, i.e. he *tried to deduce a structural and neurobiological model from his clinical theories*. It should be noted that he was radically unsatisfied with the results of his first effort.

This is demonstrated by the fact that he formulated *at least two significantly contradictory versions* of this "Project". This very important aspect *has never been mentioned* by the advocates of the theoretical validity of the "Project", for fear that their beautiful house of cards would collapse.

In fact, in his letter to Fließ of 1 January, 1896 (Freud, 1950a [1887-1902]: 104-107), Freud outlines an idea which, as he himself states, involved "a complete revision of all my theories f??". In this letter, we can identify two important differences with respect to the first version of the "Project":

- ? changes its status as it also acquires the perceptive function which was formerly ascribed to f ;
- ? changes its position and is now situated between f and ?.

In this way, Freud hoped to solve two problems which, as he explicitly asserts, he saw as the principle faults of his first version:

- the question of hallucination, which changed from regression to f to become regression to ? ;
- the question of the determination of the force of the f -excitements which was transferred to ? -neurones.

If Freud was to be in a position to deduce the wish-fulfillment thesis of dreaming from his first structural and neurobiological model (f ? ?), he *would have had to have solved the problem of hallucination*. In fact, a structural theory of hallucination is the *necessary theoretical premise for a deduction "of the hallucinatory wish-fulfillment thesis of dreaming" from the neurobiological model*.

However, we see that Freud, *although stating* that the dream is an hallucinatory wish-fulfillment, believes that he has not yet at his disposal a structural and neurobiological model, which is *able to receive such a thesis: therefore he cannot possibly have deduced it from this*.

All this goes to show that the different versions of the "Project" are nothing but *repeated attempts at the induction of a structural and neurobiological model from clinical theory*.

In fact, if we consider the *Traumdeutung*, we can see that, once again, *the consciousness changes both its position and its function*: it is only at this point that Freud seems to have a satisfactory theory of hallucination. But, *in order to gather into the consciousness all the necessary features to account for the dream being an hallucinatory wish-fulfillment*, he had to distinguish between a neurobiological model and a structural one. That is, whereas the structural model was previously also considered as neurobiological, it now was only structural. This is because from its clinical theory it was not possible to arrive at the induction of a structural model that was also neurobiological, just as a satisfactory clinical theory could not be *deducible* from a simultaneously neurobiological and structural model: the impasse of the cognitive sciences in this direction demonstrates it.

Hence, the wish-fulfillment thesis of dreaming cannot be invalidated by the failure of the "Project", as Grünbaum believes, *because it is not based on it*. Therefore Freud had no reason to abandon it along with the "Project".

This thesis can only be invalidated in epistemic-clinical terms. Although it is true that Grünbaum also tried to do it in his way, I have demonstrated elsewhere that this attempt was unsuccessful (Baldini, 1998: 9-36).

Hence, I have demonstrated:

- that Freud's wish-fulfillment theory of dreaming is not derived from theoretical assumptions, but, rather is based on a clinical foundation which, in another work of mine, I have demonstrated – against Grünbaum – to be widely convincing. Considering this case closed, I will exempt myself from dealing with it in this paper;
- that, accordingly, Freud's abandonment of the neurobiological model formulated in his "Project" does not affect at all the wish-fulfillment theory of dreaming.

2.2. Did Freud really formulate in his "Project" the ego-depletion theory in the same way as Grünbaum illustrated it?

I will show that Grünbaum's presentation of this Freudian theory is rendered absolutely unreliable by four very serious conceptual confusions, which irremediably destroy his criticism.

2.2.1. The confusion between sleeping and dreaming

Apparently, Grünbaum believes that according to Freud there is no difference between the psychic process which produces sleep and that which produces dreams. In fact, in his draft we can read: "(...) his hypothesis is that we go to sleep *and dream* with a decathected, depleted ego" (Grünbaum, 1995: 6).⁴

I would like to point out that the italics are Grünbaum's, and so he underlines the supposed identity between the process of sleeping and that of dreaming. In particular, he proves this identity by the fact that, according to Freud, both sleeping and dreaming are essentially characterized by a condition in which the ego is "decathected, depleted". In another passage he even speaks of "dream-sleep" (*Ibid.*: 17).

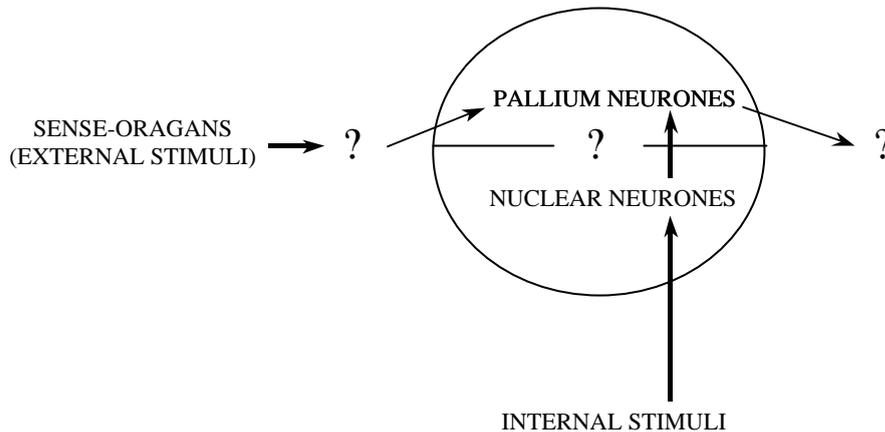
I must admit that I do not know in which edition of the "Project of a Scientific Psychology" he found those assertions, but it must be one of the apocryphal versions I mentioned before. In fact, in the *official* edition – the only one I acknowledge – things are very different.

To evidence this, it is necessary to illustrate in detail Freud's theory of sleep and dreams, as it is contained in that work.

In this respect, it is very important to underline that this theory is *dynamic* in nature. In other words, according to Freud, *changes in the flow of Q*, are decisive in distinguishing waking, sleeping and dreaming.

4. Italics in the original.

Thus, the waking state is characterized by the following flow:



In fact, as Freud puts it: "(...) during day-time a constant, even though displaceable, cathexis (*attention*), is sent into the pallium neurones, which receive perception from f (...)" (Freud, 1950a [1895]: 337).⁵

This is accentuated in another passage: "It is tempting to assign the determining role here to the great current of discharge in waking life, f – motility" (*Ibid.*: 339).

Sleep thus demands a triple change. As Freud writes, it necessarily involves a "closure of those sense-organs that are capable of being closed" (*Ibid.*: 337), followed by "a *lowering of the endogenous load in ?-nucleus*, which makes the secondary function superfluous" (*Ibid.*: 336).⁶ Moreover, during sleep, "the spinal tonus is in part relaxed" (*Ibid.*: 337).

However, this does not mean that either the external sensory flow (from f) or the internal one (from ?) are entirely eliminated, but only that they are reduced below a certain threshold. In this regard, Freud's text leaves no room for doubt (*Ibid.*: 336).⁷ "The *essential precondition* of sleep may be clearly recognized in children. Children sleep so long as they are not tormented by any [physical] need or external stimulus (hunger and cold from wetting). They go to sleep after being satisfied (at the breast). Adults,

5. Original emphasis.

6. Original emphasis.

7. Original emphasis.

too, fall asleep easily *post coenam et coitum*. Accordingly, the precondition of sleep is a *lowering of the endogenous load in ?-nucleus*, which makes the secondary function superfluous. In sleep an individual is in the ideal state of inertia, rid of his store of Q?. In adults this store is collected in the *ego*; we may assume that it is the *unloading of the ego* which determines and characterizes sleep. And here, as is immediately clear, we have the *precondition of psychological primary process*. It is not certain whether in adults the *ego* is completely relieved of its burden in sleep. In any case it withdraws an enormous amount of its cathexes, which, however, are restored on awakening, immediately and without trouble."

He goes on to write: "It seems as though ?-cathexes that have not been withdrawn level themselves off partly in the direction of their nearest facilitations and partly in the direction of neighboring cathexes. If the ego were completely unloaded, sleep would necessarily be dreamless" (*Ibid.*: 339).

If we consider the specific nature of the "Project", namely that it is a *draft* where ideas have not yet reached that character of clearness and relative organicity which they acquire in a definitive work, it is not difficult to understand that, according to Freud, the "state of ideal inertia" he talks about is never actually reached and that for him it is always *a relative rather than an absolute discharge*. In particular, his mentioning of the fact that adults fall asleep easily *post coenam et coitum* serves only as *an empirical clue* of one of the preconditions for the sleeping state and not, as Grünbaum would lead us to believe (Grünbaum, 1995: 8), as a *conditio sine qua non* for falling asleep: Freud says that they fall asleep *easily*, not that they always do so, nor that this is the main condition for falling asleep.

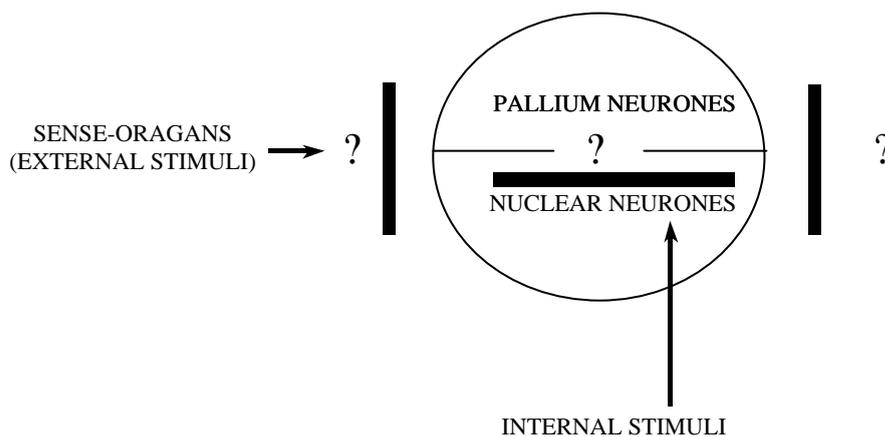
In fact – and this is the sore point of Grünbaum's lucubration – according to Freud *the three preconditions for the sleep I mentioned* (reduction of the flow from f, reduction of the endogenous cathexis of the nucleus ? and relaxation of the spinal tone) *are not sufficient for its attainment in order to actually reach the sleeping state it is necessary to add the discharge of the pallium neurones by ?* (Freud, 1950a [1895]: 337). "If ? withdraws these pallium cathexes, the perceptions take place upon uncatheted neurones and are slight, and perhaps not capable of giving an indication of quality from ?."

What Freud seems to be saying here is that *the decisive condition* for sleep is the interruption of the flow *within ?* that connects the "Kern-Neuronen" to the "Mantelneuronen", and that its preconditions are the

relaxation of the spinal tone, the reduction of the stimuli from f and the reduction of the specific cathexis of the ψ -nucleus, but *not their absolute suspension*.

In fact, in the passage I have just quoted Freud explicitly admits the possibility of such a residual cathexis, *to the extent that he demands an additional condition in order to attain the sleeping state*. If an individual merely fulfilled the three preconditions for sleep and not the fourth, he would produce in himself a state like that of a yogic *trance*, and not a sleeping state.

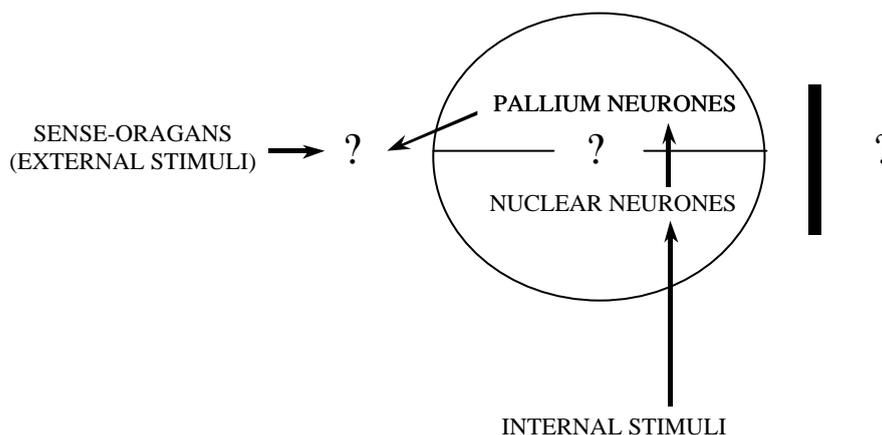
This leads to the following schema:



In the case of dreaming things are significantly different: "There are several explanations of the hallucinatory nature of dream-cathexes. In the first place, it might be supposed that the *current* from f to motility has [during waking life] prevented a retrogressive cathexis of the f neurones from ψ , and that when this current ceases f is retrogressively cathected and the necessary precondition for [the generation of] quality thus fulfilled. The only argument against this is the consideration that the f neurones, by the fact of being uncathected, should be protected against cathexis from ψ , just as is motility. It is distinctive of sleep that it reverses the whole situation here, that it suspends the motor discharge from ψ and makes the retrogressive one to f possible. It is tempting to assign the

determining role here to the great current of discharge in waking life, f – motility" (*Ibid.*: 339).⁸

Here again, Freud is very straightforward. In short what he is saying is that the sleeping state, reached by the withdrawal of the cathexis of the pallium neurones on the nuclear neurones, stops the constant flow from f to ? which characterizes the waking state and *makes possible the eventual regressive flow from f to ? which characterizes dreaming*. Such a condition is met by an increase of the cathexis of the nuclear neurones brought about by an influx of internal stimuli, *which produces a new cathexis of the pallium by the ?-nucleus, but in the direction of f*.



Not only does this imply that there is an essential difference between the sleeping and the dreaming state, but also implies that *during sleep, the ego gradually starts working again*. In fact, *it is the direction of the flow of excitation which is constitutive of the dream, and not the withdrawal of the ego-cathexis*: this feature concerns only the sleep. This is the reason why Freud consistently adds that: "If the ego were completely unloaded, sleep would necessarily be dreamless" (*Ibid.*: 339).

In fact, in order to have a regressive flow from ? to f, a new cathexis of the pallium by ? is indispensable.

8. Original emphasis.

To sum, Freud by no means believes that the psychic process of sleep and that of the dream are identical. Due to his superficial reading of the "Project", Grünbaum failed to realize that according to Freud's theory:

- what is necessary for sleep is the withdrawal of the cathexis of the pallium by the ?-nucleus and not its three preconditions;
- an entirely depleted ego is therefore not necessary for sleep;
- it is the regressive direction of the flow of excitation from ? to f , and not the ego-discharge which is necessary for dreams;
- a new ego-cathexis (both in its nuclear portion and in that of the pallium) is essential for dreams.

Sometimes, inaccuracy and superficiality become comical, one cannot help smiling when reading a particularly funny passage from Grünbaum's essay: "Yet, the Freud-historian Frank Sulloway opined (in personal conversation) that precisely this incompatibility suggests to him a more charitable conclusion as follows: Freud, who did not edit his draft of the "Project", just incurred a slip of the pen when he wrote there, in an isolate sentence, that total ego-depletion would result in completely dreamless sleep" (Grünbaum, 1995: 22).

We are sincerely grateful to the author for having set the door of the philosophical-historiographical *boudoir* to let us catch a glimpse of the sort of clever scenario his critical rumination is based upon. This will certainly be a lesson for future generations!

Let us come back to the point. The four points which were ignored by Grünbaum, clearly show that Freud's pre-analytic theory of sleep and dreams *is not at all incompatible with the fact that*: "there are untold millions of dreamers whose egos are surely not sufficiently decathected at sleep-time to give endogenous wish-cathexes overwhelming energetic predominance over secondary ego processes" (*Ibid.*: 5).

In fact, when someone goes to sleep, while "engaged in secondary processes such as planning, anticipating, judging, and even calculating, whose motto might be Auguste Comte's *prévoir pour prévenir*" (*Ibid.*: 14), the reduction of the relative cathexis of ?-nucleus will be scarcely below the lowest threshold required for sleep. Therefore the slightest interior excitation will bring about the new ego-cathexis, which is necessary for dreaming. *In fact, according to Freud's authentic theory, as it is stated in the "Project", these are the individuals who dream for longer periods of time and more frequently!*

I will deal with this aspect in my discussion of Grünbaum's second, tragic confusion – the confusion *between structure and function, mind and ego*.

2.2.2. *The confusion between structure and function*

Without doubt, in his reconstruction of the Freudian pre-analytic ego-theory, Grünbaum does not take into account the fundamental difference between structure and function, between mind and ego.

It must be said that this confusion can be attributed to some of the authors on whom he bases his interpretation and whose arguments he never takes the trouble to verify, thus displaying surprising trust for someone who professes to be an empiricist.

In fact, already in his first quotation of Sulloway, we find an absolutely unbelievable statement: "Dreams, according to this conception, are simply hallucinations motivated by the small residues of energy that are ordinarily left over in an otherwise sleeping (*or energyless*) mind" (*Ibid.*: 1).⁹

After a short while Fancher too uses similar terms: "In the period immediately after an individual falls asleep, *mental activity in general is reduced to a minimum*" (*Ibid.*: 9).¹⁰

From these two quotations we can easily infer that both these authors as well as Grünbaum take the transitive relation "depleted ego = energyless mind" for granted. In particular, they seem to believe that *the eventual residual quantity of cathexis in the ego is equal to the eventual residual quantity of cathexis in the mind*.

In order to demonstrate how far this is from Freud's actual ideas, I will reconstruct his ego-theory, as it is stated in the "Project".

First of all, we must understand that in the "Project", *the ego is not seen as a structural entity but as an exclusively functional one*. In fact, Freud describes the ego as "an organization (...) in ?" (Freud, 1950a [1895]: 323) but stresses that it consists of the "totality of the ?-cathexes, *at a given time*, in which a permanent component is distinguished from a changing one" (*Ibid.*: 323).¹¹

The phrase "at a given time" is used to stress that the ego is subjected to *temporal* changes lending it an exclusively functional character. This is confirmed by the following sentence: "If the level of cathexis in the ego-nucleus rises, the extent of the ego will be able to expand its range; if it sinks, the ego will narrow concentrically" (*Ibid.*: 370).

9. Italics added.

10. Italics added.

11. Italics added.

A few pages previously Freud also explains that the stable part of the ego consists of the nuclear neurones and that the unstable part consists of the pallium neurones (*Ibid.*: 328).

Moreover, in the first part of chapter three Freud posits that the portion most peculiar to the ego is that consisting of "Kern-Neuronen" (*Ibid.*: 369-370).

The exclusive task of the ego is to *inhibit* certain paths of conduction by *stabilizing lateral cathexes* capable of interrupting the primary psychic processes: "Let us picture the ego as a network of cathectic neurones well facilitated in relation to one another" (*Ibid.*: 323).

I fail to see where Grünbaum drew his persuasion that Freud, in his "Project", talks about the ego in terms of a "storage facility for energy or cathexes" (Grünbaum, 1995: 11). Even after a superficial reading it is evident that the ego is similar to a railway system with barriers or a canal system with its dams. The idea at the basis of Freud's pre-analytic ego-theory is *highly dynamic*, and is certainly not as static as the image of the "container" (*Ibid.*: 11) would suggest.

If we, faithfully respecting Freud's ideas, can visualize the ?-system as a canal system divided into two parts:

- the part where the water flows freely (the pallium), undergoing rises or falls in its level depending on the inflow;
- another part (the nucleus) where a system of dams (i.e. facilities) restricts the water in certain canals (nucleus of the ego) while the others remain empty. New water that flows in (internal stimuli) can only flow into the canals which already contain water.

Now let us attempt to understand how the sleeping state can modify this.

Taking our hydraulic metaphor further, we may say that the "closing of the sense-organs which can close" allows the water which is contained within the canal system to flow out. The free-outlawing water (the pallium) flows into the part of the canal where the water is already present (nucleus of the ego). Simultaneously, the dams which separated the nucleus of the ego from the remaining "Kern-Neuronen" are opened (discharge of the ego). The water will then also flow within the canals that previously were dry, *producing a lowering of the level of water in the sub-system of canals where it had flowed* earlier (nucleus of the ego).

The level of water is now the same in the whole canal system which is made up by the nuclear neurones, so we can no longer distinguish a

particular sub-system. The nucleus of the ego is therefore discharged, decathected, but not *depleted*. The cancellation of the sub-system where all the water was previously concentrated *does not mean that it dries up, but that it becomes indistinguishable from the general system*.

In other words, the neuronic sub-system which in the nuclear neurones, constitutes the nucleus of the ego *is entirely depleted from the functional point of view, whereas from a structural point of view it has only reduced its cathexis*. The only part of the ego which is decathected both structurally and functionally is the secondary one, constituted by the pallium.

We should add that, despite this process, *the same global quantity of cathexis continues to exist in ?*.

This should make it clear for even the most refractory intellects that *a certain structural cathexis can be maintained even when the functional cathexis has withdrawn completely*, i.e. that *the global quantity of energy within ? is absolutely independent from the relative quantity stored up in the ego*. This is quite the opposite of what Sulloway, Fancher and Grünbaum believe, because Freud subscribes to the idea that "energyless mind ? depleted ego".

Thus Grünbaum's failure to take note of Freud's functional ego-theory prevented him from realizing that *a relatively high level of Q? within ? is perfectly compatible with a depleted ego*.

As I have already said, the precondition for sleep postulated by Freud is in fact that the global endogenous cathexis of the ? nucleus *drops below a certain threshold*. Obviously, the lower it is, the deeper, longer and more dreamless the sleep will be, because the inflow of any new external stimuli will take longer to cross the threshold level. On the other hand, when the global endogenous cathexis of nuclear ? lies just below the threshold level, as in the case of people who go to sleep troubled with some problem, sleep will be lighter, more discontinuous and richer in dreams as even the smaller inflow of internal stimuli will be able to start a new process of ego-cathexis.

What is important, however, is that all this is perfectly compatible with a withdrawal of the ego-cathexis that, in any case, must be extremely drastic even if, as Freud points out, not complete. Thus, in Freud's pre-analytical theory of sleep and dreams there is no "*direct clash* between his thesis of the *depleted* ego at sleep-time (...) and the necessity of a *cathected* ego in his compromise-model of both manifest dream-content and neurotic symptoms" (Grünbaum, 1995: 21).¹²

12. Original emphasis.

If one, like Grünbaum, incorrectly identifies the mind with the ego, it becomes impossible to conceive of a sufficiently cathected mind in which an almost entirely decathected ego exists. But this is Grünbaum's problem, not Freud's.

2.2.3. *The confusion between real and rational*

Grünbaum enumerates four classes of individuals whose dreams, according to him, cannot be dominated by the secondary process:

- "numbers of people at all socio-economic levels go to sleep engaged in secondary processes such as planning, anticipating, judging and even calculating" (*Ibid.*: 14), for instance "mathematicians, chemists, biologists, poets" (*Ibid.*: 15);
- "during famines the world over, millions of starving people go to bed hungry and very worried about their nutritional survival" (*Ibid.*: 16);
- "during economic recessions in industrialized countries, other millions go to sleep with strong anxieties about their job-security" (*Ibid.*: 16);
- "other untold numbers of people from various social strata enter upon sleep and dreaming, chronically full of *fear* and *anger* for a multitude of reasons" (*Ibid.*: 17).

This leads him to conclude with joyous superficiality: "But, patently, all of these bed-time mental activities are *reality-oriented and ego-controlled secondary processes!*"

It is manifest that, in Grünbaum's eyes, mathematics and fear, chemistry and anxiety, poetry and hunger, biology and anger are all secondary processes which are reality-oriented and controlled by the ego.

What is worth noticing is that he indiscriminately groups together "cabbages and kings", as Carroll would say – things so different from each other such as mathematics and anger. What is more, he places both theoretically-oriented thought-processes and practically-oriented thought-processes *under the umbrella of reality*. In short, it is as if *reality itself* provides the solution to Fermat's small theorem, the writings of an elegant verse and the anxieties about job-security.

Although I am not a philosopher, I know that there is only one philosophical doctrine able to achieve this, namely idealism according to which *the rational and the real are identical*.

I also know that Grünbaum does not miss an opportunity to proclaim himself an empiricist. However many *theoretical empiricists* prove to be, *de facto, practical idealists*, thus confirming the saying: "The road to hell is paved with good intentions".

What is decisive for a philosophy is not its assumptions, but its results and I would kindly ask the *so-called* empiricist Grünbaum to note that in this case *the result of his speculation is exquisitely Hegelian*.

In fact, since when the diagonal of a square had anything to do with the real? In order to prove this, it is necessary to establish first of all the transitive relation "rational = real".

Indeed, only an irreducible idealist could sustain that the plot of *Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde* – a further example given by Grünbaum (*Ibid.*: 12) – is relative to something real.

If Grünbaum is to really become the empiricist he claims to be, he should first of all realize that theoretically-oriented thought-processes *need not be reality-oriented in order to be accomplished*. This would stop Bernard Riemann and Robert Louis Stevenson turning in their graves.

With regard to practically-oriented thought-processes, the question is somewhat more complicated.

Once again we can take one of Grünbaum's examples at random; that of starving people during famines (*Ibid.*: 16). We have only two ways to demonstrate that their dreams are *necessarily* reality-oriented.

The first and easier possibility would be to postulate that – as with the activities of theoretically-oriented thought – the individual woke up with a solution and was able to find food thanks to his/her previous oneiric activity. But, as, during famines, these "millions of hungry dreamers" go on dying in spite of their dreams, I conclude that this alternative does not confirm Grünbaum's thesis: it rather serves as evidence of the opposite.

Then, the only alternative – the one Grünbaum must follow in order to sustain his thesis – consists in the preliminary acknowledgement that not only the will to appease one's hunger goes on working during sleep, *but also that the mere presence of such a will ensures the connection with reality which is essential for the secondary process*.

Unfortunately, we are thus obliged to acknowledge a very serious discrepancy, namely just that sort of practical syllogism Grünbaum himself later accuses Freud of: "Alas, he encumbers that thesis – which itself will be seen to be dubious in any case – with the vocabulary of intentional action familiar from the practical syllogism. On that conception, an agent carries out an action A, because the agent desires to achieve a goal G and believes that A will achieve G" (*Ibid.*: 34).

In short, the only *possible* way for Grünbaum to maintain that *at least* the practically-oriented thought-processes continue to be oriented by reality even during sleep, is to resort to an argument which, as he himself admits lacks a foundation. I wish to stress that this second argument is

also of an idealistic nature, as it implies a convergence between will and reality which is based on the assumption that the rational and the real are identical.

Furthermore, we have no proof that affective states such as fear, anxiety and anger are automatically oriented by reality. Indeed, psychopathology is characterized by considerable exceptions to this idea. Even if we admit that a whole class of them follow the laws of the secondary process even during dreaming, it fatally falls within the previous case, that of the practically-oriented thought-processes. If reality-oriented dreams of anger actually existed, they would have considerable effects of solution of anger itself in the real, in view of the diffusion of this affective state in the human race!

I have demonstrated that:

- theoretically-oriented thought-processes do not need to refer to reality in order to succeed;
- and there is no evidence that the oneiric continuation of practically-oriented thought-processes has any connections with reality. Rather, the fact that it does not produce any macroscopically noticeable result tends to accredit the opposite thesis.

2.2.4. The confusion between primary process and irrationality

Grünbaum makes another less noticeable but equally serious mistake in his superficial reading of Freud, which is the real reason for the idealistic shift that I have just denounced.

The reason why Grünbaum attributes no role to the primary process in the success of theoretically-oriented thought-processes is that he ascribes to them *a character of radical irrationality*.

Freud himself never says that the difference between the primary process and the secondary one is that the former is irrational while the latter is rational.

If we carefully read the fifteenth paragraph of the first chapter in the "Project", entitled *Primary and Secondary Process in ?* (Freud, 1950a [1895]: 324-327) we can distinctly see that the secondary process is a rational process that concerns all those discharge-processes which need a real object to be accomplished (*Ibid.*: 330). Evidently, the primary process would be entirely inadequate for their achievement. *But this does not imply that it is an irrational process. When the process of discharge does not require a real object, and therefore demands no sign of reality, it*

appears to be the most proper thought-process, while the secondary process carries out only a marginal task, that of adding clearness, consistency, etc. Therefore, ever since the "Project" Freud believed that it was perfectly possible, if not highly probable, for a purely theoretical problem to be successfully worked out during the dream.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams* this thesis is formulated with utmost clarity: "They [the primary processes] occur wherever ideas abandoned by the preconscious cathexis are left to themselves and can become filled with the uninhibited energy which flows from the unconscious and strives for discharge. There are further facts which go to show that the processes described as incorrect are not really falsifications of our normal procedure, of defective thinking, but the modes of operation of the psychic apparatus when freed from inhibition" (Freud, 1900a: 446).

And later on: "If the dream continues and completes mental work begun during the day, and even brings valuable new ideas to light, we have only to strip off the dream-disguise from this, as the contribution of the dream-work, and the mark of the assistance of dark powers in the depths of the psyche (...). The intellectual achievement as such belongs to the same psychic forces as are responsible for all such achievements during the day. We are probably much too inclined to over-estimate the conscious character even of intellectual and artistic production. From the reports of certain writers who have been highly productive, such as Goethe and Helmholtz, we learn, rather, that the most essential and original part of their creations came to them in the form of inspirations, and offered itself to their awareness in an almost completed state. In other cases, where there is a concerted effort of all the psychic forces, there is nothing strange in the fact that conscious activity, too, lends its aid. But it is the much-abused privilege of conscious activity to hide from us all other activities wherever it participates" (*Ibid.*: 451).

3. My arguments with regard to the analytical dream-theory in Freud

I will now deal with Grünbaum's arguments concerning Freud's psychoanalytical theory, which was formulated after 1900.

I will not deal with his criticism of the theory of the etiologic validity of free association because since, as mentioned at the beginning of this paper, I have already demonstrated its lack of foundation in a previous work (Baldini, 1998: 9-36).

There remain two points to be discussed:

- the confusion between the different notions of "ego" in the development of Freud's theory;
- the complete misunderstanding of what Freud states with regard to the "wish to sleep".

3.1. *The confusion between the different notions of "ego" in the development of Freud's theory*

In his draft Grünbaum explains: "As we saw, Freud's repudiation of his neurobiological model of dreaming absolved him from retaining the ego-depletion thesis of the "Project". But the price of this dispensation was to let his assertion of universal wish-generation of dreams dangle all together ill-supported. Yet, dropping the ego-depletion requirement left him free, in his 1900 theory, to assign a role to a *cathected ego* in dream-formation in keeping with his compromise model, but without incurring the prior incoherence. Now, *he enlarged the ego's functions*, even beyond its role as censor of admissibility to consciousness: he endowed the ego with *the wish to sleep* as a universal motive. Thus, there was a still further need of a *cathected ego*" (Grünbaum, 1995: 23).¹³

His line of reasoning can be summed up as follows:

- in 1900, Freud abandoned the ego-depletion thesis which he had sustained in the "Project";
- the fact that he *enlarged no functions* of the ego beyond those he had assigned to it until then – assigning to it the censorship and the wish to sleep – means that a *cathected ego* was necessary;
- this is inconsistent with the wish-fulfillment thesis, as (according to him) it is deduced from the thesis of the depleted ego.

What I have already said has exhaustively demonstrated that according to Freud a new cathexis of the ego has always been essential to dreaming. This is by no means inconsistent with the wish-fulfillment thesis as it *is not based* on the depleted ego. Therefore, I do not want to re-discuss the dreadful series of mistakes made by Grünbaum.

What is worth noticing here is that Grünbaum treats the ego Freud referred to in *The Interpretation of Dreams* as if it were a *mere enlargement* of that referred to in 1895.

13. My emphasis.

This however is a grave mistake. The ego of the "Project" was *structurally unconscious* as it belonged exclusively to Ψ , and neither perception (which concerned Φ) nor consciousness (which concerned Σ) were within its province. The ego described in 1900 assumed as a specific characteristic the control of the *Preconscious-Conscious* system, and so was no longer structurally unconscious.

In other words, Grünbaum did not take into account this change of the structural reference which implied a replacement of the ego for Freud and *therefore a complete change of his notion of it*. Unfortunately, Grünbaum does not hesitate to equate the 1900 ego with the 1895 ego, thus depriving his own argument of meaning.

3.2. *The complete misunderstanding concerning "wish to sleep"*

The following is Grünbaum's presentation of Freud's formulation of the "wish to sleep": "Freud thought that, in this way, he had offered a *generic* explanation of *dreaming as such* by attributing it *causally* to an overriding wish of the ego to sleep. That ego-wish is "universal, invariably and unchanging", being fulfilled in every successful dream" (Grünbaum, 1995: 23-24).¹⁴

Once again Freud's ideas are presented with a striking tendentiousness: Freud does not say that the wish to sleep is *the cause of dreaming*, but that it is the cause of *the sleeping tale, and that it supports the dream-formation insofar as dreams are able to prolong the sleep*. In fact, Freud states: "We have found the characteristic feature of the *sleeping state* not in the disintegration of the psychic system of connections, but in the special attitude adopted by the psychic system which is dominant during the day – the attitude of the wish to sleep. The deflection from the outer world retains its significance for our view too; though not the only factor at work, it helps to make possible the regressive course of the dream-representation" (Freud, 1900a: 538).¹⁵

In such a way the wish to sleep *facilitates* the dream-formation (*Ibid.*: 528) and so *it provides its support for the unconscious wish* (*Ibid.*: 520).

Unfortunately, Grünbaum, blindly clinging on to his association of sleep with dream, is patently unable to take into account Freud's actual text and therefore is even led to question his assertion that he is indebted to Liébault for "the idea that the wish to sleep causes *dreaming* (sic!)" (Grünbaum, 1995: 24). In fact, Grünbaum comically adds: "Clearly,

14. Original emphasis.

15. My emphasis.

Liébault speaks here of the wish to sleep as the cause of *sleeping* itself, and *not*, as Freud misreports him, as the cause of *dreaming* during sleep" (*Ibid.*: 26).

But Freud did not misquote Liébault, therefore his mention of Liébault is correct: the *furor refutandi* has by now clouded all rationality, thus converting Grünbaum's critique into a grotesque series of gags.

Persuaded that for Freud the wish to sleep is the cause of dreaming, Grünbaum continues: "First, what of his causal claim that the preconscious desire to sleep is the generator of sleep-time *dreaming* as such? Alas, he encumbers that thesis – which itself will be seen to be dubious in any case – with the vocabulary of intentional action familiar from the practical syllogism. On that conception, an agent carries out an action A, because the agent desires to achieve a goal G and believes that A will achieve G. As Freud put it: "There is *one* which every dream is intended to fulfil, though it assumes various forms. You dream to avoid having to wake up, because you want to sleep. *Tant de bruit...!* Yet Augustine had recognized long ago that dreams are not intended actions we carry out for reasons; they are experiences that *happen to us*, even if they are caused by our desires. Hence Augustine denied in his *Confessions* that he was violating God's presumed command against fornication, when he had a sexual wet dream: Dreams can have sinful content without being committed sins" (*Ibid.*: 34).¹⁶

This objection is not pertinent since – as I have said – according to Freud the wish to sleep is not the cause of dreaming, but that of sleeping: the dream can only accept such a desire "malgré lui", because otherwise the ego would wake up.

What it is worth noticing here is *the manifest contradiction implied by Grünbaum's support of Saint Augustine's opinion on the not-deliberateness of the dream.*

In fact, throughout the first two-thirds of his essay, Grünbaum questions Freud's wish-fulfillment thesis of dreaming *on the basis of the fact that the secondary process might have an important part in dreams.* I would like to point out that the purposive deliberateness plays a fundamental role in the secondary process. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud explicitly talks about "purposive ideas (*Zielvorstellungen*) of the secondary thought" (Freud, 1900a: 550).

This means that Grünbaum *has long been challenging Freud on the basis of that same deliberateness that he hastily denies as soon as it seems to him that his adversary embraces it ...*

16. Original emphasis.

There is little else to add but that the theoretical value of Grünbaum's essay is undoubtedly inversely proportional to the renown he has acquired as a critic of Freud.

I would have granted this essay a certain value if at least the effort required for its confutation had opened up new avenues and therefore led one to an in-dept and novel analysis of the Freudian work. Instead, we must bitterly admit that *it adds nothing* to what we have known for a long time. Yet again, we find ourselves faced with the same prejudices and mistakes, the same superficiality and lack of rigor: in short, the same desire to finish off psychoanalysis *at any costs*.

Yet, it must be said that the fact that today – almost sixty years since his death – even Freud's most seasoned adversaries cannot formulate a criticism against him without radically distorting his theory, is undeniable proof of his relevance to the present.

We can certainly thank Adolf Grünbaum for having proved this to us once again.

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Summary

Who's the Author of Freud's Works? A Confutation of "A Critique of Freud's Pre-analytic and Psychoanalytic Dream-theory" by Adolf Grünbaum

This work shows how Grünbaum's critique, "Manifest Dream-Content a Compromise-Formation with Repressed Wishes. A critique of Freud's pre-analytic and psychoanalytic dream-theory" is wholly inconsistent.

First, it shows that Freud's theory of dreams as wishfulfillment was not based on the neurophysiological model of the "Project for a Scientific Psychology", as Grünbaum suggested.. Further, his reading of this text rests on four very serious conceptual confusions: 1) confusion between sleep and dream; 2) confusion between structure and function; 3) confusion between real and rational; 4) confusion between primary process and irrationality. Finally, it is demonstrated that, even in relation to psychoanalytic dream-theory, Grünbaum confuses the *Ego's* different notions in the development of Freud's theory and radically misunderstands what Freud says about the "wish to sleep". For all these reasons it is believed that Grünbaum's work has absolutely no epistemological value for a critical analysis of Freud's true theories.

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Key words

Freud, Psychoanalysis, Philosophy of Science, Freud's Pre-analytic Works, Ego, Psychoanalytic Dream-theory, Freud's Neurobiological Model.