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**The Wolf Man's
Magic Word:
*A Cryptonymy***

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Foreword by Jacques Derrida



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Chapter 3

The Nightmare of the Wolves

1. The Request for Truth

When we pick up our work three years later, Sergei Wolf Man is in his eighty-seventh year.¹ He has been speaking to analysts since his twenty-fourth year. For a long time to Freud, then some fifteen years later to Ruth Mack Brunswick. Many others followed, and to this day he continues his psychoanalytic sessions. During this half century he has led his life, so to speak, concurrently: his marriage with Theresa, the loss of his enormous family fortune, exile, financial aid from analysts, his job as insurance agent, a stormy sexual life, his wife's suicide at the time of the *Anschluss*, his subsequent breakdown and the helpful assistance of Muriel Gardiner, another analyst; the war, its hardships, the loss of his mother at age eighty-nine, the last member of his close family; work with paint brushes, much work with brushes to paint with bold "brush-strokes" certain landscapes he finds fascinating, just as he once found fascinating the image of white wolves sitting on a tree; then his years of retirement, leaving him plenty of time to engage in his favorite pastime; his correspondence with Muriel Gardiner; and, finally, prompted by her request, the writing of his well-known memoirs, recently published in English, then in German, and soon to appear in French. A best-selling author at age eighty-four, he is the owner of a small fortune won thanks to people's interest in his words by way of Freud and psychoanalysis. According to the latest news (summer 1974), he is in excellent health for his age.

This man, who is at once strange and average, has always lived under the guise of a double identity and has never lacked the resourcefulness needed to preserve it. His friends do not know that for analysts his name is Wolf Man and, as for analysts, they do not know, save for a few, what his real name is. It is as if he has had to maintain two separate worlds that cannot, must not communicate with each other.

Freud remarks with profound intuition in *The History of an Infantile Neurosis* (1918), right after having commented on the nightmare of the wolves: "The whale and the polar bear, it has been said, cannot wage war on each other; that is, since each is confined to his own element, they cannot meet" (*Standard Edition*, vol. 17, p. 48). Indeed, there are elements in the Wolf Man's psyche that must never meet. But should one believe that Sergei Wolf Man keeps speaking endlessly to analysts in order not to be heard? Ever since the release of his memoirs he does not simply have *one* analyst, but thousands, yes thousands, of ears to listen to him. Could it be that his purpose is to have his readers confirm the split in his personality that Freud, thinking precisely of the Wolf Man, touched on in his very last piece (*The Split in the Ego*)? The shrug of many a disillusioned or frustrated reader at having been denied some great revelation is not an adequate response to the question.

Between the lines, the Wolf Man is always in search of truth, of a truth he cannot state himself. The apparent literary banality and moral conventionalism of his autobiographical account may also be interpreted as truly symptomatic, as a caricature of the conventional "truths" of the self-righteous. Once this is understood, his work acquires the tragic dimension of a very human oeuvre. In every line he writes, and in all that he chooses not to write, one hears the cry: You don't really want to know anything about what I am!

And yet! . . . how can he overlook the fact that the oeuvre of his life is woven into his analyses and that the writings of Freud, Ruth Mack Brunswick, Muriel Gardiner, and finally his own, make up one great and single testimony, a single poem with several voices, which we will continue to comment on for a long, long time?

2. And Language as Truth Guard

From time to time, made confident by a long-standing friendship, he suggests—albeit incidentally—some tricks for opening our ears. A letter he sent in 1959 to Muriel Gardiner, who lost no time in relaying it to the authors of *The Wolf-Man's Magic Word* when she heard about their article (1970), bears witness to this. One passage, the last paragraph of the letter, is worth quoting. The lines are increasingly squeezed together: Everything must be said before the space

runs out. The beginning of the message, written in a big hand is quite insignificant. He writes:

Despite these misfortunes, I obviously try to keep up my interest in reading. As a matter of fact, I recently read Felix Dahn's book about Germanic gods; until now this had been a totally unknown topic to me. I am interested in this book . . . especially as regards—how shall I put it?—comparative linguistics, for I was able to find the Germanic roots of some Russian words. For example the first name *Trude* comes from the Germanic *Trud*, which means "force." This old Germanic word is very likely the root of the Russian *trud*, since in Russian *trud* designates the "effort" one needs in order to work. The Russian word *molnia* for saying *Blitz*, lightning in German, must be derived from *miölnir*. Indeed, this word names the hammer of the Germanic god "Thor-Donnar" which, according to popular lore, produced the lightning (*Blitz*). Lightning is supposed to be the wedge-shaped tip of the thunder hammer. The Russian name for water, *voda*, is identical to the one standing for the same concept in Sanskrit: *voda*, *veda* = *Wasser*.² It is also quite odd that the sagas make the gods die and fall when the Germans are usually so respectful of authority.

Now, liebe Frau Doktor, I wish you all a very pleasant Christmas holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year.

The subject of this letter only seems to be irrelevant. Its author insists that his reader should not only not overlook but in fact understand and even transmit to her colleagues the fact that in order to understand him (a multilingual person), one must look in several languages for the original meaning of what he states in German only.

This (implicit) suggestion became our own guide to rereading, with a renewed ear, the famous nightmare of the wolves reported by Freud and responsible for the enigmatic patient's being named the Wolf Man.

This new orientation in our reading was confirmed by another fact, mentioned by Freud, which had thus far escaped notice: From age four onward the child had an English governess. A discreet yet unmistakable reference is also made in *Fetishism* (1927) to the role played by the Wolf Man's early and forgotten experience of his *English* nursery. The nurse in question was, according to his long-past account to Freud, a rather nasty person who did nothing but tease him: "Look at my little tail," she would say. She said strange and disagreeable things, even made Nania (his sister Anna) "go out of the room," spread all kinds of rumors, and was finally let go for reasons that remain obscure. This is supposedly the time when the family suddenly moved to a different estate and when, coincidentally, little Sergei underwent his "change in character," becoming cho-

leric and phobic. The development of what Freud called an “infantile neurosis” (and whose explanation is contained in the nightmare of the wolves, according to him) would thus be linked to the presence of the nurse.

Freud’s intuition indeed seems irreproachable; the construction he provided of the nightmare remained, however, far too general for being too theoretical. For good reason. The essential material he should have had came to light only in snippets during the next fifty years, and in particular during the Wolf Man’s analysis with Ruth Mack Brunswick from October 1926 to February 1927.

Capitalizing on these new developments, Freud jotted down some reflections in *Fetishism* about his ex-patient’s use of the English language, thereby paving the way for the approach presented here. He writes:

In the last few years I have had an opportunity to study analytically a number of men whose object-choice was dominated by a fetish. . . . For obvious reasons the details of these cases must be withheld from publication; I cannot therefore show in what way accidental circumstances have contributed to the choice of fetish. The most extraordinary case seemed to me to be one in which a young man had exalted a certain sort of “shine on the nose” into a fetishistic precondition. The surprising explanation of this was that the patient had been brought up in an English nursery but had later come to Germany, where he forgot his mother-tongue almost completely. The fetish, which originated from his earliest childhood, had to be understood in *English*, not German [our emphasis]. The “shine on the nose”(in German, *Glanz auf der Nase*) was in reality a “glance at the nose” [*Blick auf die Nase*, *Blick* = glance: *Glanz*]. The nose was thus the fetish, which, incidentally, he endowed at will with the luminous shine which was not perceptible to others. (*Standard Edition*, vol. 21, p. 152)³

Who could fail to recognize the Wolf Man’s case here, despite the obligatory disguise, with his nasal symptom and his words? We will return later to these words, most certainly taken from the Wolf Man’s material, but not coinciding, “for understandable reasons,” with the words of the fetish itself. The impression nevertheless prevails that Freud grasped the verbal mechanism of the fetish as well as a principal aspect of its metapsychological import in this particular case: “The Mother has no phallus.” We would say that the penis the mother does not have is the father’s, for he deprived her of it by diverting his desire elsewhere. This caused a scandal.

But let us not anticipate. We are fully conscious that what we are proposing here is of the utmost daring. We have to pluck up all our courage to impart to you the unexpected results of our listening. The immediate task before us, for which we ask your indulgence, is an attempt at a new textual translation of the Wolf Man’s principal dream, the nightmare of the wolves.

3. The Interpretation of the Nightmare of the Wolves

Let us first recall the dream in its entirety:

I dreamed that it was night and that I was lying in my bed. (My bed stood with its foot toward the window; in front of the window there was a row of old walnut trees. I know it was winter when I had the dream, and nighttime.) Suddenly the window opened by itself, and I was terrified to see that some white wolves were sitting on the big walnut tree in front of the window. There were six or seven of them. The wolves were quite white, and looked more like foxes or sheepdogs, for they had big tails like foxes and they had their ears pricked up like dogs when they pay attention to something. In great terror, evidently of being eaten up by the wolves, I cried out and I woke up.

Around the age of four or five, when his “change in character” occurred and when his nurse left in turmoil, our patient must have had at least a basic knowledge of English. This is confirmed in connection with Elizabeth, his subsequent nurse: She would read children’s stories to him in English. It was therefore plausible to look for foreign verbal elements in his early dream material. We do not wish to retrace all the steps of association leading to the translation (*one* of the translations!) of the entire text. In fact, this attempt is the result of a long-term study encompassing all of the Wolf Man’s dreams, symptoms, and verbal tics. It would be inconceivable to reconstitute, even partially, the work of deciphering (decrypting) accomplished over the years. But it does seem vital to explain in a few words how the expression “I dreamed” becomes, once decrypted, the amazing sentence: “The witness is the son.”

The point of departure for a long chain of associations was not “I dreamed” but the word “window,” in Russian *okno*, which returns repeatedly in later dreams and can be cross-checked. Going back for the *n*th time to associations quoted by Freud, it suddenly appeared strange that the Wolf Man should offer an interpretation of it on his own: “Window” had to be understood through the Russian *okno* as “eye,” that is, *oko* or *otch*, the root for its inflected forms. Why dream about “window” when it is understood that one wishes to say “eye”? Contaminated by the idea of the English nurse, we take the German word for window (*Fenster*) to be in English. Another English association from the Wolf Man’s material emerges: It was on a *Whitsunday* that the “symptom of the nose” returned in 1925, probably also prompted by seeing the film *The White Sister* on the same day. Very close to the anniversary of this date—another *Whitsunday* in 1926—the Wolf Man sent a letter at Freud’s request confirming the early age at which the dream we are analyzing occurred. This was a *testimony* of sorts, since Freud was going to use it against Otto Rank, who maintained the dream was produced during the analysis itself through transference (Gardiner, *The Wolf-Man by the Wolf-Man*, p. 277; and this volume, chapter 5, section 6).

We do not know Russian, we can barely sound out the words in the dictionary, but this difficulty is also our good fortune. It permits us to avoid the blinders of language to follow better the avenues of our own listening. Thus, if “window” means “eye” for the Wolf Man, perhaps we must listen to this very word “eye” . . . as it opens . . . But onto what? At the entry *oko* (eye) in the dictionary, we stumble on the compound word: *otchevidietz* (eyewitness) and later *otchevidno* (“clearly,” a term that also appears later in the dream). *Otche* = *window*! Now it is talking! There is “clearly” an *otche* and *window* and there is reason to believe this link is contained within the preceding association, *Whitsunday*, which we now hear as the *day* of the *witness* of the *son*. *Otchevidietz* of the son. *Eyewitness* of the son. The idea overlaps with the numerous occurrences in the Wolf Man’s material of the English and German syllables *sun*, *son*, *Son(ne)*, *Sohn* . . . which are nearly always linked to the ideas of seeing and illuminating.

Let us take up the dream once again from the beginning.

a) “I dreamed that it was night and that I was lying in my bed.” (*Ich habe geträumt, dass es Nacht ist, und ich in meinem Bett liege.*)⁴

Freud italicizes both the text of the dream and curiously the expression “I dreamed.” At the end, however, “I woke up” is printed without italics. This seems to mean that “I dreamed” must be considered an integral part of the dream.

Now “to dream” in Russian is *vidiet son*. *Vidiet* resonates with “Whit” and “witness,” *son* with “sun” taken from *Whitsunday*. Incidentally, *vidietz* means “witness” in Russian, and *son* (dream) is a homophone of the English “son.” There is thus near homonymy, on the one hand, between *vidiet son* “to dream” or “see a dream” and *vidietz + son* and, on the other, the English “witness” and “son.” “I dreamed that it was night.” “Night,” the Russian adverb is *notchiu*. We could not help hearing it in English also: *not you*. We venture the hypothesis: **The witness is the son, not you.**

Absurd! But no measure of unlikelihood or strangeness is going to make us back down. We must not ignore any trail.

The dream continues:

“I was lying in my bed.” Note the words “bed” and “lying.” This could be illuminating. For the dreamer’s ear, bed and but may sound alike whereas “lying,” that is, “to be in bed,” must seem to a Russian child a bizarre homonym of *he is lying* (“not you, but he is lying”). The whole thing then once again: **The witness is the son, not you, but he is lying.**

Now there is a sentence to dream about! It may well have been *engraved* as is, to be disguised later in the manner we have just seen. Is this expert in legal

matters of insurance (the Wolf Man’s profession in Vienna) an unwitting “witness”? His testimony—once confirmed—does imply some misdeed. What will the next flip of the dictionary turn up to our bemused surprise? “Misdeed,” “crime,” “sin” are said with nearly the same Russian word as “walnut tree,” the legendary tree of the Wolf Man that supports the famous “white wolves” and whose image has long since become his trademark. In fact, “walnut tree” is *oriekh*, whereas “sin” and “misdeed” are *khriekh* with the stress falling on *-ekh*. Our listening gains clarity.

But let us return to our sentence: “The witness is the son, not you, but he is lying.” In whose mouth does this shred of dialogue belong? Certainly not in that of Sergei, the “son,” since he is mentioned in the third person. Furthermore, if, as we suspect, there was an accusation in English, it must have come from the English governess. As for the response, the sentence must have been uttered by one of the parents. The father, the accused party, was, as we shall see, absent from the scene. Conclusion: These meaning-laden words, spoken in a mixture of Russian and English, must be attributed to the mother and addressed specifically to the nurse.

Let us go on listening:

A rather lengthy parenthetical statement comes directly after these words. In the Wolf Man’s head, exchanges and arguments about the validity of a child’s testimony move about in a whirl from the mother to the nurse. Perhaps we should not look for excessive logical coherence here. What is striking is the constant repetition of the same ideas in various types of Anglo-Russian homonyms. It is a veritable babel of tongues. The dreamer apparently requests that the manifest content not be adulterated by the dream’s disguised subject and that the analyst not, any more than the previous addressees of the nightmare, introduce any other meanings. Yet, the analyst’s ear cannot help but continue to resonate with chords of a dialogue. We, of course, do recognize this request—spoken with such insistence—to stick with the manifest content: When he says he was in bed, it is true; he remembers that this “bed” stood “with its foot toward the window.” As for the old “walnut tree” (discussed later), there was a whole row of them in front of his window. He knows absolutely, “it was winter and nighttime.”

The analyst, however, cannot help twisting the words toward what they are meant to hide. What does the other ear hear?

b) “My bed stood with its foot toward the window.” (*Mein Bett stand mit dem Fussende gegen das Fenster.*)

The obvious meaning of this sentence, or nearly so, suggests the idea of a *dialogue*.

“True, his bed was placed footside in front of the window” (the implication being that it was physically impossible for the child to see what was going on behind him). For once, “bed” and “window” are used

literally. But this is hardly satisfactory. *Fuss* (foot) makes us think of *truth*. We shall have occasion to test the validity of this hypothesis later. So we propose the reading: "My bed" (*bed = but*) "was standing" (for the little Sergei this means), "not lying." In plain language: **But he is not lying.** "Footside" and "in front of the window": *truth* and *witness* (window = eye[witness]). In short, he is a true witness, or better yet: **But he is a truthful witness.**

The proof is in what follows, probably the nurse's reply:

c) "In front of the window there was a row [a series] of old walnut trees." (*Vor dem Fenster befand sich eine Reihe alter Nussbäume.*)

In "textual" English: **Before the witness there was a series of the old [one's] "khriekhs,"** (*khriekh = misdeed, paronym of oriekh = walnut tree*).

d) "I know it was winter when I had this dream, and nighttime." (*Ich weiss es war Winter, als ich träumte, und Nachtzeit.*)

"I know" in Russian, *Ya znayu*, but this can be heard in English in a sarcastic tone: "Znaa . . . you," "No, it's not you" (who saw it). "Winter" in Russian, *zimoi*. With the aid of the Anglo-Russian *son* and the Russian *samo saboi* ("by itself") occurring later on, we hear it through the distortion: *t'ziboy* (*it is a boy*); "when I had this dream" = he dreamed (*vidiet son*) and "nighttime" (*Notchu = not you*) = it is not you (the witness).

The entire dialogue:

– **But he is not lying, he is a true witness.**
 – **Before the witness there was a series of the old (one's) Khriekhs**
 – **Z'Naaa you** (it is not you the witness, but the son). **He is a boy, he dreamed a dream. (The witness) is not you.**

Are we going to find out what misdeed of the "old man's" the son witnessed? What misdeed the mother claims can only be a dream, not a child's eyewitness account? Thereupon the Englishwoman raises her voice.

e) "Suddenly the window opened by itself." (*Plötzlich geht das Fenster von selbst auf.*)

"Suddenly the window opened!" "Suddenly," in Russian, *v'droug*, which imitates the English "th'truth." Thus: "The truth: The witness opened himself to me." "By itself," in Russian, *samo saboi*, imitates the English "somewhat as a boy." The nurse states in sum: **The truth is that the witness confided in me somewhat as a boy.**

The disguise continues:

f) "And I was terrified to see . . ." (*Und ich sehe mit grossem Schrecken . . .*)

In Anglo-Russian: I see the great *khriekh*. I see = I understand. *Schreck* (by homophony) = *khriekh* = misdeed. That is to say: **I understand the great sin.**

What is the great sin? The dream is finally stating it:

g) "that some white wolves were sitting on the big walnut tree in front of the window." (*dass auf dem grossen Nussbaum ein paar weisse Wölfe sitzen.*) No doubt this is the crime. But how can we manage to hear it?

"Some," in Russian, *para* = a pair, a couple. **A couple.** And what is said of them? "White wolves sitting = wolf + (sitt)ing = wolf + ing. Are we on the right track? Cross-checking later dreams, there is a great likelihood that a specific Anglo-Russian homophony is at work here. Wolf + ing (pronounced with a guttural "l") = *goulfik* (Russian) = slit, fly; white = wide: **A wide fly or a fly wide open.**

So, this is Sergei Wolf Man's "wolf," the "wolf" of his nightmare, the "wolf" he later adopts as part of his pseudonym.

But the dream is not over yet. We are going to know the sin. He says that of these "wolves,"

h) "There were six or seven of them." (*Es waren sechs oder sieben Stück.*) As was shown earlier, a "pack of six," a "sixter" = *shiestorka: siestorka*, does not denote a number but simply the sister. In a word: **There was the sister.**

i) "The wolves were quite white." (*Die Wölfe waren ganz weiss.*) explains the rest:

In Anglo-Russian: **The *goulfik*, The fly was opened quite wide.**

The dreamer explains his "wolves":

j) "[They] looked more like foxes or sheepdogs, for they had big tails like foxes and they had their ears pricked up like dogs when they pay attention to something." (*und sahen eher aus wie Füchse oder Schäferhunde, denn sie hatten grosse Schwänze wie Füchse and ihre Ohren waren aufgestellt wie bei den Hunden wenn sie auf etwas passen.*)

This is probably an explanation by the mother in Russian: *lissitsa* = fox and *ovtcharki* = sheepdog or police dog. The sentence can be translated: The Miss is a *lissitsa* and Oven an *ovtcharki*. (According to the Wolf Man's memoirs, the name of this first English governess was Miss Oven.) **The miss is a fox and Oven a police dog.**

"For they had big tails like foxes": (She is a fox) because of her **big tales.** "And they had their ears pricked up like dogs when they pay attention": (She is like a police dog) because of her ears pricked up to pay attention.

As is apparent, English is less and less useful for understanding this passage, which seems to reproduce—clearly without much distortion—the official version of the events, as reported to the children by the mother in Russian, after the mysterious departure of the nurse.

The mother's version nevertheless seems unsatisfactory to the "witness." The nightmare results from this very conflict. On the one hand, little Sergei suffered from living under the terror brought on the family by the governess's threats to divulge (*cry out*) the deeds she believed to be incriminating. On the other hand, the "witness" cannot be reassured by the official version; he relives the mother's fear that, were he to say the truth he is certain he has seen with his own eyes and with all his desire, the family would come to great harm. Had he not been contaminated by the mother's fear, he would not have allowed himself to be treated like a liar and be made to gag on the truth.

Let us proceed to the end of the dream:

k) "In great terror, evidently of being eaten up by the wolves, I cried out and I woke up." (*Unter grosser Angst, offenbar, von den Wölfen aufgefressen zu werden, schrie ich auf.*) He then wakes up in terror and only Nania's soothing words can calm him.

Here, English would be of little help except, probably, to lend its meaning to what is experienced in the dream as a cry and which must be an allusion to the governess's unsettling threat to divulge what she thought she knew. To cry out = "divulge" and, in the Wolf Man's family situation, "disparage," "dishonor." An interpretation using Russian will suffice. **Anxious that on account of the eyewitness (*otch-vidietz*) "Fly" is going to put in jail (*sidiat*, in Russian, "they will eat," and *siedat*, "they are sitting in prison") and dishonored (cried out . . .).** Here the dream ends.

"Anxious that on account of the eyewitness" clearly refers to the mother. In point of fact, the dreamer cannot bear the contradiction of having to agree with the mother's fear and hear what he knows to be true called a "dream" or a "lie" and thereby be forced to renounce his desire to take the sister's place (with the father's fly). He tears himself from his sleep at the precise moment when the idea arises of crying out what the mother's anguish begs him to withhold.

Here we are before the original text of what must have been the train of thought translated and disguised into the nightmare of the wolves.⁵

4. Synopsis of the Nightmare of the Wolves

I dreamed that it was night and that I was lying in my bed. (My bed stood with its foot toward the window. In front of the window there was a row of old walnut trees. I know it was winter when I had the dream, and nighttime.)

The witness is the son, not you, but he is lying. But he is not lying, he is a truthful witness. Before the witness there was a series of the old one's khriekhs. Z'naaa you (the witness) but the son. He is a boy, he dreamed a dream! (The witness) is not you.

Suddenly the window opened by itself and I was terrified to see that some white wolves were sitting on the big walnut tree in front of the window. There were six or seven of them. The wolves were quite white.

The truth: The witness opened himself to me somewhat as a boy. I see the great khriekh (misdeed), a couple, a wide goulfik (fly). There was the sister. The goulfik (fly) was opened quite wide.

They looked more like foxes or sheepdogs, for they had big tails like foxes and they had their ears pricked up like dogs when they pay attention to something.

The Miss is a lissitsa (a fox) and Oven an Ovtcharki (a police dog) because of her big tales, she is a police dog because of her ears pricked up to pay attention.

In great terror, evidently of being eaten up by the wolves, I cried out and I woke up.

Fearing (that on account of the) otchevidietz (eyewitness), goulfik (fly) siedat (should go to prison), cry out (and be dishonored) . . .⁶

5. From the Nightmare to Phobia

Torn from sleep, yes . . . but to awake to what? Awakening to the same anguish—experienced first in the midst of wakefulness, then transformed into a phobia. Yearning for the nightmare to return while awake mingles with his dread of seeing a *wide-open wolf-book* displayed by his sister, and the mother's fear that the *wide-open goulfik*, the wide-open fly, might be spoken about again.

This is the hypothesis drawn from the Wolf Man's nightmare as regards the genesis of his childhood phobia.

A nightmare . . . only to awake to sleepwalking . . . and phobia! Here is a case that cries out for the analytic couch. Theoretically, the apparatus Freud invented could produce a complete awakening from an anachronistic state of fascination. We now understand, though, why this awakening never quite took place in the Wolf Man's case. Freud's own unconscious is not being questioned: Witness his comparison, mentioned earlier, between the "polar (white) bear" and the "whale," very near his study of the nightmare itself. The comparison shows the unconsciously felt but as yet unstated relationship between "white wolf"

("white bear") and *goulfik* (*Walfisch*, whale) that must—in no way!—meet in the patient's mind.

The special difficulty of the Wolf Man's analysis was due to the fact that his position as "witness for the prosecution" put him in a paradoxical situation: He knew that he was the object of his parents' fears. By espousing their apprehension of him, he must have been, to some extent, afraid of himself, afraid of his own impulse to denounce and make his own the act that occurred between his father and his sister and that, subsequently, served as blackmail for the governess. The sleeper's desire wanted the truth, wherein lay his own sexual ideal, to be "cried out," but also to be *accepted*, not hidden and reviled.

Yet the "cry" is the very thing that awakens. How can he sleep with a "cry" inside? And then to what does he awake if not the same cry that would curdle the parents' blood and heap shame and suffering on them? So he awakes to another sleeping state, to a quasi-hypnotic sleep provoked by the mother's wishes, and leads a libidinal life on the strength of unsaid, unspeakable words by twisting them beyond recognition.

Thus the Wolf Man created a secret magic word that, without betraying anybody, allowed him to achieve real or sublimated sexual gratification. This word was: *tieret*.

He also had other secret treasures: *goulfik*, "fly," the hidden attribute of his father, the true name of his ideal transformed into *wolf*, his cryptic family name. He carries within him yet a third disguised word, the name of his vocation as witness: *vidietz*. We no longer have to wonder at the occupation he chose for himself in his exile. He was an insurance agent, a kind of traveling salesman, who asks his clients upon entering their house: *Wie geht's*, "How are you?" (pronounced "viget," it rhymes with *vidietz*), an expression that serves in Austria as the somewhat humorous and colloquial nickname for the profession itself.

These three words, *vidietz* (witness), *goulfik* (fly), and *tieret* (rub) form the three invisible yet solid columns constructed by the Wolf Man on the ground of his impossible desire to occupy one or the other place in the scene he saw, his genuine "primal scene." These three columns have been supporting, for some eighty years, a trapped life, held to this day under the sway of a childhood hypnosis.

III. The Return of the Nightmare: The Crypt's Permanence

play on the split between the two properties in the beginning of *The History of an Infantile Neurosis* that he is dispossessed, or of which he can dispose only under the conditions of a *mortgage*. The position as guard is itself mortgaged. From out of its place in my scholastic memory, that English word has been haunting me throughout this reading: the word *mortgage* [in French, literally, "death pledge"—Trans.], a linguistic ghost coming back, intact, safe, in all its decomposition.

29. "introjecter-Incorporer."

30. *Ibid.* On these points (Introjection, magical demetaphorization, etc.) see again the introduction to *Thalassa*.

Chapter 2. Behind the Inner World

1. According to Ernest Jones, *The Life and Works of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1955 p. 274), who quotes an unpublished letter written by Freud to Ferenczi on 13 February 1910: ". . . he initiated the first hour of treatment with the offer to have rectal intercourse with Freud . . ." This first session is not recounted in Freud's case study. In view of our hypothesis, the Wolf Man must have requested from Freud to stand "on all fours" (rectal = from behind = a *tergo*: *tieret* = to rub) and to let his "Jack-in-the-box" reach orgasm.

Chapter 3. The Nightmare of the Wolves

1. Following a lecture given before the Paris Psychoanalytic Society on January 15, 1974 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Ferenczi's birth.

2. The crucial importance of the roots *tr*, *tor* (*tor*, past tense of the verb *tieret*, to rub) is now corroborated. We shall demonstrate in the following chapters the equally crucial significance of the words "lightning" (*Blitz*), "water" (*voda*, *Wasser*), and "strength" (*Trud*).

3. Why stop midway and leave untranslated the German word *Nase*, nose = (he) knows. The unexpected result of this restoration will be clear shortly.

4. The German text of the dream is quoted from Sigmund Freud *Gesammelte Werke* (London: Imago, 1947), vol. 12, p. 54.

5. It is worthwhile to note that the rendition of a dream's original text requires more than sheer verbal deciphering. In moving from a manifest to a hidden text the entire metapsychology of the person involved has to be considered both synchronically and diachronically. It is the overlapping of the various hypotheses operating on all levels simultaneously that allows the interpreter to confer rigor on his attempt at "retranslation."

6. The textual restoration of the dream thoughts (to use Freud's terminology) sheds new light on the dream work in general and on nightmare production in particular. This subject warrants elaboration, but let us be content for the moment with the following remarks.

First, in this case, the dream thoughts are comprised of the evocation of the initial traumatic dialogue between the mother and the nurse and of the subsequent conciliatory words of the mother. Finally, the dream states the reason for the mother's anxiety. The dream wish is: Let there be no reason for the parents' anxiety. Only if this wish is fulfilled can Sergei attempt to cut the father out with the sister and vice versa, that is, attempt to carry out a form of triangular introjection.

Second, the nightmare does not merely result, as we have suggested, from the child's identification with his mother's anguish concerning his father but also from his own anxiety that he might lose—in real life and not in fantasy—his love objects who, in any case, were to remain no more than secret models. These remarks also apply to the structure of the Wolf Man's infantile phobia. The phobic moment is a fault in wakefulness; the nightmare bursts into the waking state with all the features of a dream.

Chapter 4. In Some of Little Sergei's Dreams and Symptoms

1. This chapter is based on the dreams and symptoms discussed by Freud in his *History of an Infantile Neurosis*. The following are the page numbers of the relevant passages in *The Standard Edition* (vol. 17) and the *Gesammelte Werke* (vol. 12), abbreviated respectively *S.E.* and *G.W.*, matched with the sections in this chapter. Section 1: *S.E.*, p. 39; *G.W.*, p. 66; section 2: *S.E.*, p. 39; *G.W.*, p. 67; section 3: *S.E.*, p. 40; *G.W.*, p. 67; section 4: *S.E.*, pp. 16, 89–90; *G.W.*, pp. 39, 122–23; section 5: *S.E.*, pp. 87, 100, 94; *G.W.*, pp. 120, 133, 128; section 6: *S.E.*, p. 20; *G.W.*, p. 44; section 7: *S.E.*, pp. 91–92; *G.W.*, pp. 124–25; section 8: *S.E.*, pp. 69–70, 87; *G.W.*, pp. 101, 120; section 9: *S.E.*, p. 85; *G.W.*, pp. 117–18. On the dream of the celestial bodies and the Turkish flag, see Gardiner, *The Wolf-Man by the Wolf-man*, p. 288.

2. These German words are added to the Wolf Man's vocabulary by his new language—which is also the language of his psychoanalysis with Freud. Compare the following passage from *The History of an Infantile Neurosis*: "Thus he could recall how he had suffered from a fear, which his sister exploited for the purpose of tormenting him. There was a particular picture-book, in which a wolf was represented, standing upright and striding along. Whenever he caught sight of this picture he began to scream like a lunatic that he was afraid of the wolf coming and eating him up. His sister, however, always succeeded in arranging so that he was obliged to see this picture and was delighted at his terror" (*Standard Edition*, vol. 17, p. 16). About *Schreckbild* see also the dream of the icons (chapter 7) reported by Ruth Mack Brunswick. We can see the transformation [translation] of a wish word (*goulfik*, fly, slit) into a visual image (*Bild*, image) on account of the misdeed (misdeed, *khriekh*: *Schreck*, terror).

3. See also his mistrust of tailors in *The Standard Edition*, vol. 17, p. 87, and *The Wolf-Man by the Wolf-Man*, p. 272.

4. *Weeping on a Poet's Tomb*. This dream might be related to the illustration of a famous poem by Lermontov: *The Demon*. In the poem the demon seduces a young princess before her marriage and kills her with a deadly kiss. When his sister (their father's "dear poetess") died, the Wolf Man went to the Caucasus mountains and wept on the tomb of a great poet, Lermontov, who had been killed in a duel. Clearly he was making a displacement (in Freud's words) in complete identification with his father's grief. In his heart of hearts, he was only too glad to learn of his rival's death just as he must have been to learn of Lermontov's. He did misstate to Freud that she had shot herself, though he knew full well that she had poisoned herself with mercury.

5. *Schnecke* (snail) = *Schreck*: *khriekh* since the letter *n* is pronounced *P* in Cyrillic longhand and the capitalized letter *P* is pronounced like an *R*.

Chapter 5. The Crypt Screen

1. The complete case history Ruth Mack Brunswick provides is quoted word for word from the Wolf Man's own account that he gave her immediately after the close of his analysis. The Wolf Man's account became chapters II and III of "A Supplement to Freud's *History of an Infantile Neurosis*" in *The Wolf-Man by the Wolf-Man*, pp. 267–78. Our interpretation of the case history refers to these two chapters.

Chapter 6. Is a Witness Always False?

1. [The German text of the dreams is quoted from Ruth Mack Brunswick, "Nachtrag zu Freuds *Aus der Geschichte einer infantilen Neurose*," in *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, vol. 15 (1929):16–40. The English translation follows the German original; the reader may also refer to *The Wolf-Man by the Wolf-Man*, pp. 268–97.—Trans.]