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Writing and Dreaming Primary and Primal Scenes

The primal scene has become something of a Freudian cliché, yet if considered in a broad narratological sense, the concept can offer a useful template and terminology in investigations of the writing process. This discussion explores how primal scenes, and variants of the term such as ‘primary scenes’, hold a pivotal position between imagination and memory, between history and fantasy, in the creation of stories. Such scenes not only represent the first glimmers of creativity, tentative starts in the making of a novel, but they also feature centrally in the ensuing writing process - providing narrative momentum, propelling writers’ further investigations of the narratives they become intent on writing. The concept and terminology has also been used in wider psychological contexts (see Freeman 1993) and by narrative theorists (see Brook 1985 and Lukacher 1986); this offers possible connections between criticism and the creative process. Illustrations from a novel and essay by Rose Tremain will be surveyed, alongside other authors’ initiating images, and scrutiny of a starting scene of my novel, *The Book of Guardians* (Neale 2012). The significance of these scenes and images will be considered in the context of a possible psychoanalytic theory of creativity, with specific reference to the case study which first gave rise to Freud’s use of the term ‘primal scene’.

In his essay ‘Graceful Combinations’, Malcolm Bradbury called for a theory of creativity that is at once both psychological and literary, prompting an exploration of ‘the ways in which the instincts, the structures, the modal forms of imaginative

expression can take on their purpose and pattern not as textual slippage but as original humane discovery' (1993: 62). The publication of the volume in which Bradbury's essay appears, *The Agony and the Ego*, was a sign that his call was being heard, containing as it does several other writers' accounts of their working activity. However, it could be argued that little progress has been made in the decades since Bradbury's essay and that an impasse remains between creativity and interpretation, or that theories thus far proposed have over-developed the craft aspects of writing at the expense of the imaginative aspects. Much of literary and cultural criticism's mission is based on research, on observing human experience and behaviour, examining history in empirical fashion, identifying patterns and structures in order to further understand the past, the present and possibly even the future. Yet imaginative writers – novelists in particular, being the subject of this discussion - translate experience, act as critical interpreters of personal and cultural history. This would seem to promise at least the possibility of common aims and a shared vocabulary.

In that same volume Rose Tremain asserts in her essay 'The First Mystery' that for the writer 'the factual or experiential has to find its own mysteriousness', as if this is antithetical to any academic interest in data, evidence and structure. She states:

All the research done for a novel – all the studying and reading, all the social fieldwork, all the location visiting ... must be reimagined before it can find a place in the text. It must rise into the orbit of the anarchic, gift-conjuring, unknowing part of the novelist's mind before it can acquire its own truth ... Reimagining implies some measure of forgetting.' (1993: 5)

This anarchic, unknowing self is also glimpsed in the first half of Tremain's essay where she reveals an experience relatively common amongst novelists - being presented with an image or scene and feeling compelled to investigate further. She describes a 'waking dream' which becomes the 'first mystery' of a novel: A middle-aged man who is tired and careworn, standing by a stone wall in French countryside, sees a bird circling. Realising it is an eagle as it comes to land in front of him, the man's melancholy is joyfully transformed. Tremain goes on to assert that the writer's task is to 'rightly' interpret such imagined scenes, to give narrative context and meaning to the mysterious and random 'traffic' of image creation. In the eventual novel, *The Swimming Pool Season* (Tremain 1985), the image of man and eagle remain, though the encounter is no longer identical with the story's moment of recovery and transcendence (that coming in a later scene set in a Byzantine cathedral). In pursuit of what might be termed her primary images and scene, those primitive and tentative foundations, Tremain altered the initiating elements and produced further scenes which have primal qualities – in that they are fundamental and central to the whole narrative and yet bear traces of what existed right from the start of the writing process. Her brief essay does not elaborate on the detail of this secondary, contextualising process, and she would no doubt refer interested parties to the novel itself. However, her considerations offer a possible link to Freud.

Such primary images and scenes are comparable to, if not always synonymous with, Freud's primary process, detailed in 'Project for a Scientific Psychology' (Freud 1964a) and 'The Interpretation of Dreams' (Freud 1964b and 1964c). As Harold Bloom suggests:

Freud speaks of the primary process as being marked by a wandering-of-meaning, with meaning sometimes dislocated onto what ought to be an insignificant idea or image, and sometimes compressed upon a single idea or image at a crossing point between a number of ideas and images.’ (Bloom: 177)

Freud’s primary process is largely associated with the unconscious whereas the primary images as labelled in this discussion, and as exemplified with Tremain’s eagle, perhaps bear more resemblance to Freud’s secondary process which ‘characterizes the preconscious-conscious’ (Bloom: 177)¹. It is safest to say that the way in which ‘primary’ is being used in this discussion is not entirely congruent with a Freudian ‘primary process’. However, as Bloom suggests: ‘any theory of artistic creation that wishes to use Freud must depart from the Freudian letter in order to develop the Freudian spirit.’ (180)

In his essay ‘Creative Writers and Day-dreaming’ Freud proposed a model of writing as intrinsically related to memory:

A strong experience in the present awakens in the creative writer a memory of an earlier experience (usually belonging to his childhood) from which there now proceeds a wish which finds its fulfilment in the creative work. The work itself exhibits elements of the recent provoking occasion as well as of the old memory. (Freud:1964d)

The creative process makes use of experience, elements of the past and present, almost as a method of reconciliation between contrary eras and realities, linking them as one paradoxically in a dream reality. Dreaming is the principal evidence of the Freudian primary process, but ‘poetic thinking’ might also be evidential of

this stage of psychic activity (Bloom: 177). As Freud, in talking of his essay ‘The Uncanny’, also suggested – ‘The unconscious mechanisms familiar to us in the “dream-work” are ... also operative in the processes of imaginative writing.’ (Freud 1925: 40)

Dreaming and writing are consistently associated in Freud’s writings, their psychological processes firmly linked. Another trope of Freudian theory, the primal scene, the fantasy ‘which accounts for our existence’ (Bloom: 194), is also closely associated with dreams. Freud’s original conception of the primal scene had an uneasy ontological and epistemological standing, which announced the difficult relationship between construction, fantasy and recollection. His use of the term originates from the case history of Sergei P, (Freud 1964e: pp.7-122), in which his patient recollects, at the age of four years old, dreaming of several white wolves sitting in a tree, earning the case and patient their names – Wolf Man. This dream marked the onset of a childhood phobia and certain compulsive behaviour patterns.² Through the analysis the Wolf Man’s primal scene is 'activated' by this dream. As Freud states:

We shall further bear in mind that the activation of this scene (I purposely avoid the word 'recollection') had the same effect as though it were a recent experience. (1964e: 44; see also Lukacher 1986: 36).

In Sergei P’s case history Freud’s version of the primal scene – the proto-biographical events which lay behind the dream of wolves - consisted of what has become a familiar schema: the Wolf Man witnessing his parents having sexual intercourse, *coitus a tergo*. Sergei P. was one and a half years old at the time, according to Freud's construction of the scene - and this emphasis on construction over recollection is repeatedly highlighted by both Freud and his commentators:

'By insisting on the therapeutic power of the primal scene, Freud was attempting to reverse the conventional wisdom that valued the recollected event over the constructed event.' (Lukacher: 21).

This lies at the centre of the controversy about the therapeutic benefits and veracity of psychoanalysis, with critics such as Masson (1984) and Balmory (1982) concentrating on Freud's negotiation of fact and fantasy, the primal scene's relationship to seduction theory and the fact that these scenes are often imaginary and constructed, arrived at in collaboration with the analyst, rather than simply recollected.³

Despite these considerable therapeutic controversies, literary commentators point out the importance of Freud's insistence on the primal scene, and in particular the pervasive influence of similar constructions in recollection and narrative production. As Lukacher suggests:

'What the primal scene establishes is that at the origin one discovers not a single event that transpires in one temporal sequence but a constellation of events that transpire in several discrete temporal sequences.' (1986: 36).

Both Brooks and Lukacher commend Freud for his metaphysical bravery in not insisting on the concomitance and equivalence between the primal scene and any possible originary event, as he initially inferred in first drafts of the case history. In effect this problematises the question of cause and originating stories, suggesting the fence around the origin is impassable:

'Freud recognises that the work of analysis is the translation of one narrative event, like the wolf dream, into another narrative event, like the primal scene. It would be a mistake, however, to equate that work of narrative transposition and transference with the revelation of the origin.' (Lukacher: 37)

What is of interest to critics such as Brooks and Lukacher is not the empirical efficacy of a particular narrative or interpretation but the ontological and epistemological importance of the primal scene in general. Lukacher proposes 'the notion of the primal scene as a trope for reading and understanding.' (1986: 24). Here the primal scene is not summoned in a restrictive sense: a disturbing past life event sought out in the therapeutic venue; a child witnessing a sexual act with traumatic consequences. He is talking rather of the primal scene as an 'intertextual event':

Rather than signifying the child's observation of sexual intercourse, the primal scene comes to signify an ontologically undecidable intertextual event that is situated in the differential space between historical memory and imaginative construction, between archival verification and interpretative free play. (1986: 24).

This analysis echoes the testimonies of novelists when talking of primary images and their practical attempts to develop such scenes. My suggestion in this discussion is that primary and primal scenes are closely related to what Tremain referred to as the 'mysteriousness' (as opposed to the craft aspects) of the writing process. In reading novels in progress (often PhD projects), I frequently witness insistent images and scenes that appear very early in the writing, scenes that yet manage paradoxically to elude the writer; elements of these scenes are emphatically known and seen by the writers, yet their full realisation, how they might sit and what they mean in the story, is difficult for writers to pin down. The images give momentum to the process and it takes the writing of a whole book to

fully and ‘rightly’ realise how the images might be contextualised and to ‘interpret’ what they mean. The accurate exegesis of such scenes and images in terms of process belongs to individual writers⁴, yet we can say that the scenes invariably sit at the heart of the novels; they can be scenes involving a death or sex, but are frequently not so dramatic. The importance of the scenes can be manifest in different ways and the first, early glimpses of them appear like strange riddles to their recipients - the writers being both finders and makers, the dramatic relevance having to be sought out, as seen with Tremain’s dream encounter between character and eagle. The images act as triggers, compelling the writer to investigate further and hold an addictive quality, as if the writer is bathed and stimulated, soothed and agitated by them. They donate to the writer a quest, their elusive quality haunts the narrative and does so both for the writer and the eventual reader.

In pursuit of these images the writer necessarily creates alternative or consequent or attendant scenes, some of which will contain similar haunting qualities; some will graduate to the status of primal in their own right, not least because they will contain a residue from that initial dream image. The pursuit of the primary scene becomes an investigative story in itself. Sometimes this is explicit in the text – especially when the story involves a literal investigation, with a ‘detective’ character or narrator.

Tremain’s disclosure is unusually full yet still tantalisingly brief. Writers are generally cautious and superstitious that their output, their art, will be eroded by offering too full a story of its making. Novelists frequently discuss the writing process and primary impulses, but there is a recurrence in these testimonies of a grasping in the gloom, rather than clear sighted vision or pristine images. For

instance, E. L. Doctorow talks of writing as ‘driving a car at night: you never see further than your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way.’ (1986: 29). Other writers concur with this sort of analogy, see for instance Hanif Kureishi and Andrew Cowan (both in Neale and Anderson 2009), the latter talking of writing being a glimmer and every book as ‘a journey of exploration ... looking for the words which will give form to the glimmer’ (Neale and Anderson: 178). Some writers are surprisingly inarticulate when it comes to talking of their imaginative process. David Mitchell says, for instance, when asked about planning and how much he knows in advance about a novel – ‘I can’t express the relationship between concepts and products better than Picasso: “I find something, then I go off looking for what it is.”’ (Mitchell: 90) Even so, there are examples to match Tremain’s primary images and scenes, writers who witness similar phenomena. Doctorow, oddly in the same interview, reveals the founding images of his novel *Loon Lake*: ‘I saw a sign, a road sign: Loon Lake’ (1986: 28). This was the trigger, soon followed by images: ‘A private railroad train on a single track at night going up through the Adirondacks with a bunch of gangsters on board, and a beautiful girl standing, naked, holding a white dress up in front of a mirror to see if she should put it on. I didn’t know where these gangsters came from’ (1986: 37-8). This is the primary set of images, from which Doctorow inquires: when might such people have taken rides on private railways? He concludes that the 1930s was ‘the last era a man would have had his own railroad car’ (1986: 38) and then reasons that because of the era and the Depression a natural person to spot this private train, the carriages and these characters, would be a drifter – eventually the character, Joe, who follows the rails, as Doctorow admits he, as writer, also did.

Similarly one of William Faulkner's primary images is of an unknown little girl with dirty underpants, climbing a tree outside a window, an image which is 'slowly expanded into a long story that required another story or section to amplify it, which in turn required another, which in turn required another, until finally Faulkner had four sections of a novel'. (Oates: 89). This young girl is Caddy, the sister of the first narrator, Benjy, in *The Sound and the Fury*. Caddy is a submerged primal figure in the novel – representing brightness, love and loss to her brother Benjy. She was at the centre of the novel's conception (see Millgate 86-103⁵), yet she is paradoxically elusive. Faulkner chose not to give her a voice, while giving narratives to her brothers, Benjy, Quentin and Jason, so the reader's perception of Caddy is always filtered. Faulkner can say that Caddy 'was my heart's darling. That's what I wrote the book about and I used the tools which seemed to me the proper tools to try to tell, try to draw the picture of Caddy.' (Millgate: 86) In this respect the primary image develops into a complex character, both girl and woman, and the lack of Caddy's voice paradoxically helps keep her in focus, as Millgate notes: 'it certainly seems likely that to have made Caddy a "voice" in the novel would have diminished her importance as a central, focal figure'. (Millgate: 90) From this example it is evident that the primary and primal nature of such images and scenes has an unarticulated emotional impetus that doesn't translate into straightforward or obvious choices about point of view, structure and other technical options.

By way of testimony, a consideration of writing process and starting images in relation to my novel, *The Book of Guardians* (Neale 2012) might help to illuminate such choices and potential theoretical connections. The book grew from a waking dream comparable to those so far surveyed, a primary collection of

images – a shed at dusk with birdsong rising from an adjacent holly tree, a freshly watered seed tray by the window, a young dark-haired woman, and a suspicion that Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* was in some way bound up with events. Compelled to discover just quite how, I asked first questions of the scene (as Doctorow inquired of his private railroad carriages). In answer to those first inquiries I imagined that the woman conceived a child in the shed and was convinced that the child's father was God. Unlike Doctorow's next moves, this second order imagining had no historical reasoning or logic behind it, but perhaps did contain a budding awareness of what would eventually become a major thematic strand – parents and families. The narrative resulting from these primary images is one which searches for fathers, for literal and metaphoric antecedents. In terms of the writing process, the challenge was to solve the mystery of that initial double conception – the scene and the woman conceiving a child. What did they mean? What causes and back-story lay behind them? And what consequences lay ahead?

In the novel's eventual published form the encounters between the woman and 'God' in the shed are never seen in the dramatic present; they are only 'remembered', and then controversially, by the woman. The account is first rendered elliptically via the narrator recalling an interview with the woman where she recounts certain details of the scene, details which have obviously been misconstrued and corrupted en route through various reports and the narrator's interpretation and prejudice. Time also intervenes; this interview occurs when the child is more than a year old, nearly two years after the conception. The event has already happened and been told several times. It is a murky history, one which compels the narrator, an investigator of sorts, to visit the shed himself. This effect,

the scene layered behind different versions of itself, resembles how the scene first appeared to me. In narrative terms, and to use those of the Russian Formalists (Todorov 1977, and as used by Brooks 1985: 264), it is a scene that is a central and essential part of the *fabula* - the *what* of the narrative - but holds a hazardously unclear position in the *sjuzet* - the *how* of the narrative.⁶ It attained the status of a working myth as drafting progressed, residing always behind the dramatic events of the story. Despite the structural displacement - the fact that the event, the conception of a child, is always several temporal removes from its moment of 'existence in reality' - the scene underlies all the action, prompting much of that action. A scriptwriter might call it an 'inciting incident' (McKee 1999: 181), inaccurately as it happens, because inciting incidents are always seen in the first acts of films; this is not seen. Some readers may even perceive it as extraneous to the main narrative. Nonetheless it was one of the first things I, as writer, knew about the story - if knowing is not too categorical a verb to use.

Harold Pinter somewhat modestly said of his own creative process that he starts with a character or characters in a room, and then pursues the possibility or impossibility of getting them through the door and out of the room (1994). This amounts to a primary image. The scene in the shed in *The Book of Guardians* posed a similar strategic problem: it appeared as both primary and primal, a scene that was as if 'already written', yet a puzzle not readily solved. Brooks (1992: 269) and Haughton (2003: ix) compare Freud's narrative method in his case studies to Oedipus, the solver of puzzles, and to Conan Doyle and detective fiction. The waking dream of shed scene and myth of the child's conception demanded a similar investigative approach, and proved to be prolific in that the dream produced several possible pasts and futures, a profusion of alternative

scenes, some of them with a similar or related potential to appear uncanny or to haunt the narrative. This echoes the way in which Faulkner developed his primary image of the girl in the tree, as detailed by Oates, and such multiplying has parallels with critical perspectives on the narrative function of primal scenes. As several critics have suggested (see Freeman, Brooks and Lukacher), primal scenes tend to multiply when investigated; they are schemata born in the hinterland between reality and fantasy, and are inherently difficult to pin down. Lukacher states:

The notion of the primal scene enables us to grasp historical experience at the interface of language and world, at the interface of consciousness and the unconscious. (1986: 14)

Events which are inscrutable as either fact or fiction; primal scenes are, ontologically, impossibly unstable. They exist in *fabula* but resist definitive representation in *sjuzet*.⁷ In *The Book of Guardians*, at various moments in the writing process and in pursuit of *fabula* - 'what will happen' and 'what has happened' - I was faced with what is perhaps for novelists a familiar decision – whether or not to abandon the primary image; either dispensing with the shed scene completely (and writing a very different novel) or embracing its uncertainty wholeheartedly.

Brooks claims that Freud's case studies reveal as narratives both a 'drive toward the end and a resistance to ending' (1985: 28), so leaving particular episodes open for further interpretation and rewriting, and postponing closure. This doubleness is echoed in various formulations in narrative theory where, by contrast, there is sometimes more promise of a definite outcome. For instance, Hillis-Miller states:

The protagonists live their lives in ignorance of the future. The narrator speaks from the perspective of the end. The reader enjoys both these points of view at once. He experiences the novel as the reaching out of the protagonist's point of view toward the narrator's point of view, as if at some vanishing point they might coincide. (1968: 33-4)

The primal scene occupies this narrative space - between procession and resistance, between development and closure. Brooks suggests such a space is conventionally obscured by the 'closure demanded by narrative understanding - the closure without which it can have no coherent plot - [but which] is always provisional, as-if, a necessary fiction'. (1985: 28).

The shed scene was initially perceived as a site covered in dust, neglected and unattended, except for the anomaly of the freshly watered seed tray. This new growth was an exception to the prevailing mood, and a vital clue. On reflection, it is now clear that during the writing process the scene developed beyond its literal signification into a kind of symbol, a repository for the illicit and a motif for a leftover and profuse nature, both cultivated and wild, a home for the uncanny, the unconscious, the return of the repressed. The scene also became a site imbued with loss – though what was lost was harder to grasp. Tremain's primary image of the eagle provided her with the essence of the novel she would write – a narrative which involved a moment of reversal from careworn melancholy to transcendence. In similar fashion the seedlings in the shed and the story of conception leant the melancholic and dangerous mood of the shed a promise of transformation and rebirth. Inarticulate loss became a motif for the story as a whole, not just remaining attached to the woman. As in Tremain's development of the eagle scene, some

elements, some central emotional content, of my primary images were transferred to other parts of the narrative.

The shed scene's generic connotations, not least the uncanny and the Gothic, are fairly obvious. I was conscious of setting events topographically, at least in part, in the vicinity of what might be termed modern-day Mary Webb country. The setting was also liminal, to do with the conjunction of hills and sky, town and country, city and town, middle-class and sub-class, legitimate and illegitimate, edges and outskirts. These setting choices arose directly from the primary scene, inevitably giving rise to a lexicon quite familiar to the English novel, but also to ruptured forms of realism. Lukacher describes the link between the Gothic and the primal scene:

'The Gothic text demands that we construct a primal scene but thwarts our ability to carry through with the effort. ... In *Jane Eyre* we have no idea why Rochester keeps his mad wife in the attic of his main estate rather than on a neighbouring estate he also owns.....just as we never learn how Jane could have heard that mysterious, telepathic voice that marks the climactic point of the novel. The Gothic novel opens the space for the construction of the primal scene and in the same gesture bars access to it.' (1986: 122)

Lukacher suggests that in Gothic texts primal scenes are continually glimpsed, giving rise to the urge towards their (re)construction, even if that urge can never be fully satisfied. *The Book of Guardians* displays the quest to disclose, to reveal the 'real' events behind the mythic scene. The ensuing exposition produces glimpses of the shed imagery, a historical scene of uncertain validity, and gives rise to a number of questions, which if pursued might produce concrete answers and apparent points of closure – for instance a man, the baby's putative father, is

eventually discovered in prison (not heaven). However, it also gives rise to a profusion of alternative, contrasting, parallel and rival primal scenes – these are too many and too distracting to catalogue here, but include scenes of sexual initiation, invasions of private space and one-to-one therapy sessions.

These later sessions between the woman (from the shed) and a psychiatrist are not mimetically represented, but reported in the psychiatrist's notebook. Readers are faced with the dilemma of whether to trust such reports; they are distanced from events in similar fashion to how they are distanced from the shed scene - by time and narrative point of view. This ongoing dilemma of reading and interpretation could be seen to echo the ontological theory proposed by Brooks, and affirmed by Lukacher: primal scenes are always being looked at but are forever just out of sight. They can never quite be grasped or known. In the same way Caddy, as Faulkner's central focus, is a character always just out of sight. They are scenes, characters, that require fiction, interpretation and imagination to complete their 'truth'.

The psychoanalytic session *per se* is often referred to as if it is a primal situation. The therapy sessions in *The Book of Guardians* might be similarly viewed, though not Freudian in their method; there is a similar primal dramatic staging: the analyst is positioned behind the couch, the therapist in the novel is behind her notes, each like spectators, 'seeing but unseen'. (Lukacher 1986: 145). Freud, in stating that 'it is well known that no means has been found of in any way introducing into the reproduction of an analysis the sense of conviction which results from the analysis itself' (1964e: 13), was suggesting that the content of psychoanalytic sessions is beyond representation and that semantically each session exists in 'the undecidable space of its own prehistory.' (Lukacher: 144).

The focus of this discussion has perhaps given the impression that primal scenes are a prerequisite in the creative process. This is not so; they are one factor that may be relevant, but they are not a necessary feature. Tremain (1993: 6), for instance, suggests that for her novel *Sacred Country* (1992) there was no 'first mystery' or primary scene. This discussion has necessarily conflated the concepts of primary scenes and primal scenes on occasions. In this context the terminology has been shifted on from a purely Freudian or therapeutic context, and also beyond the confines of literary criticism, towards a poetics of praxis, while capitalising, it is hoped, on what Bloom called the 'Freudian spirit'. The conflation (of primary and primal) is justified because within the creative process such scenes as Tremain's eagle, Doctorow's private train carriages, Faulkner's girl in a tree, or the shed in *The Book of Guardians* - these amount to more than just initiating images; they pervade throughout further drafting, imaginative investigation and reconstructions. They provide founding perceptions and feelings which underlie the eventual range of images, emotions, themes, events and temporality collectively known as a novel.

As with Pinter and his characters getting in and out of rooms, in negotiating my primary images for *The Book of Guardians*, I simply wanted to get my characters in or out of the shed. In so doing it was necessary, pragmatically, to invent and negotiate a cluster of further scenes. The dilemma of the writing process - is this story to be found or made - takes another twist in light of the primal scene's dark promise. It is impossible to plead cognisance or naiveté, will or innocence, in relation to the fantasised, imagined, remembered and constructed arrival at, and development of, such scenes. This comparative analysis of writing processes admittedly fails to offer the substantive theory of creativity that

Bradbury urged, but it may offer the potential of a shared vocabulary. The ontological uncertainty of primary and primal scenes typifies some essential part of imaginative play and would appear relevant to any further investigation of the uncertainties inherent in the writing process, the novelist's 'anarchic and unknowing' form of truth-telling, and to future theorising of creativity.

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¹ As Bloom goes on to assert, there is 'no single concept of the unconscious in Freud' (181); Freud's evolving model of psychological processes dispensed with the notion of a simple 'creative or inaugurating unconscious', in favour of a model of the psyche with id, ego and super-ego in which the unconscious dominates in all three spheres.

² The Wolf Man's symptoms and behaviour are variously described as phobic, hysterical, compulsive, neurotic and he was diagnosed by a number of psychiatrists throughout his adult life as of 'manic-depressive sanity' (Freud 1964e: 8; see also Lukacher: 149). The Wolf Man was also bi-sexual, which elicited a normative reaction; his sexuality was perceived as illness, colouring and dating the various diagnoses and analyses. Brooks' extensive description of Sergei P (1985: pp. 264ff) portrays him as valetudinarian decadent, his 'morbid narcissism' typical of a certain European literary character-type. But he is also strikingly similar to a character such as Fairlie in Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*. As Brooks points out, the Wolf Man's case history is bound up with the public and personal history that he survived: two world wars, the Bolshevik Revolution in his native Russia, the Nazi *Anschluss* in Austria, economic inflation, devaluation, destitution, and his wife's suicide.

³ The Wolf Man later declared he never remembered Freud's version - the primal scene behind the dream - despite Freud's insistence that he would eventually recollect it. (Gardiner 1971 and Obholzer 1982: 36). Sergei P believed that the crucial 'cause' of his behaviour patterns was his sister seducing him as a child. (Freud 1964e: 21 and Lukacher: 137).

⁴ It is not a coy evasion to suggest that it is the writers' prerogative not mine, as mere reader of work-in-progress, to disclose more specific details about these images from their creative process. Psychoanalysts may write (as Freud did) of clients and case studies, but disclosing details of nascent fictional narratives appears curiously to be a matter of even greater personal confidentiality.

⁵ Millgate's method includes comparison of textual versions during the drafting process, which can be a key approach in identifying the development of primary images.

⁶ The *what* and *how* definitions come from Lodge (1997: 207). Brooks (1985: 91) and Lukacher (1986: 136) qualify the terms in similarly comparative fashion; Lukacher, for instance, suggesting *fabula* is equivalent to story and *sjuzet* is equivalent to plot or the 'motivated representation of story'.

⁷ Their mythic qualities even point controversially beyond the temporality of a single biography - as Brooks suggests: '[Freud] considers that such primal phantasies may be a phylogenetic inheritance

through which the individual reaches back to the history of mankind.'(1985: 276 and see also Freud 1964e: 29-47)