Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899)

Announcement regarding *Cloud Nine*

Freud begins work primarily in medicine & neurology, seeking physiological, mechanical, empirical explanations for psychological phenomena. Great impact of work on hysteria w/ Breuer on “Anna O.”

- development of “talking cure”
- Role of language & semantic/phonetic associations
  - puns, jokes, slips-of-the-tongue

*Interpretation*

- assumes that “dreams are capable of yielding an interpretation” (78)
- technique of analysis to break dream into parts, then to rejoin
  - remember Stanislavski’s advice to actor, break down beats
- technique of “free association” (81)
  - mobile attention as way to be “transparent” about non-transparent activities of unconscious
Rising recognition of involuntary processes
see how Stanislavksi attempts to harness these through “physical actions”
Proust’s emphasis on “involuntary memory” as the motor of narrative
making sense of life not about a chronological history, with a clear beginning, middle, and end
instead, the retrospective creation of meaning from parts
Surrealism’s emphasis on automatic writing, free-floating symbols to which psychic energy becomes attached
Methodology of dream interpretation emphasizes
a) language
   the primary source of evidence about unconscious
   later, unconscious like a language, Lacan
b) sexuality
   “sexuality, that factor to which I attribute the greatest
   significance in the origin of the nervous afflictions” (93)
   not will, but desire (160) as primary focus of identity
   bisexuality, polymorphous sexuality
c) childhood, “primitive” origins of psyche
   children as sexual beings
   children as different from adults psychically (102)
   Rousseau & on
   what about role of primitivism in Modernism (388)

Examples of dreams, Wish-fulfillment
Condensation
Displacement
Family Drama & Oedipus complex (201-205)
Avoidance of unpleasure (396)/compare to Aeschylus on Erinyes
  “Do not banish the terrible from my city”; deal w/ the unliked by embracing it
Psychological time in Freud
how does it work?
   is a dream narrative linear, simultaneous, or what?
how tell stories, create dramas w/ these assumptions?
How do Freud’s theories attempt to explain how self-division operates?
how does dramatic character change, post-Freud?

Film & psychoanalysis
   Role of “screen memories” in incest “fantasies”
   film screen as screen for wish-fulfillment, editing as analogous to psychical processes

Continuity between conscious & unconscious in Freud w/ emphasis placed on latter; new basic notion of human subjectivity
For next time: Ibsen, *Ghosts*

1) Consider how the kinds of questions that Marx asks – about the effect of material social conditions on shaping consciousness – and those that Freud asks – about mechanisms of condensation & displacement in dealing with sexuality, repression, etc. – are also asked in *Ghosts*.

2) But how does Ibsen also not align with Marx or Freud?

3) Finally, Ibsen’s drama is thematically innovative, but also structurally & formally innovative. Notice how condensed “dramatic symbols” tie together different parts of the story in *Ghosts*. And what about how plot twists – usually achieved through revealed memories – keep constantly shifting characters’ (and audience’s) perception. All drama might be multi-perspectival, but in Ibsen, much of the drama seems to be taking place within perception, within the psyche.