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6. Sigmund Freud, "Dreams and Telepathy" [1931], in Standard Edition, 18:95-120. He repeats this claim in "Dreams and Occultism." These states of diminished consciousness would later become known as the "minus factor" in parapsychological research.
11. For an account of Ferenczi's interest in telepathy and analysis, see Debra Rae Cohen, Michael Coyle, and Jane Lewty (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009), 31-50.
13. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Here Malvo appears to have been influenced by the 1993 film Seven, which in turn draws on the mythology of such "branded" criminals as "Son of Sam" and the "Zodiac Killer."

Freud and the Technical Media
The Enduring Magic of the Wunderblock
Thomas Elsaesser

Freud's Legacy at His 150th Anniversary: "Bankrupt" or "Inspiring"?

The necessity of rethinking Freud's legacy with respect to the technical media may not seem obvious. After all, as the following passage suggests, his standing in the humanities is, to say the least, ambiguous: "The fate of Freud's writings in the late 20th and early 21st century has been a peculiar one. On the one hand, his work had been declared by many to be unscientific, intellectually bankrupt, and morally suspicious. On the other, his writings continue to be a source of inspiration and provocation, both directly and indirectly, not only to psychoanalytic theory, but to feminism, queer theory, film theory, literary and cultural studies, and throughout the arts and popular culture." Yet inevitably the occasion of his 150th birthday in 2006 did lead to numerous reassessments, many of which produced variations on the question of whether it is sensible at all to have recourse to Freud as the source of a theory of the psyche, given that this word psyche is situated today somewhere—but where?—between the "soul" of religion, the "mind" of philosophy and the "brain" of neuroscience.

The dilemma is clear: on the one side, in the medical practice of psychology and psychotherapy, Freud's teachings have been either quietly abandoned or modified to such an extent that they are unrecognizable; furthermore, since the so-called "Freud Wars," psychoanalysis stands as a much-discredited doctrine of consciousness and the mind's pathologies, clinically as well as neurologically; behavioral psychology, even child psychology, not to mention cognitivism, evolutionary biology, and neuroscience, have left little of Freud's method and
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On the other side, psychoanalysis is still one of the most widely used hermeneutics, or methods of interpretation, not only in the humanities but in everyday life when we try to interpret the behavior of those we communicate, negotiate, and come into contact with, especially our nearest and dearest, whom we constantly probe as to their unconscious motives. Given this continuous importance of psychoanalysis for the humanities, in particular for literature and cultural studies (which have always recognized Freud's preeminence as an analyst of "texts," both written and spoken, as well as his stature as a writer), is there another way of understanding Freud's legacy? For instance, can we make sense of Freud without taking at face value his various topographies of the psyche (so clearly reflecting his time); rethink the foundational significance of the Oedipus complex for human subjectivity, gender, and identity by drawing on other, evolutionary theories of gender division and the formation of primary bonds; finally, can we reformulate Freud's theory of the unconscious? Any of these revisionist moves might, of course, eviscerate and deplore Freud to the point of leaving just an empty shell, a mere name and a memory. But perhaps the risk is worth taking, especially when one comes to Freud as a historian of communication technologies or as, in the present case, a media archaeologist, who would want to ask: Can one regard Freud's work as addressing a number of problems of his time, other than the ones he is chiefly known for, but that for us in the twenty-first century have still retained their relevance and may even have increased in importance? Such revisionism would ignore much of what scholars in the humanities, including cinema studies, have come to associate with Freud. Yet by placing Freud more firmly in the context of his time, we might perhaps make him more comprehensible to our own. It makes sense to ask what sort of challenges psychoanalysis raised with respect to Western mankind's self-understanding when we remember that psychoanalysis emerged at the turn of the previous century, that is, between 1895 and 1914, and therefore at a time of major social upheavals and scientific breakthroughs. Investigating "Freud, the media theorist"—as one might call such a rehistoricizing enterprise—would then mean placing him alongside writers such as Georg Simmel or Walter Rathenau, as well as poets like Paul Valéry and Gottfried Benn, and reinscribing him into media history the way Walter Benjamin or Siegfried Kracauer have become key witnesses to the revolutions in media technologies and their impact on the human body and the senses. At the same time, it is important to remember that Freud, like all scientists, was a problem solver perhaps even more than a system builder and to recall Samuel T. Coleridge's famous dictum "Until you understand a writer's ignorance, presume yourself ignorant of his understanding," which here might mean, "Until you understand the question a writer is asking himself, presume yourself unable to understand the answer he gave himself." In other words, "What were the problems Freud thought that his new science of psychoanalysis might help to answer?"

The question suggests that we may still benefit from the questions he posed, even if some of the answers he provided no longer seem convincing and appropriate.

This chapter is a media-archaeological "deconstruction" of classical apparatus theory, but it takes a somewhat different route from the usual one, which has consisted of cognitivist attacks on perceptual illusionism in general and post-Freudian psychoanalysis in particular. The chapter makes a counterintuitive move in that it actually goes back to Freud rather than dismiss his work. It tries to make a case for Freud, a notorious technophobe, as a "media theorist" by once more investigating—in line with a number of other writers, including Jacques Derrida and Thierry Kuntzel—his "Notes on the Mystic Writing Pad" and shifting attention from perception and identity (the standard psychoanalytic paradigm) to memory and storage (the media-archaeological perspective). The chapter points to the fact that Freud's own theory of memory clearly distinguished between the perceptual part of the psychic apparatus (the "optical-acoustic part" of consciousness, if you like) and the storage and processing part (the recording and encoding apparatus, which previous writers on the "cinematic apparatus" had ignored or conflated) and that Freud's "discovery" of the unconscious, repression, and the rhetoric of dreamwork can be seen less as a psychological "fact" than as a necessary hypothesis to "fill the gap" left open and exposed by the discrepancy between the two systems. In short, the chapter tries to understand the Freudian mystic writing pad or Wunderblock as giving us a potential model for comprehending an element of the cinematic apparatus that neither is entirely dependent on the visible nor refers back to the "geometry of presentation" of Renaissance painting but points instead to inscription, trace, and "data management" (using both narrative and nonlinear "programs"), which are crucial aspects of an "archaeological" approach to media technologies.

SOME OF THE PROBLEMS TO WHICH FREUD THOUGHT PSYCHOANALYSIS WOULD PROVIDE THE ANSWER

Freud began as a physiologist and remained a convinced materialist all his life. Central to his convictions was the primacy of the body. Rather than acknowledging a philosophical mind-body split, Freud saw the body as the gateway to the mind and treated the body as a two-way communication device, as well as a producer of meaningful utterances: in this respect, both The Interpretation of Dreams (1900) and The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901) are books that have remained inspirational for the humanities and the arts because they show Freud as one of the foremost thinkers about close critical analysis and interpretation in relation to the body and the senses. They allow us to reevaluate him as a reader and hermeneutician—a reader of the mind's activities, of brain and the body as "loci" of agency, and a hermeneutician who not only considered human
actions in their material consequences in a cause-and-effect schema but was able to conceive them as “texts” that needed to be deciphered, in the sense that mind, body, actions—in their material manifestations—constituted a form of writing or inscription, even if it was not entirely clear to him what the medium, the code, and the place of inscription might be.4

Let us start with Freud’s *topography of the psyche* and his reflections about “nature” and “culture,” or rather about human beings between nature and not-nature. In thinking this divide, for instance, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud posited his famous split in the circulation and exchange of vital energy between drive and desire, which implies in some respects the possibility that the two are the recto and verso of each other, or stronger even: the question and answer to each other. To put it briefly, “drive” can be conceived as the totally deindividuated life principle: stupid, irrepressible, unstoppable, the part of nature that knows no individual death, only change and transformation, through repetition and the laws of thermodynamics. In this perspective, “desire” would be the answer to the drive, born out of the failure to submit to the drive and thus the always unfulfilled and unfulfillable movement to arrest the drive and to resist its depersonalizing force. Consciousness, or the individualized psyche, emerges as an accident of organic life, rather than its natural destiny, in the course of evolution.5 It brings Freud’s thinking closer to our contemporary understanding of other late nineteenth-century thinkers, notably, of course, Darwin and Nietzsche, emphasizing his role in displacing humanity from the center of creation and thus contributing to what have been called the “narcissistic wounds” inflicted on man’s self-confidence.

Similarly, it may be possible to argue that sexual difference and the Oedipus complex are so fundamental and foundational not only because of the question of individual identity but because, in terms of evolution, sexual selection (as opposed to selection for survival) operates in such a way that skills we now call “aesthetic” or “symbolic” have these qualities not as an addition to their use value but rather in opposition to their use value. This, at any rate, is what evolutionary biologists are now arguing, which in no way contradicts Freud’s “tragic” view of sexuality and sexual difference, certainly in an age when utilitarian efficiency and economic criteria were the “ground” of all thinking about evolution and adaptation.6

Finally, the unconscious: one can think of Freud’s positing of the unconscious as trying to answer the question of human agency: Are we self-determined, do we possess individual agency, or are we never fully self-present in our actions, however rational they appear to us? But the unconscious can also be understood somewhat differently: as the necessary hypothesis in response to a problem for which no other assumption could provide a satisfactory or even plausible answer. In other words, it may be possible to consider the unconscious as a “placeholder” rather than an actual place. What if it named a virtual space, the locus where two apparently incompatible conceptions of the working of the psyche converge, remaining “in place” until a more satisfactory explanation was found? The consequence would be to assume that the unconscious is the “provisional” answer to a problem that Freud encountered. And what is this problem? My suggestion—and not only my suggestion—is that it is the question of “memory.” As Freud boldly noted in 1895, “Any psychological theory deserving consideration must provide an explanation of memory.”

**PARALLAX VIEWS AND CONSTELLATIONS: THE MYSTIC WRITING PAD**

In what follows, I shall concentrate only on this question regarding the nature of memory, by focusing in particular on those parts of Freud’s work where he tries to tackle the problem of inscription/recording and of storage/retrieval, two essential aspects of memory. The best-known writings that confront the question of memory are “Project for a Scientific Psychology” from 1895, and “Notes on the Mystic Writing Pad (or Wunderblock)” from 1925, and although the two texts are thirty years apart they show a remarkable consistency of thinking. But they are also indicative of how persistently this question of memory preoccupied Freud without leading him to a satisfactory solution, a habit of mind very typical of Freud, who never seemed satisfied with any of the answers he was able to give to the problems he had discovered. Consider how in 1925 he summarized the problem of memory: “All the forms of auxiliary apparatus which we have invented for improvement or intensification of our sensory functions are built on the same model as the sense organs themselves or portions of them: for instance, spectacles, photographic cameras, ear-trumpets. Measured by this standard, devices to aid our memory seem particularly imperfect, since our mental apparatus accomplishes precisely what they cannot: it has an unlimited receptive capacity for new perceptions and nevertheless lays down permanent—even though not stable—memory traces of them.”7

In this and the passages that follow, where he explains how a simple mechanical device, the *Wunderblock*, combines an “ever-ready receptive surface” with the “permanent traces of the notes that have been made upon it,” Freud is arguing that our senses along with our brain, when taken together as the “psychic apparatus,” are able to accomplish something that for technical apparatuses is apparently impossible to achieve, namely to combine the function of (sense-data) transmission and the function of (sense-data) storage. It is as if psychoanalysis had to be invented to bridge this gap and to explain—via the positing of the unconscious—how the “perception-consciousness system” receives but does not retain perceptions, while the “system of the unconscious” preserves, not perceptions, but excitations, which become “permanent,” in the form of mnemonic traces.
FEEDBACK AND CIRCUITS VERSUS
STORAGE AND MANIPULATION

As not only the "Mystic Writing Pad" but also "The Project of a Scientific Psychology" made clear, consciousness and memory, transmission and storage are mutually exclusive. Consciousness (the perceptual system) should be imagined as a feedback system or a circuit and therefore must not retain any data; otherwise it could not respond to the environment and be self-regulating. Yet if that which Freud called the unconscious were unable to retain data and store unlimited quantities, there could be no "memory" of any kind, whether repressed, habitual, voluntary, or involuntary. By arguing that "any psychological theory deserving consideration must provide an explanation of memory," Freud posed a challenge to himself, namely how to conceive of memory, which is to say, how to picture the relation between input, storage, and processing. Thus, and this would be my hypothesis, the invention of the unconscious can be understood as a partial answer to this problem. But if the problem was already clearly posed in 1895 and only in 1925 found an apparent answer in "Notes on the Mystic Writing Pad," this in turn raises a lot of other questions, not least about the Mystic Writing Pad itself. What sort of an "answer" does it constitute? Is it a serious suggestion of a workable media technology? Is it a metaphor that alludes to a technical solution, which, by invoking what is essentially a child's toy, deliberately sidesteps the issue of media technology? Or is it no more than a personal joke that the master is playing with himself? After what has been said so far, it may indeed be the case that Freud deliberately used such an example, at first glance improbable and yet on second thought apt, precisely not to have to declare himself on the technical media of transmission and storage that were developing during his lifetime, because—rightly or wrongly—he judged that they did not fulfill his own requirements for a memory apparatus that could replicate or "improve" on human memory.

What, then, more specifically, justifies thinking of Freud as a media theorist? A first answer would be something like the following: Freud qualifies as a media theorist because he thought of the body/mind as a storage and recording medium as well as an input/output device, where what interested him were the parameters of sensory input (sound, vision mainly) and its output, representability (visualization, narrativization, and linguistic representation, including slips of the tongue, the parapraxes or Fehlleistungen). Second, Freud was interested in temporality (as rupture, gap, discontinuity, rather than time's linear arrow of sequence and succession). He speculated that time was a dimension that mankind had invented to protect itself from discontinuity and the contingent, that it was a subjective category (as opposed to the physical, thermodynamic principle of entropy), and he made famous the notion of Nachträglichkeit, deferred action, the reversal of cause and effect in our thinking about "origins" and "causes." Finally, and perhaps not coincidentally, he had a great interest in archaeology, that is, in the trace, the index, and the imprint as forms of inscription and recording, as well as in geological strata, which gave rise to another one of his topological models of the psyche. But however intriguing, these avenues of thought may still not be the appropriate ways of thinking of Freud as a media theorist if we cannot also account for his "negation," disavowal, or neglect of the technical media.

In other words, I want to consider Freud as a media theorist malgré lui, someone very aware of the technical developments of his time and yet not so much suspicious of them as in a constant contest and rivalry with them. How would such a possibility change our understanding of his attitude toward the technical media of his time, which of course included the cinema? In doing so, I seem to be leaving aside the Freud familiar to us from film theory, which, as is well known, evolved in a constellation characterized by the names of Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze (to which we could add Louis Althusser and Felix Guattari), French thinkers who intensively reflected on Freud, often from a critical perspective that centered on the Oedipus complex, the function of language in the formation of the unconscious, the narrativization (and discipline) of psychic energy, and the censoring of desire through "repression" rather than its suppression/proliferation through the drive.8

In film theory, this Freudian constellation was interpreted as being focused on perception, on visuality and the optical-specular, in that it centered on looking, the gaze, and their relation to identity and sexual difference, as well as the self-monitoring of panopticism as an aspect of self-consciousness and the formation of a socially adaptable ego.9 The constellation I am invoking, by considering Freud as theorist of auxiliary memory and the technical media, and thus as a media theorist, shifts this perspective away from film to a more general consideration of the technical media. It is made up of Jacques Derrida (rereading Freud in his "Freud and the Scene of Writing"); Mary Ann Doane (rereading Freud through one of the precursors of the cinema, the scientist and chronophotographer Jules-Étienne Marey); and Friedrich Kittler (rereading Jacques Lacan and Lacan's interest in cybernetics and mathematics).10 Their points of intersection—and their relevance for contemporary film theory—have to do with trace, inscription, and writing, with the function of speech and the voice, with the relation between print culture and the cinema, with the body as text, with woman and media machines; and, finally, with the conception of time and intermittence.

We can characterize these intersections, for the purpose of this chapter, by saying that if film theory in the last third of the twentieth century (i.e., from the 1960s to the early 1990s) has concentrated on Freud to understand questions of subjectivity and identity as they arise out of filmic spectatorship and the cinematic apparatus when conceived as a Cartesian optical theater (with the
of scientific rigor typical of his time. As is well known, he worked as a researcher in the laboratory of the biologist Ernst Brüche’s Physiological Institute, he did experimental work with magnetism, he studied with Charcot in Paris, and with his colleague Joseph Breuer he published a study of hysteria. As a technophobe, in the sense that he made little use of modern technology in his everyday life. He did not like radio, he was shy of photography, he used the typewriter sparingly and preferred to compose in longhand, he refused to have the telephone connected to his consulting room or his private office, and he disapproved of the cinema, withdrawing his cooperation from a famous filmmaking project initiated by one of his disciples to popularize psychoanalysis, G. W. Pabst’s *Geheimnisse einer Seele* (though he did seem to enjoy quite a few films on his visit to the United States, and even the case of Pabst’s *Wunderblock* as a children’s toy inscribes marks or grooves on a wax background and how one can then “mystically” erase these by lifting the plastic cover sheet. Memory here clearly recalls the ancient practice of the palimpsest, the writing process whereby mnemic impressions emerge, merge, and re(e)merge through acts of layering and superimposition.

**Jacques Derrida**

The first commentator to suggest that Freud possessed a media theory was Jacques Derrida, who in his essay “Freud and the Scene of Writing” extensively discusses “Notes on the Mystic Writing Pad.” Derrida showed how Freud hesitated between thinking of the psyche as an optical system and as an “inscription” or “writing” system. Visual metaphors predominate in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, where one finds an entire scenography of telescopes, cameras, microscopes, and magnifying glasses. By contrast, once Freud begins to speak of memory, as he does in the “Project of a Scientific Psychology” and “Notes on the Mystic Writing Pad,” the language is one of “memory traces,” of the violence with which sensory data break themselves a path (*Bahnung* in German) into the mental-material substratum and generally force their way into memory. Derrida notes how the *Wunderblock* is multiple. First, it confirms his general thesis, namely that the metaphysics of presence in Western philosophy is *underwritten* by a repression of writing, which nonetheless organizes every representational system so far devised. Second, Derrida is able to show how the priority given to speech in psychoanalysis is still grounded in writing because its effects on the psyche are described exclusively in terms of imprint, inscrip-
tracks of physiological data, then the cinematic image is the index of a sound emanation or of a physiological-somatic presence, and only secondarily the imprint of a perception. The aesthetics of Jean-Marie Straub and Danielle Huillet, with their demand that one see their films with one's ears and hear them with one's eyes, would seem to have taken up Edison's thinking and literalized its implications.24

MARY ANN DOANE

Another theorist who has commented extensively on Freud's "Mystic Writing Pad" essay is Mary Ann Doane. In her book The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive, she constructs yet another contemporaneity and immediate disciples, instead of writing thousands of letters by hand, had had at their disposal AT&T telephone credit cards, portable tape recorders, computers, printers, faxes, television, teleconferencing and above all electronic mail.22

Derrida evidently enjoys this little game of anachronisms and hypotheticals, in which one can read his auto-portrait of "deconstruction" as itself an effect of media technologies, precisely the ones that he names, but that he also covers, by imagining their devastating effect on the father of psychoanalysis. Nonetheless, his jeu d'esprit contains at least one serious suggestion about this Nachträglichkeit, or retrospective action or retroactive revision—this reversal of cause and effect—that invariably accompanies any attempt at a media archaeology of the kind I am exploring here when one is trying to "write into" (sic) the history of cinema and its theorization a figure as unlikely, canny, circumspect, and, finally, recalcitrant as Sigmund Freud.

I make this cautionary remark, as I am about to introduce not so much an anachronism as a synchronism and simultaneity that must be thought of as at least as troubling but also as revealing as Derrida's image of Freud with an AT&T phone card at, presumably, JFK Airport. This figure of troubling contemporaneity with Freud is Thomas A. Edison. If we see Freud's metaphoric chains and semantic clusters in the "Mystic Writing Pad" essay as referring less to writing, to hieroglyphs and palimpsests, than to Edison's successful attempts to record vocal and aural data on wax cylinders and tinfoil, and if we add to this the knowledge that Edison developed the kinetoscope originally to complement the phonograph and synchronize it with an image machine, then the Mystic Writing Pad becomes in a sense even more mysterious and magic in that it reproducites at the level of a jeu d'enfant that is also a jeu d'esprit an ambivalence also present in the cinema, at least as conceived of by Edison, where graphein (writing) and scopein (seeing) are kept in play and in suspension.23 Seeing and writing hover over the technical media that make up the cinema both in its basic apparatus as well as in its theoretical elaborations, referring back to the very beginnings of cinema the vexed question of indexicality and iconicity of filmic recording, and suggesting that if we follow Edison and give priority to sound recording, understood as the laying of

tion, and trace (frayage, as Derrida translates Bahnung), while the categories of Freud's dreamwork, such as condensation and displacement, are, as we know since Roman Jacobson, analogous to the rhetorical strategies of metaphor and metonymy, themselves modeled on certain dysfunctions of the brain. But in his book Archive Fever Derrida also comments on the paradox noted above, namely the peculiar status of media technologies as at once absent and present in Freud, something Derrida sees—in a manner borrowed from Freud—as itself a repression haunted by the possibility of its return. I quote: "One can dream or speculate about the geo-techno-logical shocks that would have rendered unrecognizable the scenery of psychoanalysis... if... Freud, his contemporaries, collaborators and immediate disciples, instead of writing thousands of letters by hand, had had at their disposal AT&T telephone credit cards, portable tape recorders, computers, printers, faxes, television, teleconferencing and above all electronic mail."

In Freud's work, time... seems to operate as a symptom whose effects are not only overtax the individual perceptual apparatus but also threaten—with its "too much" of aural and visual data—the very capacity of culture to represent itself to itself, as literary texts or musical notation has done, and instead lead to cul-
ture's pathologizing itself by trying to read mechanically reproduced audiovisual data across culturally encoded "representation." This pathology of modernity—

theorized by Benjamin as the difference between Erfahrung and Erlebnis, the cinema, in its industrial and institutional form, addresses by turning toward narrative and generating out of the undifferentiated flow the hierarchized, regulated forms of discontinuity that we know as editing or montage in order to retrieve meaning from total representation by an act of semiotization. Freud, on the other hand—and this may furnish a more theoretically cogent argument for his dislike of cinema—does not trust this superficial form of narrativizing the contingent and the continuous, deciding that time can only be experienced as unrepresentable. In its emphasis on surface appearances and its reveling in the accidental, the cinema must have struck Freud, Doane remarks, "as a veritable reservoir of meaninglessness." Whereas psychoanalysis repairs the discontinuity and apparent meaninglessness of visual recall by retrieving and restoring the layers of data no longer accessible, the cinema, as it were, parodies psychoanalysis by imposing on perception the logic of an order of the visible that ignores the very "work" that in the psychic apparatus goes into representation and legibility.

If, in the light of what was said earlier about the problem of combining perception and data input with storage and data processing, we venture to draw some conclusions that Doane might not draw herself, we could say that the cinema has to be understood as an apparatus concerned with perception and the optical only as an initial step but that its full conceptualization requires an additional dimension, namely that of storage and processing, which—and here Freud was right—cannot be solved by narrative. For those who have taken a historical, or rather "archaeological," perspective and have reexamined the so-called "origins of the cinema" ("early cinema" in English, "le cinéma des premières temps" in French), this conclusion is almost self-evident. Both early cinema (or what is now called "the cinema of attractions") and the avant-garde have consistently refused narrative as a "solution," even if they have done so for different reasons and with very different arguments. Freud's contribution to this debate would be his insistence, so forcefully but also so obliquely expressed in the "Wunderblock" essay, that an apparatus, considered as archive or memory, needs to clearly differentiate and separate the transmission function (mirror) and the storage function (memory). Between perception (and immediate forgetting) and the unconscious (unlimited storage), Freud, as it were, comes close to specifying the machine requirements for an input/processing/output system. The input would be our "classical" model of film theory and psychoanalysis, with its emphasis on vision and the gaze, the mirror phase, or, put more generally, on all forms of input that have a mirroring or duplication function and thus refer to our feedback loops with the environment, including our relations between the self and the other as well as our forms of (self-) consciousness. The storage part would be the unconscious, which contains the "memory traces" while remaining open for new "impressions." The processing part, or "program," would be the psychoanalytic-therapeutic process, that is, the "talking cure" itself, understood as the combination of free association and what Freud himself in The Interpretation of Dreams called "work" (i.e., the data recalled across the different rhetorics of the unconscious and logico-linguistic operations, such as condensation, displacement, and the interface of presentability), to which the analyst applies the techniques of translation and transcription (i.e., verbalization and visualization).

Since the two functions of perception and memory for Freud come together only in the virtual space that is the unconscious, the cinema would need to have the equivalent of a media unconscious, a virtual space in which its perceptual optical data (the inscription of a perceiving subject) and its mnemonic trace (the presence of an object) could come together. Until now, theories of the cinema have tended to oscillate between these two possibilities, either privileging perception and the spectator (in semiotic and psychosemiotic theories) or privileging the object and its material traces (in realist, materialist, or "ontological" theories). Perhaps one of the many seductions that Gilles Deleuze's theory of the cinema has for us today is that it seems to both sidestep these alternatives and at the same time, with his formula of "The brain is the screen," offer a way of understanding the cinema as both perceptual fact and material fact.

But this is where Freud's conceptualization of time—if we follow Doane—would put a serious obstacle in our way. Time, in Freud, is the protective-compensatory effect of a subjective experience of intermittence, of rupture, a failure and loss of signal even, occurring in the transition between recording and storage. The indexical-iconic data of perception cannot be joined with the data of "time" (understood as the experience of "narrativized" intermittence), so that time as durée (in Bergson's sense) is not its "primary" state but already the processed result, such as we know it in the time-based arts, including the cinema, divided between chronos (linear time) and kairos (the moment of recognition—incorpsis—and of "closure"). It is therefore only logical that Deleuze should not refer to Freud, but he might have—instead of Bergson—called upon Marye. For as Doane points out, whereas Freud conceives of time as the effect of "this continuous method of functioning of the system perception-consciousness" and thus as a "subject-effect," Marye tried to capture time as pure process, as the movement of objective "becoming," when he devised so many different methods of recording natural phenomena—from the human heartbeat to the gallop of horses, from the phases of motion of the wings of bees and birds to the patterns of turbulence formed by air and smoke as hot and cold air come into contact with each other. In all these phenomena, Marye attempted to let movement and motion, vibration and oscillation "write" themselves, without the intervention of the human hand or any kind of symbolic notation, such as language. And unlike
Muybridge, whose recordings of movement were generated by the intermittence of different still images, sequenced one after another, Marey tried to capture movement without any “loss” or intermittence, producing the famous blur or continuous line, by abstracting as much as possible from the plenitude of sensory data. For instance, he reduced the human body to a set of luminous dots, which yielded the motion graph against a black background that we have become so familiar with. We might say that while Muybridge, as a photographer and artist, strove to use chronophotography as a means to “gestalt” recognition, Marey’s method as a scientist was closer to what I earlier called “pattern recognition.” But as Doane also points out, Marey’s attempts to capture movement as a full continuum, and thus to record time without intermittence, was as much haunted by failure as was Freud’s attempt to imagine an apparatus that could combine perception-consciousness with memory-trace recall, without inventing “repression,” the “unconscious,” and the hermeneutics of “dreamwork.”

Mary Ann Doane is an important figure in the history and formalization of feminist film theory; her previous book The Desire to Desire and her collection of essays entitled Femmes Fatales have been required reading in film theory classes all over the world. A question that thus might arise is how and where her work in feminist film theory and on female subjectivity intersects with this interest in early cinema and even precinema, as manifested in “Temporality, Storage, Legibility: Freud, Marey, and the Cinema.” One possible answer could be sought by returning to the origins of psychoanalysis and the fact that—as all feminists have noticed—Freud’s initial patients and the subjects of his first case histories were predominantly women. In Doane’s analysis of the representation of psychoanalysis in Hollywood cinema, one of the strongest motifs is the medicalization of femininity and the inevitable erotic entanglements between doctor and patient that seem to accompany the representation of psychoanalytic therapy, as if female subjectivity itself were the pathology that psychoanalysis set out to cure, to the benefit of patriarchy.

**DRACULA: FREUD, LITERATURE, THE CINEMA, AND PSYCHOANALYSIS**

Against this “medicalization” of women in mainstream Hollywood, as documented and analyzed by Doane in The Desire to Desire, our combined effort to present Freud the media theorist might allow us to give another turn to this trope as well by suggesting that Freud can also be understood as having not so much medicalized female subjectivity as “mediatized” women. This is one of the abiding subjects of a third thinker who has commented extensively on “The Mystic Writing Pad” but whom I want, by way of conclusion, to introduce through yet another possible but unlikely contemporary of Freud. The complementor is Friedrich Kittler, and the perhaps unexpected contemporary is Bram Stoker’s Dracula. I do not need to—nor do I have time to—say much about the abiding affinity of the cinema with the Dracula figure as the archetypal embodiment of the uncanny undeadness and in-between-ness of cinematic life and its preservation or storage. Instead, what I want to draw attention to is Kittler’s take on Dracula—Bram Stoker’s novel from 1897, rather than say, F.W. Murnau’s Nosferatu from 1922—because of the way Kittler reads the novel as a commentary on the media origins of psychoanalysis at just about the same time as its principles and first therapeutic practices were being formulated by Freud. For Kittler, Dracula is a creature driven not by desire but by some other force and energy: that of a technical media revolution, as it has affected the domains of information and communication. As such, he may be the only original and authentic myth that the age of mechanical reproduction has produced, so that Dracula stands for the eternal repetition of mechanical inscription, which has entered the Western world with the typewriter, the gramophone/phonograph, and the cinema.

Besides a book entitled Gramophone, Film, Typewriter, Kittler is best known for the book Aufschreibsysteme 1800/1900, translated into English as Discourse Networks 1800/1900. There he presents a reading of German Romantic poetry as the consequence of new media technologies, notably the widespread alphabetization undertaken by Prussian school reform. This put woman at the center of a double regime: in the figure of the mother she inducted the male child into discovering through silent reading a new form of inwardness and subjectivity, and in the figure of the female reader she helped create the artist-poet, with his pen as the embodiment of a form of masculinity that impregnated and engendered through paper and ink, and by extension through writing and print. Kittler’s thesis is that literature as we know it in the modern age is the result of the coming together of two technologies and a universalizing educational discourse: it was necessary to join to the printing press the postal system, and to public education the literate mother. I have travestied a complex historical thesis (which has delusionized the discipline of Germanistik at German universities in the 1980s and created the field of Medienwissenschaft), mainly in order to introduce a larger historical scheme into which Kittler’s analysis of Dracula fits and where feminist film theory might find itself in some sense both historicized and given a function beyond the emphasis on specularity, vision, and the male gaze.

Kittler in effect, argues that Dracula (1897) is the story of how women become themselves media, how their susceptibility and sensitivity are, in the middle of the nineteenth century, discovered as a resource and a raw material, Charcot, Janet, Freud— for Kittler they all line up as men who “harvest” the mediatic powers of women, and it is Bram Stoker who calls their bluff, as it were, because in Dracula he both exposes the patriarchal mechanisms underlying their psychoanalytic analysis and at the same time offers the imaginary solution that
allows Victorian/Western society to live with this shocking realization and its real contradictions. In the contrasting and complementary figures of Nina and Lucy, and in the descriptions of their symptoms, Stoker makes hysteria, paranoia, and somnambulism appear as embodiments of electromagnetism and the human equivalents of wireless transmission. Stoker was no doubt aware that Marconi had patented his wireless telegraphy system in 1896, even if he could not have known that as early as 1938 Marconi would successfully transmit radio signals across the English Channel. On the journey in pursuit of Dracula back to Transylvania, Nina serves the men as both medium and messenger: that is, thanks to her vampiric contact with Dracula, she is able to receive the transmissions emanating from him on the high seas and on land, thereby helping to track his (global) position. Being familiar with a technically advanced, symbolic encoding device, the typewriter, she records the messages sent by Dracula as they travel to the Carpathian mountains, acting as a kind of moving (wireless) receiver and recorder. As Kittler dryly remarks, women around 1890 had only two choices, to become hysterics or typists, and Nina, after the demise of Lucy, is both.

Psychoanalysis and the cinema—yes, they were born together, but they have also been on a collision course ever since, or rather, they compete with each other and in the process produce the famous “excess” or surplus that, in various formulas (“woman as excess” in musicals and melodrama, violence as special effect, body-horror and pornography), film studies, too, has been trying to come to grips with. Psychoanalysis and cinema are thus the enemies and rivals who—according to the double negative of “my enemy’s enemy is my friend”—none theless come together at the close of the nineteenth century to put an end to literature and the literary author.

In Kittler’s scheme of things, technological media and psychoanalysis thus compete around literature’s legacy, trying to take on the various information-processing tasks and cultural memory mandates that used to be literature’s monopoly: the recording, storing, and repeating of experience in sounds and images, text and traces, embodied or imagined, manifested as physical symptoms or as phantom sensations. Where film and the cinema (or the audiovisual media generally) accomplish such recording by mechanical means, and on synthetic material supports, psychoanalysis has retained the body and voice as its material support. Yet it, too, tries to “automate” the recording process as much as possible through free association and the seemingly esoteric but strictly controlled body of techniques that make up “analysis.”

To conclude with another speculation: Kittler, it would appear, is trying to indicate how in three different epochs, women have been crucial in “naturalizing” a new media technology as well as problematizing its effects on gender relations. If, around 1890, women were essential to the idea of literature as a profession and an autonomous practice, it was the female body and voice that

introduced and “naturalized” the cinema around 1900 (if we can accept his reading of Dracula as an allegorical prefiguration of audiovisual media). The question with which this leaves us is whether, around 2000, a return to Freud—now as media theorist rather than medical therapist—can tell us something about the “unconscious” of our current media technologies. In the emphasis on such traditional attributes of the female mind as “parallel processing,” “distributed attention,” and “collaborative intelligence,” the digital media find themselves naturalized by virtue of being “feminized,” perhaps to keep at bay—and to control—another form of the undeadness of data, the “too much” of stimuli that threaten the very possibility of perception and comprehension, and thus the very manageability of processing. If T. S. Eliot, in 1936, famously asserted that “human kind cannot bear too much reality,” it would seem that Freud likewise suspected that humankind could not bear much media reality. Where, then, one is tempted to ask, is the Freud of the twenty-first century who reinvents the “unconscious” appropriate to the information media age? To encourage us to think about this further, let me end with a quotation from Freud’s Beyond the Pleasure Principle: “Uncannily it predicts one of our current predicaments: that our senses are mere ‘samplers’ of data and our consciousness the protective shield that enables us to survive their contact with the world: ‘It is characteristic of [the sense organs] that they assimilate only very small quantities of the outer stimuli, and take in only samples of the outer world; one might compare them to antennae which touch at the outer world and then constantly withdraw from it again.’” Freud the media theorist may still “amount to” someone who increasingly speaks to our age: to cognitivists, biologists, and perhaps even some to whom psychoanalysis now appears so “bankrupt” and “discredited.”

If media archaeology is trying to step into the breach that has opened up between a film history (or a television history) that is no longer possible for the twentieth century and a media anthropology that is not yet feasible for the “media convergences” or even “a-mediality” of the twenty-first century, then a figure such as Sigmund Freud—precisely because of his “negative epistemology” about the technical media and his skeptical insistence on persistent problems of memory in relation to consciousness and communication—can stand as a milestone and marker on a road that is direct or linear neither in temporal succession nor in topological extension.

NOTES


2. For a useful exposition, a flavor of the polemics, and a thorough analysis of the “Freud Wars,” see John Forrester, Dispatches from The Freud Wars: Psychoanalysis and Its Passions (Cambridge,


5. Such a view has most forcefully in recent years been argued by Slavoj Žižek, notably in his chapter on neurobiology in The Parallax View (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 200–251.


13. On the former, see, for instance, Jacques Rancière, La fable cinématographique (Paris: Seuil, 2001), on the latter, see the "tag cloudy" generated by online databases such as the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com).


15. For a concise statement in English, see Niklas Luhmann, Theories of Distinction: Redescribing the Descriptions of Modernity (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

