Charcot's Narcotic Dream, Part II

This is Part 2 of 2 parts. Part 1 here.

by Norman Simms (December 2018)

Caricature of Jean-Martin Charcot: caught in the jaws of death.

In Part 1 of this essay we noted that one of the salient and controversial features of Jean-Martin Charcot's studies into hysteria is the importance of illustrations—drawings, photographs, paintings, lithographs and prints. In his lessons, the Master used his own line drawings, those prepared by assistants, photographs taken of patients and professional dancers and acrobats, historical paintings, mostly of a religious nature that show saints and sinners in agony and ecstasy, related manuscript and early print pictures collected from all over western Europe to demonstrate the diachronic and geographical manifestation of bodily contortions and tics that constitute the physical aspect of the disease in question over many centuries.[1] Included in the survey of historical pictures, such as Charcot and his associated collected, are figures caught in catatonic states, bodies twisted into unnatural and therefore absurd combinations with animals, plants, rocks and letters.

A long view of the nineteenth century can put in perspective both the apparent flowering of hysteria as disease of preference for men and women of a certain class[2] and the way in which medical experts like Charcot came to see it as at once distinct from an organic illness and yet likely to be congenital. Whatever its cause, it presented in terms similar to what was perceived through new technology, such as the phantasmagoria and photography. Elizabeth Bronfen suggests the following, which we will take as including more than just the fixed images of a daguerreotype, but also the magic lantern and, as we shall see later in this essay, caricature:

The photograph turned into a medium that enabled men and women to change gender and to redesign themselves as animals, monsters and machines . . . The individual designs new faces that only emerge in the design, it re-arranges its anatomy,

breaks itself up into small pieces and reifies itself . . . [3]

Since Bronfen also says that doctors "have always . . . understood hysteria as a disorder that illustrated the problematic relationship between self-identity and self-staging",[4] the question is what is consciously willed, unconsciously prompted, and manipulatively suggested.

If Charcot's life-long sense of aesthetic pleasures helped him both trace out the history of hysterical gestures in European art, high and low,[5] in order to understand the disease as not something invented during the nineteenth century but a mark of the human condition, his emphasis on examining, recording and treating patients with disorder with the aid of drawings and photographs,[6] as well as spoken descriptions and mimetic performances helps us understand how his approach differed from the word-based methods used by psychoanalysts in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.[7]

What are Hysterics?

> *When shown the body, she fell into violent hysterics, and kept her bed for several days.*[8]

In Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* (1818)*,* a young woman wrongfully accused of murder, is found guilty and sentenced to death. This is part of the horror let loose into the world by Victor Frankenstein's scientific enthusiasm. Yet what about the reactions of this victim? No description, just the word,

hysterics, modified at best by the adjective "violent" as though there could be hysterics which were soft, quiet and measured: hysterics are something you "fall into," that is, a state of being already pre-set by tradition and social usage—or suggestion; and some condition that, when mild, must be allowed to pass, to run its course, and hence she (the sufferer, the victim) "kept to her bed for several days." If the hysterics were more extreme, she would have been constrained in a straightjacket and shackled to her bed, and then taken away to an asylum, a place where she could be protected for the remainder of her days or rarely until by some natural process the condition would have subsided and faded away.

Those who suffer from hysteria or who manifest a condition created in themselves find their symptoms characteristically brought on by a sudden or violent shock that is called horror or terror in fiction (we would say: *trauma*), by some intensity of emotions that cannot be contained by the patient's body, especially by its nerves. For example, a character might say, "I have been struck with a mysterious horror"[9] and then lose consciousness and control over his or her body. He or she, as Frankenstein, begins to tremble uncontrollably, the arms and legs contorting into rigid unnatural postures, the head twists around its neck, the eyes bulge, the ducts and sphincters release their fluids, and the voice utters incomprehensible gibberish. The body assumes grotesque shapes; and the person becomes a parody of normal, healthy humanity. A caricature.

The Nebulous Haze of Hysteria

"At the first few sittings the figure of the child was visible in a kind of nebulous haze," he explained, "but at

the last séance—"[10]

A hysterical dream caused by narcotics drawn by Jean-Martin Charcot and published by Henri Meige. This one (as distinct from the illustration shown in Part I of this essay) with more open spaces and distinct edges around each character and object looks more like the animated cartoons drawn in the early history of cinema, such as the *Dans Macabre* or Skeletons' Dance of Death.[11]

The tricky "nebulous haze" produced by a phantasmagoria turns out to be a real event, and the delusions of mental illness prove no mere figments of a diseased imagination. What is fake is not always false. The modern mind discovered and displayed at the end of the nineteenth century had become a theatre of dreams and frustrated desires. As the mysteriously pained and psychologically confused monkish narrator in E.T.A. Hoffman's *The Devil's Elixir* says:

. . . I was left standing alone in the dim light, which always became more obscure. Seldom have I known visions more strange than what arose to my bewildered senses at that moment. Forms and features, imagery and adventures out of my past life, stept out vividly, like the illusions of a phantasmagorie [*sic*], amid the gloom of the dark forest,

before me.[12]

From Circus Routine to Caricature and on to Character

A visit to a lunatic asylum furnished William an occasion for any denouncement of a system that allowed the public to come and gape at the unfortunate patients. Women came from the country specifically to witness what was akin to a staged circus scene, where the warders lashes the victims into a bleeding frenzy, indulging the public gaze and gratifying their morbid curiosity (L).[13]

The visitor was Dr. William Wilde, Oscar's father, and the asylum was in Vienna, and the year was 1840. Half a century later in the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris crowds flocked to watch Jean-Martin Charcot put on a show of his hysterical men and women, not to pander to prurient tastes and sadistic urges in "a staged circus scene", as was the case before the reforms in the treatment of nervous and mental diseases became more civilized and humane, but to illustrate how the pains and humiliations of abused children lived on to manifest in signs of extravagant bodily contortions.[14] The audience of learned doctors, curious artists and fascinated others watched the Master analyse the progress of mental illness, explain its stages through reference to drawings and photographs, as well as mimed performances and *tableaux vivants*, and offer hope to

those otherwise unable to express their anxieties and frustrations.[15]

But what and who is a caricature?

Dans l'analyse clinique du malade, M. Charcot possédait le don de saisir promptement dans la masse des symptômes présentés les plus caractéristiques pour en démontrer l'importance diagnostique ; en même temps il examinait le malade très promptement, quoique soigneusement, évitant de la fatiguer sans raison pour ne pas augmenter ainsi les symptômes morbides.[16]

In a clinical analysis of a patient, M. Charcot possessed the gift of seizing promptly from the mass of presenting symptoms the most characteristic to demonstrate their diagnostic importance; at the same time he examined the patient quickly, yet carefully, to avoid fatiguing him [or her] without reason so as not to augment the morbid symptoms.

It is easy to understand this description of Charcot's methods in terms of caricature. The gift of promptly grasping the key symptoms, the clear categorization of the illness, the interpretation of the clinical situation to those subjects he worked with, those students and colleagues he taught and those members of the general public he enlightened.

Though some of the modern critics who seek to discredit Charcot and his work assert his authoritarian, short-tempered

and intolerant attitude, writers who knew the man and worked with him have a very different view; and so do those patients who put down their thoughts in memoirs and journals. Perhaps the strongest argument against such a view may be found in one of Charcot's Russian students, A. Lubimoff's long obituary written in 1894. He recalled Charcot as a judge "severe but just," always open to students and associates, undogmatic in his approach, tolerant and patient, though opposed to empty theories and religious presumptions, and with the sensibility of an artist. [17]

His biographers *paint an image* of an austere presence, reserved manner, shyness, *economy of gestures* and an *impenetrable, impassive face*. However, a *wry and sarcastic* side of Charcot can be demonstrated in several situations, and these examples *help to clarify the intricacies* of his personality and work style.[18]

The two Brazilian and one Canadian set out a picture of the Master that we think can best called a caricature, an image moreover that was to some extent self-created by Charcot himself. I have italicized the key words in their statement. Like E.T.A. Hoffmann, the German artist and fantasy writer we will discuss soon, Charcot presented himself as an ambiguous and indecipherable hieroglyph. [19]

Perhaps someone might want to look at his love of animals as an emblematic pendant to his supposedly sharp tongue and dictatorial manner, the aloofness that led some of his German students to dub him *Napoleonkopf*, [20] and why not his pet monkey, Rosalie, given to him by Don Pedro, Emperor of Brazil?[21] This would surely be one of the "new ways of looking at" the man, the hospital performances, the patients

put on display, the men and women suffering from the disease named hysteria; new because it adds to the range of contextual venues—"wax museums, puppet shows, and pre[-]cinematic devices", as well as café concerts, music and dance halls, street fairs and other forms of popular entertainment—where "gesticulatory hysteria" was produced, imitated and turned into art.[22]

In a now controversial article[23] published in 1938, E.H. Gombrich and Ernst Kris[24] argued that caricature first appeared in the sixteenth century, and could not have been invented as a separate genre before then for this reason: "the conscious distortion of the features of a person with the aim of ridicule"[25] because the whole sense of the individual had changed and this new individual who was responsible for his public and private self needed to be held accountable for his words, deeds and even his thoughts. Moreover, these new individuals or their heirs were not able to call the shots in commanding portraits of themselves by artists, whose task was to show the better side of their characters, and so be portrayed in their finest garments and surrounding by the signs and symbols of their historic presence. Not only did it fall to the artist—who was no longer merely a craftsman and servant of the patron—to reveal the true character of the subject, even if this meant exposing the negative qualities of such a personage, including weaknesses and defects, but above

all with ugliness as a resulting conceptualization of this caricature.

Previously, according to Gombrich and Kris, artists were free to ridicule types of social, moral and psychological types of person, but not recognizable individuals. What resulted was grotesque, comic and satirical. Grotesques combined naturally and logically incompatible elements, such as plants, animals and social classes, making evident the defects in ideological and political pretentiousness and hypocrisy. Comic types made evident the weakness of social behaviour and self-deluded persons, the laughter evoked calling for correction and amelioration of the problems, but never threatening to expose the structural defects in society. Satire, however, roughly and often violently tore off masks of dangerous pretention and reduced to ridicule the lies and self-righteous architecture of institutional authority. Each of these generic typologies, though, tended to become top-heavy with their own ideologies and the need for accompanying commentary.

Caricature entered the fray with a new feature to make the sarcasm and ridicule more effective: simplification. Gombrich and Kris claim that the caricaturist, such as the Caracci Brothers or Poussin, seized upon a single characteristic, isolated it, exaggerated it and made it express the essence of the person it drew. For these two art historians of the 1930s, the "elliptical expression" of a caricature performed a task similar to that of what Freudian psychoanalysis called "dreamwork" such as condensation, displacement, splitting and symbolic replacement. Paradoxically, the fewer the details of the portrait and its natural or civil background, the more striking the likeness to the real essence of the character depicted.[26] The artist, then, no longer a craftsman or liveried servant, was guided by his (or rarely until our own

times her) imagination.

Imagination rather than technical ability, vision and invention, inspiration and genius made the artist, not merely the mastering of the intricacies of handicraft. From an imitator he became a creator, from a disciple of nature its master.[27]

During the Romantic Era prior to and after the French Revolution of 1789, the notion of imagination replaced the older idealized terms of artistic creativity, such as imitation and wit, internalizing and decontextualizing the processes painting, writing poetry, choreographing dance or performing music. In brief, there was an attempt to put aside reason, common sense and traditional patterns of behaviour. In so doing, in terms of caricature, the artist set himself against the dominant values of the bourgeoisie, the ruling parties of monarchy and church, and the inheritance of classical and Renaissance art. As rebel and drop-out, however, this new imaginative depicter of great men in society was not so much a revolutionary, like Nietzsche's superman (*der ?bermensch*) beyond good and evil, but rather like a classical *eiron*. Ironically, the drawers of caricature were more often supporters of the *status quo* and the ruling elite, less objective than partisan, and not above ridiculing good men espousing unpopular causes. The critic hides within what seems like a low, popular, ephemeral genre, a rough-sketch artist, or a furtive character drawing on urban walls and sunken graves.[28]

Be that as it may, there is another side to the development of caricature, one that Gombrich and Kris are partly aware of in their essay. "One knows from clinical experience," they write,

though this is probably more Kris than Gombrich, "that pictures in fact play a different part in our minds than do words." [29]

Word and images are remembered in different ways, and thus combine into memories often contrary to more abstracted, intellectual thoughts. The distortion of the image—the face and other appendages of the body—generates different sensory and mental sensations in the brain than do spoken words and abstract ideas. The pictures provoke immediate emotional responses and seemingly instinctive bodily motions. The use of the term caricature to suggest these mental processes already appeared in such nineteenth-century novels as E.T.A. Hoffman's *The Devil's Elixir*, as we remarked earlier.[30] One recent commentator introduces his various talents this way:

Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (1776-1822) was a Prussian lawyer, composer, music critic, illustrator, caricaturist, and, most importantly, author. Living at the height of the Romantic era, Hoffmann wanted to write astonishing stories of wondrous things and so became one of the precursors of modern fantasy writers and possibly the first modern horror writer with his first horror short stories predating Frankenstein by a full year.[31]

Because of these differences in the way caricatures are perceived and remembered (in the double sense of individual recollections acting as templates on subsequent experiences and collective reproductions in later works of art and reference points in historical debate),[32] "Caricature is seen as a key not only to politics, personages, types and circumstances, but also to perception and pictorial rules." [33] So says Judith Wechsler in her editorial introduction to

a special number of the *Art Journal* for Winter 1983. But as the contributors to this special number make evident, it is more than a question of changing the way we perceive or make works of art that caricature signals. By perception, however, there is both an aesthetic sense of how images are construed in an intellectual way, as they are also transformed into memory for storage or reconstruction in the brain, and also how what the eye registers from sensations of light on the retina can be influenced by physiological and emotional ailments. This interference with sight itself was interpreted by Charcot "in the dazzling scotoma that erupt in their [hysterics'] field of vision, in their drawing, and in their handwriting."[34] These visual auras—and by analogy, oral or other sensory disturbances—are not always debilitating, even if they are annoying or provocations to creative acts.[35]

They fascinated performers and spectators in the nineteenth century, being taken often as signs of modernity—the freedom to express oneself through the deepest and most irrational impulses of the body and thus being in touch with what is most natural in the deep, hidden and inexplicable aspects of the mind. Gordon can thus claim that "Modernity in the cabaret is, to an astonishing extent, another word for pathology." Take *cabaret* as a metonym for *popular culture* and *pathology* for *artistic truth* and each of Charlie Chaplin's silent films becomes an analogue to Charcot's lessons in the Salpêtrière. Put differently, caricature for the new age is character.

For caricature marks a new way of seeing individuals and their specific characteristics. W.A. Coupe can thus indicate that in this form of art "characteristic features ae seized upon and exaggerated to the point of distortion, yet it is precisely by means of this distortion that a striking impression of fidelity is conveyed" and, as even one of the originators of

the genre, Annibalae Caracci in the early seventeenth century could say, "enable the artist 'to grasp the perfect deformity and reveal the very essence of a personality.'"[36]

Our argument is that caricature goes beyond political satire or aesthetic perceptions; the form does not have to be aggressive or even jocular. It can be perceptive in the sense of training the eye of a psychologist to "seize on the essence [not of a victim, but of a patient presenting confusing and ambiguous symptoms" and so to "penetrate to the reality behind the appearance presented to the world [and to normative medical practice]".[37] The object becomes to cut away the grounds for ridicule and rejection of the seemingly distorted image of humanity, as the hysterical patients seemed to be, and reveal what they really were: suffering men and women. Their contorted bodies and crazy speech were symptoms of a disease that could be identified and treated. Novelists often spoke of modern social relations and private inner thoughts as punctuated by "shocks," and these were described as "electric jolts," the body, like the mind, reacting in convulsive or at least distorted ways.

In terms of Charcot himself—the man shaped into a hieroglyph or caricature—he was, according to his inner circle of associates and friends, "a highly humorous man with a paradoxical spontaneity, a charming laugh, and a behaviour reminiscent of a joker, or even buffoon."[38] More than these entertaining qualities in the man, Charcot also "made use of his sarcasm as a powerful scientific weapon,"[39] a cutting tongue, as it were, shaping those caricatures enacted by his female and male patients that brought out the truth of hysteria.[40] As in a caricature, where the artist simplifies, exaggerated and brings into relief the essential character of the subject, in the Salpêtrière Charcot sought to make the

hysteria explicit in recognizable gestures and articulate in the delirious language of the patients. The illness was a mysterious hieroglyph deep in the mind—the brain, the nervous system, the hormones—and the performance was a diagnostic tool. He was not fooled by his performers.[41]

A good diagnostician, like Jean-Martin Charcot, was able to see through the cloud of verbiage and ideology that traditional physicians surrounded the hysteric with, and could distinguish between fakers merely imitating epileptics and patients trying to express their pains and humiliations through a body language built on a cultural heritage of religious and civil bigotry. Barbara Brooks, a surgeon with twenty years' experience in the operating theatre, has written an M.A. Thesis in which she "argues that caricature was the medium best suited to visually record this unusual time [the eighteenth century in England] in medical history and to expose the social responses to these medical advances."[42] Her dissertation contains many fine insights that arise from her experience as a modern surgeon, but we are trying to extend the idea of caricature to make it into an instrument of medical—particularly psychohistorical—treatment. The teaching of anatomy required that professors and students often engage in illegal or at least quasi-legal practices such as body-snatching to obtain corpses and that they steel themselves with "inhumanity" to cut into the human body to study its components. These activities and attitudes made the profession an object of ridicule in caricatures, an approach motivated by fear of the unknown, anxiety for the spiritual destiny of their "victims" and an aesthetic reaction against the ugliness of the ravaged and putrescent human body. A similar set of negative responses emerged when Charcot and his associates began to show sympathy for and serious medical attention to the "lunatics" in the Salpêtrière. Sympathy was read as prurient interference with the female hysterics and serious

attention ridiculed as a form of madness in itself.

Let us go back to what E.T.A. Hoffman, himself an artist and caricaturist, explains in his novel how both the individuality of characters is put in question by the strange doubling of appearances, so the protagonist is haunted by a *Doppelgänger*—a seemingly exact duplicate of himself in all but character and personality;[43] and yet the appearance of such individuals is subject to a mysterious process of metamorphosis. Euphemia, a wise old female adviser, explains to the knightly Victorin (as Medardus seems to be):

> . . . the individual, who in such undertakings, expects to succeed, must possess the power of stepping, as it were, out of herself,—of contemplating her own individuality from an external point, (that is to say, as it is beheld by others;) for our own identity when viewed in this manner, serves like an obedient implement—a passive means of obtaining whatever object we have proposed to ourselves, as the highest most desirable in life.[44]

This machiavellian baroness then continues in this vein, but her ideological motive misses out the more fantastic and mysterious processes disclosed in the novel of not openly shape-shifting for strategic advantage in courtly and political games, but of being separated by more spiritual or demonic powers from the appearance and personality one had previously thought constituted the individual self. The deliberate distortion one's own visible and tangible identity is a form of cutting caricature, while the ability to maintain one's consciousness and conscience in spite of these illusory transformations marks the real individual, the healthy and sane person.

Can there be anything more admirable than an existence which rules over that of others, so that we may exert perfect empire over the insipid beings—the phantom shapes, by which we are here surrounded, and command them, as if by magic spells, to minister to our enjoyments.[45]

In fact, she and others who seek to impress these delusions on the minds of others are themselves dupes of "horrible" forces swirling about them. For, as we learn,

It is a particular attribute of madmen, that they can often look more deeply than others into the hearts of those by whom they are surrounded. It seems, as if their own minds, being free from rational control, stand in nearer relationship with the spiritual world, and are more liable to be excited sympathetically by the emotions of another. Thus often times they pronounce aloud our own thoughts, like a supernatural echo, when we are startled as if we hear the voice even of a second self.[46]

This second *self* designated as a manifestation of irrational insight into the real dynamic character of the mind becomes in the parlance of psychoanalysis the unconsciousness. In order to reach such an understanding, the distorted appearance and speech of the hysterical patient needs to be described accurately in its essence, that is, by combining the reproductions of photography, the peculiar sensitivity of drawing, the empathetic mirroring of facial expression and body contortions, as well as the controlled rhetoric of written and spoken discourses. Combining them, playing with different tones and shades, creates a caricature. Attempting

to take all appearances at face value or all spoken language as transparent to thought—that is, without exaggeration, irony or wit—turns the patient into "a broken *marionette*—a worn-out plaything,"[47] a passive victim of manipulation and suggestion.

But not only does the narrator find that his character changes with his dress—clothing, mask, facial features—but the world he travels through itself becomes fantastical:

> I observed that the people whom I met on the road, invariably stood still to look and gaze after me, so there must have been something quite unusual and unaccountable in my appearance. I was not interrupted, however, but arrived in due time at the village, It was of considerable extent, badly paved, and composed of poor ill-furnished house, many of which were more like animated monsters, like gigantic visages mounted on claw feet, after the distorted imagination of [David] Teniers [the Younger, 1610-1690], than dwellings to reside in.[48]

Horror, grotesque, fantastical, and then in due course what Medardus, under his various names and appearances, finds the correct word for this vision of a phantom world: they are "like the illusions of a phantasmagorie."[49] Then, not long after, the even more apt term comes to him: *Karikature.*

There was, however, one little man in the room, with a comical visage, long nose, and sparkling eyes, who irresistibly engaged my attention. He was dressed in black, with a long steel-mounted sword, and wound himself, with incredible dexterity, like a serpent through the crowd, appearing now here, now there, but resting never, and apparently raising laughter (whether with him, or at him, I knew not) wherever he went. This person (having ventured an inquiry) I understood was the Prince's physician.[50]

More than a tradition "character" or "type", this is one of the caricatures whom he encounters. They are comical, grotesque, but above all "absurd but true." What is exaggerated and simplified in their portraits brings out the essence of their otherwise hidden or repressed characters.

Continuing to draw from Hoffmann's fantastical and Gothic novel premonitions of the psychological insights to come later in the nineteenth century, we find the physician described above advising the narrator on a lady of the court who shows "hysterical" symptoms (her "nervous irritability") and characterizing her condition through the use of caricature.

Hereupon reverting to her late fit of nervous irritability, he gave, wickedly enough, such a caricature (for he was an excellent mimic) of her conduct and expressions, when he had arrived express at the summer-house, contrasting these also,

with the grave ceremonious *hauteur* of the Princess, that I was forced, even against my will, to laugh (for the good humour of the physician was infectious), and gradually recovered a degree of cheerfulness, which, but a few minutes before, I had supposed lost forever.[51]

The "wickedness" of the doctor stands for the "aggressiveness" usually used to define caricature as a satirical portrait. By setting forth in sharp relief the contortions and ravings of the lady against the aloofness and arrogance (*hauteur*) of the Princess, the physician breaks the melancholy and horror oppressing the protagonist, making him laugh away his debilitating anxieties. Each of these technical terms and the imaginative concepts behind them are, to be sure, not exact parallels to the diagnoses and treatments developed by Dr. Charcot in the Salpêtrière, but they are a foreshadowing of the methodology that grows from his familiarity with the arts and literature of the period.

Hoffmann created male characters who suffered from hysteria, not just females, as we have seen. Medardus the monk who is haunted by strange phantoms and doubles in *The Devil's Elixir* manifests classic symptoms of the disorder, in part through hallucinations and periods of delirium, but more often in physical and psychological responses to horrible and terrifying experiences: he trembles, falls, lurches, twists around, as when he attends the funeral of his impossible love, the saintly Aurelia:

> . . . I trembled convulsively…a sudden giddiness seized me, and I should have fallen . . . had not my watchful brother seized and held me back . . . I made a violent effort to be tranquil . . . but my passions now raged and burned within

me with a violence which I had never before known. Every vein and fibre in my frame was convulsed and swollen by the vehemence of my conflict, and I grasped the reading-desk with such force, that the boards cracked and broke beneath the pressure . . . Let me not become mad!—only not mad! . . . Save me from utter frenzy.[52]

Charcot turned away from the mystical, magical terms of the nineteenth century and sought a naturalistic, positivist explanation for mental illness. Individuals no longer gave or received "magnetic" or "mesmeric"—"galvanic" or "electronic", too, is sometimes used—influence on one another; and if there were an "extraordinary mental sympathy and connection" between people it came from empathy, sympathy and love. If an individual found his or her identity split, it was not "into two hostile and contending powers,"[53] one demonic, the other godly, but one consciously striving for health and reason, the other trapped in an unconscious of painful childhood experiences and even hereditary defects.

Caricature can strip each figure or face to the bare necessities, and make them coexist, in a single image. So too a good diagnosis, which cuts to the quick, reveals the illness, suggests the treatment, but also establishes an empathetic bond between patient and physician.

NOTES

[1] Jules Evans,"Jean-Martin Charcot and the Pathologisation of Ecstacy" *Philosophy for Life and Other Dangerous Things* (27 March 2015) online at http://www.philosophyforlife.org/ jean-martin-charcot-and-the-pathologisation-of-ecstasy. Evans is one of those who thinks the whole performance of hysteria in the Salpêtrière was "an absurd farce" and all the women displayed were hypnotized to pick up Charcot's suggestions, as they were also "hypnotized by a gong or tom-tom drum" at the Moulin Rouge. This whole farce, he thinks, was put on so the male audience could gloat as the women "fall to the floor clutching their vaginas." On the charge that interns at the Salpêtrière would frolic with the female patients after hours, see Jean-Michel Rabaté, "Loving Freud Madly: Surrealism between Hysterical and Paranoid Modernism" *Journal of Modern Literature* 25:3-4 (2002) 59.

[2] Olivier Walusinski, "The Girls of the Salpêtrière" in J.Bougoussavsky, ed., "Hysteria: The Modern Birth of an Enigma" in *Frontiers of Neurology and Neuroscience* 33 (2014) 1-10.

[3] Elisabeth Bronfen, "The Performance of Hysteria" Chapter 7 in Heidrun Friese, ed., *Identities: Time, Difference and Boundaries* (New York and Oxford: Berghan Books, 2002) p. 154.

[4] Bronfen, "The Performance of Hysteria" p. 158. We doubt that medical professionals "always" framed their questions in this contemporary post-modernist jargon. More likely, as we shall find when examining ETA Hoffman's *The Devil's Elixir(s),* the codes were moral, ethical, political and spiritual. Charcot combed museums and libraries throughout France and Europe to find depictions of expressions and gestures that showed hysteria to have an iconographical language spanning many centuries and crossing many cultural borders.

[5] Gordon, "From Charcot to Charlot" 518.

[6] Though the Surrealists, like André Breton, were fascinated by the photographs published to illustrate the hysterical women of the Salpêtrière, despite what Adrianna Alksnin argues, these aesthetes at the turn of the century did not have a major or lasting influence on either culture in general or the visual arts in particular, and Charcot, for all his interest in collecting and appreciating art, paid much attention to the *avant garde* of his day. Adrianna Alksnin, "Augustine: Charcot's Bunny" (Augustine, née Blanche Wittman, is the model depicted in the much-reproduced painting of Charcot's lessons at the Salpêtrière, found the reference being a derogatory one to Hugh Heffner's semi-pornographic *Playboy* magazine) DOI:10.1838/td.2015.en.2.8 online at https://depot.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/123456789/ 11818/08_alksnin_augustine.pdf?sequence=1 But it is rather mild compared to the bizarre novel by Swedish author Per Olov Enquist, *The Story of Blanche and Marie,* trans. Tiina Nunnally (London: Vintage Books, 2007; orig. 2004), wherein Blanche goes to work in Marie Curie's radioactive laboratory after her husband Pierre Curie dies in a street accident, and the two women share sexual secrets as Wittman gradually loses her body parts.

[7] John Kerr, *A Dangerous Method* (London: Atlantic Books, 2012; orig. Knopf, 1993) pp. 25-29. Like many other authors who depend on secondary sources, not least those in the post-modernist and feminist schools of Paris, Kerr is hostile to Charcot. Much of this negative assessment can be traced back to Léon Daudit, *Devant la douleur: souvenirs des milieu littéraires, politiques, artistiques et médicaux, de 1880 à 1905* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1915). Bitter at being failed in his medical certificate, this son of the more famous Alphonse Daudet (author of *Lettres de mon moulin*), wrote against the medical profession in France (one of his nastier novels is *called Les Morticoles*, The Dealers in Death); and because his father was a good friend of Jean-Martin Charcot—and Léon a schoolmate of Jean-Baptiste Charcot,

the future explorer of the Antarctic)—he wrote long accounts of the family life of the doctor and the procedures in La Salpêtrière. In later life, he turned from nasty to Nazi, and published extensively as a collaborationist during the German Occupation of Paris.

[8] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*, (1831) ed. M.K. Joseph (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) p. 82.

[9] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, voll. I, chap. V, p. 14. The term horror sometimes is used to indicate an emotional or physical response to the shock, but often to the shock itself." Thus: "my looks and behaviour assumed a horrible expression" (I, xv, p. 47), "a kind of horror seized upon me" (I, xix, p. 62), etc.

[10] Agatha Christie, "The Last Séance" in Herbert Van Thall, ed., *The Second Pan Book of Horror Stories* (London: Pan Books, nd) p. 159. According to Wikipedia*,* "The Last Séance" was "first published under the title of *The Stolen Ghost* in issue 87 of *The Sovereign Magazine* in March 1927." However, it had been printed a year earlier in an American magazine "the November 1926 issue of *Ghost Stories* under the title of "The Woman Who Stole a Ghost" (see "Reading Agatha Christie" for 30 July 2016 online at https:// agathachristiereadinglist.wordpress.co/ tag/short-story/…).

[11] Meige, *Charcot artiste* (1925).

[12] Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir*, vol. I, chap. xxiv, p.80.

[13] Emer O'Sullivan, *The Fall of the House of Wilde: Oscar Wilde and his Family* (London: Bloombury, 2016) p. 36.

[14] Official records show that the female patients mostly came from broken and dysfunctional homes (if that is even an appropriate word for their abused, neglected and abandoned upbringing) marked by "[p]aternal violence, aggravated by

alcoholism" and, even when in the hospital under medical supervision, "their employers would come to harass them, demanding sexual favours" (Walusinski, "The Girls of the Salpêtrière" 1-2.

[15] Walusinski, "The Girls of the Salpêtrière" 1. "Few of the patients" that Charcot and his associates treated "had been to school or knew how to read and write. Their parents were unemployed or poor, and they themselves sought work as laundresses (the most scorned occupation at the time), linen maids, house servants or florists." While in the Salpêtrière, "these women accepted miserable, cramped housing." By and large, "the hospital remained a refuge from the misery outside" (4).

[16] A. Lubimoff, "Le Professeur Charcot, étude scientifique et biologique," trans. Lydie Rostopchine (1894) p. 13 ; online at https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Le_Profeseur_Charcot_%C3%A9tude _scientifique_et_biologique/Le_Professeur_Charcot

[17] Lubimoff, "Le Professeur Charcot, étude scientifique et biologique," pp. 12-15.

[18] Hélio A.G. Teive, Francisco M.B. Germiniani and Renato P. Munhoz, "Charcot's Irony and Sarcasm" *Arquivos de Neuro-Psiquiatria* (June 1; online at http://www/sciel.br/scielo.php?pid=S0004-282X2017000600402&scr ipt=sci_arttext.

[19] Andrew Kirwin, *Poetics of the Hieroglyph: Allegory and Media in E.T.A. Hoffmann's Fantastic* (BA Thesis, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Ct., 2009) pp.2-3. The kind of hieroglyph discussed here is that current prior to Jean-François Champollion's cracking of the Rosetta Stone in 1822. For Hoffmann, especially when he "inscribed himself into his stories" imagined this as a "pictographic caricature" (p. 3). This concept is at once a rhetorical trope—the image as

condensed statement of an idea—and the ironic Romantic foreshadowing of "psycho-symbolic elements in his work."

[20] Hélio A. Ghizoni Teive, Ségio M. Almeia, Walter Oleschko Arruda, Daniel S. Sà and Lineu C. Warneck, "Charcot and Brazil" *Arquivos de Neuro-Psiquiateria* 59:2 (June 2001) 1-8; online at http://.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttexct&pid=S004-282X2001000200032. Léon Daudet, these authors add, said that Charcot was known in French as having "*un front trop bas* [and] *avait la rectitude d'un Bonaparte replet*" (3).

[21] Hélio A.G. Teive, Walter O. Arruda, Lineu C. Werneck, "Rosalie: pequienina macaca brasileira de Charcot/Rosalie: The Brazilian Female Monkey of Charcot" *Arquivos de Neuro-Psiquiatria* (September 2005) online at http://ww.scielo.br/scielo.php?pid=S0004-282X20050040031&script=sci_artext. The creature was a *Cebus apella* or Black-capped Capuchin. "In his [sic] famous book about Charcot, [C.G.] Goetz, [M.] Bonduelle and [T.] Gelfland comments [on] a tale recalled by Charcot['s] granddaughter, about the affair with the small female monkey during a dinner in Charcot's house, with the presence of several famous persons, including the Grand Duke of Russia. 'Rosalie' dismantled the dining room (a[n] elaborate fruit decoration in the dining room centerpiece), but Charcot and the guest friends maintained [sic] a good sense of humor" Teive *et al*, p. 3). See also Teive *et al.*, "Charcot and Brazil" 5.

[22] Rae Beth Gordon, "From Charcot to Charlot: Unconscious Imitation and Spectatorship in French Cabaret and Early Cinema" *Critical Inquiry* 27 (Spring 2001) 515-516.

[23] See for instance the critique of Gombrich and Kris by W.A. Coupe, "Observations on a Theory of Political Caricature" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2:1 (1969) 79-95, esp. p. 85.

[24] E.H. Gombrich and Ernst Kris, "The Principles of Caricature" *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 17 (1938) 319-42; available at Trapp no.1938A.1; online in many places, among them https://gombricharchive.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/showdoc85

[25] Gombrich and Kris, "The Principles of Caricature" p. 1.

[26] Coupe, "Observations on a Theory of Political Caricature" 85.

[27] Gombrich and Kris, "The Principles of Caricature" p. 7.

[28] Jules Chamfleury, *Histoire de la caricature antique* (Paris: E.Dentyu, 1879) p. 19.

[29] Gombrich and Kris, "The Principles of Caricature" p. 9.

[30] John Kerr points out that Jung referred to *The Devil's Elixir* in more than a casual way: he studied and adapted the processes of personality doubles, identity transformations and reproduction of unconscious memories; *A Dangerous Method*, pp.211, 214, 482, 490, 503. Freud took a different story by Hoffmann, "The Sandman", as an organizing example in his essay on "The Uncanny" (*Die Unheimlich*, 1919)

[31] K.J. Michaels, "Author Appreciation: ETA Hoffmann (1776-1822), the Prussian Romantic Writer" online at https://www.reddit.com/r/Fantasy/comments/63jdi/author_appreciation_eta_hoffmann_17761822_the_prussian_romantic_writer.

[32] Gordon, "From Charcot to Charlot 521.

[33] Judith Wechsler, "Editor's Statement: The Issue of Caricature" *Art Journal* (Winter 1983) 317.

[34] Gordon, "From Charcot to Charlot" 527.

[35] For more on Charcot's aesthetic sensibility, training in

painting, music and sculpture, avocation as an art collector and patron, see Lubimoff, "Le Professeur Charcot, étude scientifique et biologique," 99. 15-19.

[36] Coupe, "Observations on a Theory of Political Caricature" 85.

[37] Coupe, "Observations on a Theory of Political Caricature" 87-88.

[38] Teive, Germiniani and Munhoz, "Charcot's Irony and Sarcasm" 3

[39] Teive, Germiniani and Munhoz, "Charcot's Irony and Sarcasm" 3.

[40] Teive, Germiniani and Munhoz, "Charcot's Irony and Sarcasm" 4.

[41] Michelle Bonduelle and Toby Gelfand, "Hysteria Behind the Scenes: Jane Avril at the Salpêtrière" *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences* 8:1 (1999) 35-42.

[42] Barbara Brooks, *Caricature as the Record of Medical History in Eighteenth-Century London,* MA Thesis, Art History, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2013.

[43] By the end of the novel, the mysterious double turns out to be Medardus' brother by a sinful painter, but yet not a naturalistic reproduction of himself. "My horrible double again stood vividly before mine eyes. It was no longer the mere phantom of my own disturbed brain that had seemed to follow me through the woods, but the real and substantial madman, or demon, by whom my strength had been overpowered, and who had at last robbed me of my clothes, in order to represent me in this manner at the convent" (Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir*, vol. II, chap. xx, p. 81).

[44] Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir*, vol. I, chap xiv, p. 43.

[45] Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir,* vol. I, chap xiv, p. 43.

[46] Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir*, vol. I, chap xv, p. 45.

[47] Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir*, vol. I, chap xv, p. 45.

[48] Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir*, vol. I, chap xvi, p. 50.

[49] Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir,* vol. I, chap xxiv, p. 80.

[50] Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir*, vol. I, chap xxvi, p. 88.

[51] Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir*, vol. II, chap vii, p. 29.

[52] Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir*, vol. II, chap. xxi, p. 86.

[53] Hoffman, *The Devil's Elixir*, vol. II, chap. xx, p. 83.

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