Case Studies: American Writers Encountering Psychoanalysis

Checklist and Descriptions

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1. F. Scott Fitzgerald: *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned*

**F. Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise*, NY: Scribner’s, 1920.**

The Jazz Age of the early 1920s was characterized by a broad rejection of Victorian sensibilities and social conventions. Young people who came to define the period, known as the “Flaming Youth,” adopted a popularized version of Freudian ideas in support of a free spirited lifestyle unburdened by “suppressed desires.” Contemporary novels employed references to Freudian concepts to mark characters’ modernity, broadminded views of sexuality, and general lack of inhibition. *This Side of Paradise* was published in 1920 when F. Scott Fitzgerald was not yet 25; it immediately became the quintessential novel of the Flaming Youth and made Fitzgerald spokesman for the generation coming of age in the Roaring Twenties. Fitzgerald’s characters pursue pleasure with insistence and a vague sense of rebellion. In the words of the novel’s hero Amory Blaine, they had “grown up to find all gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken.” The novel was based on Fitzgerald’s experiences at Princeton and his stormy courtship of Zelda Sayre; the two married days after the first edition of the novel sold out. Their sensational, champagne-drenched escapades made them Jazz Age celebrities. When the Flaming Youth evolved into the Lost Generation, Fitzgerald wrote his late novel *Tender is the Night*, based in part on Zelda’s emotional breakdown and psychiatric treatment (*Tender is the Night* is exhibited on the alternate side of the mezzanine).

**F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Beautiful and Damned*, NY: Scribner’s, 1922.**

**Warner Brothers, “The Beautiful and Damned,” hand colored lobby cards, 1922.**

Fitzgerald’s second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*, is the story of Anthony Patch, a member of New York’s Jazz Age elite awaiting his grandfather’s death so he might inherit his fortune. Anthony’s wife Gloria is a woman with a “coast-to-coast reputation for irresponsibility and beauty.” Their life of endless parties and entertainments is increasingly defined by decadence and meaninglessness. Fitzgerald highlights the novels’ extreme modernity by referring to specific New York hotspots and current events; characters easily refer to much-talked-about books of the period, including those of Sigmund Freud and Oscar Wilde as well as Fitzgerald’s
then-recently-published first novel, *This Side of Paradise*. “Everywhere I go some silly girl asks me if I’ve read *This Side of Paradise*” a friend says to Anthony Patch. “If it’s true to life, which I don’t believe, the next generation is going to the dogs.”

2. Arthur Davison Ficke

**Photograph of Edna St. Vincent Millay and Arthur Davison Ficke in Santa Fe [circa 1927]. From the Arthur Davison Ficke Papers.**

Author of more than twenty collections of poetry and theatrical works, Arthur Davison Ficke was a well-respected poet in the first decades of the twentieth century. His work is characterized by an abiding interest in traditional lyric forms and in the complexities of love; critics admired his work for what one reviewer called its “impassioned beauty, rich restraint, and romantic appeal.” Today, Ficke may be best remembered for his brief but passionate affair with fellow poet Edna St. Vincent Millay; Millay’s sonnets about Ficke appeared in her 1920 book, *Second April*. The two poets remained life-long friends and influenced one another’s work throughout their writing careers. Suffering from writer’s block and troubled by problems in his marriage, in 1939 Ficke pursued psychoanalysis with Dr. Karl Menninger, a founder of the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas, who was spending a sabbatical year in New York. Ficke soon returned to writing, publishing his last book, *Tumultuous Shore, and Other Poems*, in 1942. He died of lung cancer in 1945 at the age of 62.

Arthur Davison Ficke, notes addressed to Dr. Karl Menninger, 1939.

**Karl Menninger to Arthur Davison Ficke, November 18, 1945. From the Arthur Davison Ficke Papers.**

Throughout his analysis and in the months that followed, Ficke made thorough notes, including descriptions of memories and dreams and thoughts about their meaning and significance. Though many of the notes are addressed to his doctor directly, it appears Ficke never shared this private record of his treatment with his analyst (he notes here: “I never showed any of this to Menninger, after all”). Ficke did, however, keep in touch with Menninger after concluding treatment. When he wrote to Menninger shortly before his death from lung cancer, Menninger responded—in a letter written just twelve days before Ficke’s death—“I am glad that the circle of your life, now closing—as you say—linked thru mine.”
Arthur Davison Ficke, Primary Process Chart, no date. From the Arthur Davison Ficke Papers.

In this chart, Ficke maps out his understanding of Freud’s description of complementary modes of psychic functioning, the unconscious primary process and the opposing secondary process; Ficke understands these to be “two kinds of instinct representation—one is the idea which is ultimately the cathected memory traces; the other is the change of affect which comes to expression.”


... From his calm and careless hand Drop the bright bubbles of his dreaming: He showers them indifferently, precious globes, Beside whose luminous iridescence The sun is blackness. At his feet Lap the flames of hell......

3. Floyd Dell


Floyd Dell, “Speaking of Psycho–Analysis: The New Boon for Dinner Table Conversation,” Vanity Fair, December 1915.


Novelist and critic Floyd Dell was a bestselling author and an influential member of Greenwich Village’s creative community in the early decades of the twentieth century. As an editor and staff writer for the radical magazine The Masses and its successor, The Liberator, Dell was well-known as an early feminist and supporter of progressive education, free love, and socialism. He was also an early advocate of psychoanalysis; he wrote about Freudian ideas for some time before entering analysis himself in 1917. In his memoir, Homecoming, Dell notes that analysis.
“gave a new emotional center” to his life; “in knowing myself as I at last had begun to do, there was generated a new happiness and self-confidence. My character was not made over; far from it; but I could see it in its habitual operation … catch it at its silly tricks, understand it to the core.” It is evidence of Dell’s high hopes for his treatment that this advocate of free love—his love affairs were the subject of much gossip among friends and colleagues—chose not to pursue romantic relationships in the early period of his analysis, “preferring to wait until my emotional problems had been solved, so that I could love with a whole heart.”


“How Psychoanalysis Aided My Writing” is a witty, enthusiastic description of Dell’s experience in psychoanalysis in the early 1920s. Then a well-known Greenwich lothario struggling to write a novel, Dell credits his treatment with enabling him to fall in love for the first time and complete his novel. Revisiting the essay about a decade later for inclusion in the present volume, Dell accuses himself of inadvertently suggesting that every aspiring writer must be psychoanalyzed. “I do not wish to be taken as offering general advice,” he wrote; “As to myself, however, I feel no doubt that being psychoanalyzed was immensely valuable to me both in the achievement of happiness in my personal life and in freeing my literary energies for use upon a scale more commensurate with my ambitions.”

Floyd Dell to Edmund Wilson, October 22, 1952. From the Edmund Wilson Papers.

In a letter to fellow writer Edmund Wilson, Dell reminisces about his Greenwich Village days on the occasion of the publication of his friend and one-time lover Edna St. Vincent Millay’s collected letters; Dell refers to a 1921 letter in Millay’s collection in which the poet mentions a party at which someone performed an imitation of “the Rev. Mr. Dell” reciting Vachel Lindsay’s poem “The Chinese Nightingale.” “I recognize myself as the ‘Rev. Mr. Dell,’” he writes, “a very earnest young gospeller, a preacher of the gospel of St. Freud as well as St. Marx, and so, I think, Edna always thought of me: ‘The minister kissed the gypsy wench and couldn’t preach for thinkin’ o’ it.’”

4. Max Eastman

The Masses, November 1915.

“Max Eastman’s Lecture for The Masses” The Masses, June 1915.
Carl Van Vechten, photograph of Max Eastman, October 31, 1934. *From the Carl Van Vechten Papers.*

Journalist and poet Max Eastman advocated for social justice from the pages of *The Masses,* a magazine that published poetry and artwork alongside cultural criticism and political commentary. *The Masses* promoted communism, feminism, and argued against US involvement in World War I (in 1917, Eastman and his co-editors were tried for conspiring to obstruct military recruitment). In the April 1915, issue of *The Masses,* Eastman encouraged his audience to read Freud’s work, suggesting “it is long past time to say that his working hypothesis of the Unconscious Mind, and the effects of repressed impulses that linger there, forms the ground plan, not only of the psycho-pathology, but of a great part of the Wisdom of Life for future men.” He went on to suggest that psychoanalysis, along with other kinds of scientific enquiry, might have an important role in the struggle for social justice: “… there is other work to be done by those whose goal is social liberty, than agitate and converse and write beautiful literature and poems of love and anarchy. Either we will bend this patient, sharp-eyed and dogged moving monster, Science, to our high purposes of life, or others will use him for death and tyranny.”

**Max Eastman, “Mr.-er-er-er Oh! What’s his Name?” Everybody’s Magazine, 33.1, July 1915.**

In 1915, *Everybody’s Magazine* published Eastman’s two-part article introducing American audiences to the “amazing new science of psycho-analysis.” Admitting from the first that he is “describing a method of treating disease which I believe may be of value to hundreds of thousands of people,” Eastman briefly profiled Freud and other leading thinkers in the field and outlined various psychoanalytic concepts. Though Eastman’s essays refer to serious clinical cases reported by Freud and others, the drawings that accompanied the articles suggest something of the ways psychoanalysis was simplified for popular consumption.

**Max Eastman, The Sense of Humor, NY: Scribner’s, 1921.**

Of his project in writing *The Sense of Humor,* Eastman wrote “so far as the present technique of psychology permits of solutions, I have tried to solve the problem of humorous laughter.” In doing so, Eastman carefully—if critically—considers Freud’s work on wit and humor. The *Psychoanalytic Review* called *The Sense of Humor* an “excellent book,” noting that “toward the theory of wit advanced by Freud, Eastman is unexpectedly tolerant. He seems to consider it of value and does not, as others do, dismiss it with a shrug. He recognizes, indeed, the close connection between certain forms of humor and sexuality.”
Playwright and Nobel Laureate in Literature Eugene O’Neill’s complex psychological dramas are counted among the most important in American literature. The Provincetown Players Greenwich Village debut of his early work marked a major shift in American theater away from sensational melodrama and toward an often-dark emotional realism. Interested in psychoanalysis from the nineteen-teens, O’Neill read widely in psychoanalytic literature and pursued an on-again-off-again analysis with Smith Ely Jelliffe from 1921 to 1926. According to Malcolm Cowley, O’Neill drew the Oedipal themes in *Desire Under the Elms* directly from psychoanalyst Wilhem Stekel’s 1922 book *Disguises of Love: Psycho-analytical Sketches*. Cowley recalled O’Neill’s mention of a case study about a woman who seduced her son, driving him insane: “There are enough case histories in the book, Gene says, to furnish plots to all the playwrights who ever lived.” The Oedipal drama in *Desire Under the Elms* centers on Eben, a young man who falls in love with his widowed father’s new bride, Abbie. O’Neill describes Abbie’s complex attachment to her stepson as “a horribly frank mixture of lust and mother love.” O’Neill denied any relationship between his interest in psychoanalysis and his play: “Playwrights are either intuitively keen analytical psychologists—or they aren’t good playwrights. I’m trying to be one. To me, Freud only means uncertain conjectures and explanations about truths of the emotional past of mankind that every dramatist has clearly sensed since real drama began. I respect Freud’s work tremendously—but I’m not an addict! Whatever Freudianism is in *Desire* must have walked right in ‘through my unconscious.’”


This 1920s notebook provides an example of O’Neill’s notoriously small handwriting. Though O’Neill himself once stated that his writing became smaller as he became more engaged with his ideas, scholars have suggested that O’Neill’s tiny writing allowed him to control a tremor in his hand or that he intended to keep his ideas and drafts private by rendering them nearly unreadable.
without a magnifying glass. Once deciphered, the playwright’s basic outline for *Desire Under the Elms* (here called *Under the Elms*) describes the emotionally complex play in just a few lines:

**Under the Elms**

Play of New England—locate on farm in 1850, time of California gold rush—make N.E. farmhouse and elm trees almost characters in play—elms overhanging house—father, hard iron type, killed off wives (2) with work, 3 sons—all hate him—his possessive pride in farm—loves earth to be as hard—in old age a moment of unusual weakness & longing marries young woman, bring her back to farm, her arrival brings on drama, youngest falls for her

6. George Cram Cook, Susan Glaspell, and the Provincetown Players


*Suppressed Desires* is the tale of Henrietta, an avid advocate for psychoanalysis who sends her husband Steve and sister Mabel to see her analyst, Dr. Russell. Their sessions with Dr. Russell reveal that Steve secretly wants to leave Henrietta and Mabel is secretly in love with Steve. Hurt and frustrated, Henrietta renounces analysis to save her marriage. The play concludes with Mabel’s cry “What am I to do with my suppressed desire?” to which Steve replies “Mabel, you just keep on suppressing it.” The play’s first audience in the summer of 1915 would have been familiar with psychoanalysis from the many articles about Freud and his discoveries that appeared in American magazines that year, including Max Eastman’s two-part introduction published in *Everybody’s Magazine* (the play’s plot is drawn in part from Eastman’s description of Freud’s case, “Elisabeth R,” whose symptoms disappear when she becomes aware of a suppressed desire for her brother in law). Many in the audience would also have been at Mabel Dodge’s salon that year when Dr. A. A. Brill lectured about psychoanalysis and the unconscious. Glaspell later noted that in the years following its first private production, *Suppressed Desires* was performed widely: “Now it has been given by every little theater and almost every Methodist church; golf clubs in Honolulu, colleges in Constantinople; in Paris and China and every rural route in America.”

Photograph of Lewis Wharf, Provincetown, Massachusetts (viewed from the water), undated. Enlarged photograph. *From the Martha Coon Robinson Collection of Photographs of Provincetown, Massachusetts.*

Provincetown Players, promotional materials, New York, 1916–1917. The Provincetown Players, the company that started the early twentieth-century “little theater” movement that transformed American theater, staged their first productions in Provincetown,
Massachusetts, during the summer of 1915. *Constancy* by Neith Boyce and *Suppressed Desires* by George Cram Cook and Susan Glaspell were performed for friends in the living room of Boyce’s rented summerhouse. An encore performance, staged in a make-shift studio in a fish house on Lewis Wharf, became the company’s first “public” show. In 1916, *Suppressed Desires*, then including the subtitle “A Freudian Comedy in Two Scenes,” was performed along with Eugene O’Neill’s *Bound East for Cardiff* and *King Arthur’s Socks* by Floyd Dell in the Players’ first New York season. Motivated by “the impelling desire of the group [to establish] a stage where playwrights of sincere, poetic, literary and dramatic purpose could see their plays in action … without submitting to the commercial manager’s interpretation of public taste,” the socially-engaged community included now well known writers, editors, and artists such as American journalists and Communists John Reed and Louise Bryant, artists Charles Demuth and William Zorach, and poets William Carlos Williams and Mina Loy.

Photograph of George Cram Cook, Susan Glaspell, and daughter Nilla, [1922–24].

Nilla Cook to Miriam Hapgood, May 13, 1921. With facsimile of verso.
*From the Hapgood Family Papers.*

If *Suppressed Desires* responded to bohemian Greenwich Village’s fascination with Freudian analysis (“Those were the early years of psycho-analysis in the Village,” Glaspell later wrote; “you could not go out to buy a bun without hearing of someone’s complex”), it also called attention to the ways psychoanalytic concepts were filtering into popular discourse. Psychoanalysis was so much a part of Greenwich Village culture, in fact, that even children were aware of it. Nilla Cram Cook (daughter of George Cram Cook and stepdaughter of Susan Glaspell) was just eleven years old when she wrote this letter to her playmate Miriam Hapgood (whose parent’s Neith Boyce and Hutchen’s Hapgood were also involved with the Provincetown Players). “How is your Sikoanalisis getting along?” Nilla asks, “Swallowed another encyclopedia for breakfast lately?” Facing a boring summer home from summer camp, Nilla writes: “Were it not for my Sikonanlizm of Bacteria life would be as a peanut shell.”

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7. Mabel Dodge and Smith Eli Jelliffe

Photograph of Mabel Dodge, undated.

Photograph of Mabel Dodge’s salon, 23 5th Avenue, 1930s revival including Georgia O’Keeffe in the audience.

*From the Mabel Dodge Luhan Papers.*

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In the nineteen teens, Mabel Dodge’s Greenwich Village apartment was a meeting place for artists, writers, and political radicals. Herself a writer, social activist, hostess, and muse, Dodge sat on the editorial board of the *Masses*, helped organize the 1913 Armory Show exhibition of modern art, and came to represent the sexually liberated “New Woman” of the moment. In a weekly column for the Hearst papers and at now famous salon-style gatherings called “Evenings,” Dodge introduced readers and friends to ultra-modern ideas, including Freudian psychoanalysis. In *Movers and Shakers*, the third volume of her ambitious four-part memoir, she describes her salon as a gathering of: “Socialists, Trade Unionists, Anarchists, Suffragists, Poets, Lawyers, Murders, ‘Old Friends,’ Psychoanalysts, I.W.W.’s, Single Taxers, Birth Controlists, Newspapermen, Artists, Modern-Artists, Clubwomen, Woman’s-place-is-in-the-home Women, Clergymen, and just plain men.” Of A. A. Brill’s presentation about psychoanalysis, Luhan wrote: “it was in my home that he first talked about psychoanalysis to a lay group. Some left in great disgust. Those were days when new subjects were thrilling to some and horrifying to others…. psychoanalysis [was] sensational.” Suffering from frequently debilitating depressions, Dodge sought a variety of psychological and spiritual cures throughout her life. She pursued psychoanalytic treatment in 1916, first with Smith Ely Jelliffe and then with A. A. Brill. An advocate for the curative power of psychoanalysis, she sent several friends into treatment; she once raised money to send a friend to be analyzed by Carl Jung in Switzerland, and she gave A. A. Brill the manuscript of her friend D. H. Lawrence’s novel *Sons and Lovers* to cover the expense of another friend’s treatment.

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**Mabel Dodge to Smith Ely Jelliffe, January 4, 1916.**

**Smith Ely Jelliffe, “Dodge” analysis process notes, March 1916.**

*From the Mabel Dodge Luhan Papers.*

Early in 1916, Mabel Dodge sought treatment with Smith Ely Jelliffe, writing to him from her home in the Hudson Valley. Her self-diagnosis includes a “jealousy complex” and an “anxiety neurosis.” Jelliffe was founder and editor of the influential *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* and *Psychoanalytic Review*, journals that published foundational psychoanalytic texts in translation as well as work by a growing community of American analysts. He made thorough notes of sessions with Mabel Dodge, recording what she said to him in great detail. He alternated to red ink when recording Mabel’s reported dreams. Ultimately, Mabel found Jelliffe “too dogmatic” in his treatment and quit her analysis. She later began a second treatment with Dr. A. A. Brill.

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**Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* manuscript, 1930s. From the Mabel Dodge Luhan Papers.**
In *Movers and Shakers* Mabel Dodge Luhan recounts a conversation with her friend, writer A. E. Robinson, about her interest in the new science of psychoanalysis: “‘Do you know they have doctors now to cure the soul?’ he said. ‘Yes—and I’m going to be done someday.’” She went on to describe her experience in analysis with Smith Ely Jelliffe in 1916: “It was interesting to watch my soul provide exciting subjects to discuss with Jelliffe. Whenever things got dull something would turn up from below to keep the ball rolling and he and I chased it wherever it would roll.”

8. Leo Stein

**Photograph of Leo Stein, undated.**

**Leo Stein,Untitled, oil on canvas, undated.**

*From the Leo Stein Papers.*

Though generally remembered as the older brother of Gertrude, artist, art collector, and writer Leo Stein was once widely respected for his theories on aesthetics, his advocacy on behalf of Modern Art, and his peerless art collection. The collection he built with Gertrude in Paris in the first decade of the twentieth century was arguably the most important of its kind; Alfred H. Barr Jr., the first director of the Museum of Modern Art, called Leo Stein “possibly the most discerning connoisseur of 20th-century painting in the world.” In 1909, Leo Stein read Sigmund Freud’s work for the first time and became deeply engaged with psychoanalytic theories. Having long been interested in unconscious motivation, what he described as “behind the spoken word … the real intention,” Stein referred to Freud as “the man I long ago called for.” In New York early in the nineteen-teens, Stein underwent psychoanalytic treatment with both A. A. Brill and Smith Ely Jelliffe.

**Leo Stein, notebooks, undated. From the Leo Stein Papers.**

Leo Stein’s deep interest in psychology and psychoanalysis is documented in notebooks in which he reflected on published works in the field and on his own experiences; it is clear from several notebooks dedicated to his consideration of the work of William James that the psychologist was an important influence on Leo, as he was on his sister Gertrude. After concluding that his doctors, A. A. Brill and Smith Ely Jelliffe, were not up to the task of analyzing him, Stein used his notebooks to conduct an ongoing self-analysis; this included recording and commenting on dreams, as in this example dated June 2, which begins “Nina (Stein’s wife) and I were in a store where they sold flowers....”
Trigant Burrow to Leo Stein, December 29, 1927.


Archival materials from the Leo Stein Papers.

In The New Republic, Stein wrote about neurosis and group psychology and reviewed books including psychoanalyst Trigant Burrow’s The Social Basis of Consciousness. Burrow corresponded with Stein for more than 20 years, discussing his research and developments in psychology. The letter on view refers to Stein’s review of Burrow’s first major book and to Stein’s first collection of essays, published the same year. The first psychoanalyst to pursue group analysis, Burrow reports to Stein: “You will be amused to know that group-analysis is coming to be quite the vogue in New York. The popular adaption has to do, I understand, with the analysis of collections of people on the part of a self-appointed arbiter called the psychoanalyst. It is a form of group-analysis (!) in which the arbitrary position of the analyst receives the yet wider arbitrariness of a social extension. It is interesting to speculate what will be the outcome.”

9. Gertrude Stein

Gertrude Stein and William James

Innovative writer and Modernist-era icon Gertrude Stein studied psychology with William James when she was an undergraduate at Radcliffe College in the 1890s. A lively and unconventional teacher, James was an important influence on the young writer; in The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas (1936), she recounts the following now-famous interaction: “It was a very lovely spring day, Gertrude Stein had been going to the opera every night and going also to the opera in the afternoon and had been otherwise engrossed and it was the period of the final examinations, and there was the examination in William James’ course. She sat down with the examination paper before her and she just could not. Dear Professor James, she wrote at the top of her paper. I am so sorry but really I do not feel a bit like an examination paper in philosophy to-day, and left…. The next day she had a postal card from William James saying, Dear Miss Stein, I understand perfectly how you feel I often feel like that myself. And underneath it he gave her work the highest mark in his course.”
Pioneering American psychologist-philosopher William James’s most substantial contribution to the developing field of psychology, *Principles of Psychology* took the physician more than a decade to write. Counted among the most important books in modern psychology, it immediately became a standard American textbook in psychology and influenced the field internationally. The text, a blend of psychology, philosophy, and reflection, introduces the concept of “stream of thought” and contains seeds of pragmatism and phenomenology. James devotes attention to topics ranging from habit to perception, from memory to reason.

**Photograph of Gertrude Stein with Radcliffe and Harvard classmates, 1890s.**

**Gertrude Stein, Daily Themes for English 22 at Radcliffe, December 20, 1894.**

*From the Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas Papers.*

Around the time she was studying with William James, Stein wrote the present essay for a Daily Themes course; the instructor’s only comment reads: “shows discernment.”

> It is a very painful fact in human experience that each of us must go over the same old ground of mental struggle and development. To be sure it is a reflection old as the hills but it is still new for I have just rediscovered it. The worst of it is, that the recognition of it as fact is of no value.

> I know perfectly well that I will hold some time in the future the same opinions in large measure that I have just been combating. I know perfectly well that when my parent was my age he held mine and yet I cannot spare myself the intervening pain and struggle.

> I know I will believe but as I don’t believe there is no help in that. Some times I fiercely and defiantly declare that I won’t believe neither now nor in the future. “Be still you fool” then says my mocking other self, “why struggle you must submit sooner or later to be ground in the same mill with your fellows. The past is straight before you can but choose to follow. Why waste your strength in useless cries! Be still, it is inevitable.”

**William James to Gertrude Stein, May 25, 1910. With facsimile. From the Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas Papers.**

In a letter written from Bad Neuhein, Germany, James responded to Stein’s gift of her novel *Three Lives*: “I have a bad conscience about ‘Three Lives.’ You know (?) how hard it is for me to read novels. Well, I read 30 or 40 pages, and said ‘this is a fine new kind of realism—Gertrude Stein is great! I will go at it carefully when the right mood comes.’ But apparently the right
mood never came. I thought I had put the book in my trunk, to finish over here, but I don’t find it on unpacking. I promise you that I shall read it sometime!”

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Gertrude Stein’s earliest publications were two papers about “motor automatism,” which describe a series of experiments in automatic writing. The first of these, co-authored by fellow James student Leon M. Solomons and published in 1896, documents writing experiments in which Stein was herself a subject; she produced the following lines that now seem typical of her prose, including what Solomon termed a “marked tendency to repetition”: “When he could not be the longest and thus to be, and thus to be, the strongest.

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10. Scofield Thayer

Photograph of Scofield Thayer, undated.

Sigmund Freud to Scofield Thayer, July 19, 1921. With facsimile of verso.

From The Dial / Scofield Thayer Papers

Editor and publisher of the groundbreaking Modernist little magazine The Dial, Scofield Thayer moved to Vienna in 1921 to be analyzed by Sigmund Freud. During his two-year treatment in Vienna, Thayer experience the most productive and creative period of his life; his editorship during that time helped to make The Dial one of the most important publications of the period, printing work by the most significant writers and artists of the era, including Jean Cocteau, T.S. Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, Henri Matisse, Marianne Moore, Pablo Picasso, and William Butler Yeats. In July of 1921, Freud wrote to Thayer lamenting his previous psychoanalytic treatment in New York, but expressing hope for his analysis: “I am sorry I cannot get you fresh; your having gone through a long unsuccessful treatment with another man is surely no advantage … I feel very sympathetic about the determination you express to get out of your inhibitions or whatever it may be. The man who suffers deeply has a good chance to recover by analysis.” Though his condition temporarily improved in Vienna, Thayer’s health deteriorated after he returned to New York in 1923. Several years later, Thayer suffered a severe breakdown and was hospitalized. He never returned to his literary pursuits and spent the rest of his long life in seclusion.

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The Dial, December 1920, with editor Scofield Thayer’s notes.

*From the Dial / Scofield Thayer Papers.*

A year before he began analysis with Freud, Scofield Thayer wrestled with his ideas in print. In 1920, *The Dial* published an unsigned review of *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, referring to the text as “ponderous reading.” In his own copy of the book, Thayer argued with Freud in the margins, stating that the author “really establishes no obvious connection between race-history or the origin of language and our dream-symbolism…”

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Scofield Thayer to Kenneth Burke, February 20, 1923. *From the Dial / Scofield Thayer Papers.*

Thayer’s relationship with Freud allowed him to secure what he referred to as a “scoop” for *The Dial*—an essay by Freud, “elucidating a church account of the selling of a man’s soul to the devil in Austria in the 17th century.” In letters to his co-editors, Thayer enthusiastically advocates for publishing the essay, in spite of the fact that it includes “passages in which ‘details’ are mentioned.” Thayer asks fellow editor Kenneth Burke to respond immediately with a telegram indicating either “accept Freud” or “decline Freud.” Finding the article “troublesome,” the *Dial* editors decided not to publish it. Though no telegram stating “decline Freud” survives, Thayer refers to it in a letter indicating his surprise and disappointment over his colleagues’ decision. Freud’s essay, “A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis” appeared later that year in *Imago.*

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James Sibley Watson to Scofield Thayer, June 6, 1922. *From the Dial / Scofield Thayer Papers.*

*The Dial* co-editor James Sibley Watson exchanged detailed letters with Scofield Thayer about the magazine and its contents during Thayer’s time in Vienna; Thayer’s letters, which regularly ran to fifteen or more pages, included instructions for upcoming issues and information about work solicited from European writers and artists. The editors’ correspondence also documents Thayer’s involvement with the literary life of Vienna where he met with cultural figures including Thomas Mann, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and controversial sex researcher and playwright Arthur Schnitzler. “Is Freud treating you for syphilis?” Watson wrote to Thayer; “Other conjectures in NY are less charitable, involving a certain Dr. Schnitzler.”

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Scofield Thayer, notes, undated. *From the Dial / Scofield Thayer Papers.*
Thayer recorded his experiences and thoughts in Vienna on hundreds of typed note cards; his brief, impressionistic observations occasionally refer to Freud and his colleagues.

11. Mabel Dodge Luhan and A.A Brill

Photograph of A. A. Brill, undated.

Photograph of Mabel Dodge Luhan in Taos, undated.

From the Mabel Dodge Luhan Papers.

After receiving medical training at New York University and Columbia, Austrian-born psychoanalyst A. A. Brill studied in Zurich with Eugen Bleuler and Carl Jung and in Vienna with Sigmund Freud. Returning to New York in 1908, Brill entered private practice as America’s first psychoanalyst. As the first American translator of Freud’s major works, Brill played an essential role in introducing American physicians and lay readers to psychoanalysis. In 1915, he lectured on psychoanalysis to the artists and activists gathered at Mabel Dodge’s Greenwich Village salon; some members of the audience were so shocked and appalled by Freudian ideas about repression and the motivating force of unconscious wishes that they walked out in the middle of his presentation. Nevertheless, the following year writer and arts advocate Mabel Dodge pursued psychoanalysis with Brill. Her treatment was interrupted by her decision to move to Taos, New Mexico in 1917, where she married her fourth husband and became Mabel Dodge Luhan. She and Brill carried on a nearly thirty-year correspondence, exchanging letters full of gossip and news of family events. Their letters document a warm friendship but also reveal the persistence of their primary relationship as analyst and analysand; Luhan wrote to Brill about her depression and writer’s block and Brill offered intellectual and emotional support in the form of analytic interpretations. (Materials documenting Mabel Dodge Luhan’s significance as an early promoter of psychoanalysis are displayed on the alternate side of the mezzanine.)

Mabel Dodge Luhan to A. A. Brill, October 22, 1935.

A. A. Brill to Mabel Dodge Luhan, October 26, 1935.

From the Mabel Dodge Luhan Papers.

This exchange between Luhan and Brill exemplifies their unique, analytically infused friendship. Mabel’s letter asks if Brill has received her most recent book; “I never got your book,” he replies. “Consequently, I did not read it because somehow I felt that if you had written a book you should send me a copy.” Referring to reviews calling the book self-absorbed, Luhan writes “they don’t seem to see that one can become objective about one’s subjective past and observing oneself like a laboratory specimen.” Brill responds: “Your exhibitionism has probably been more
or less shocked because of some of the critics and your libido, as it were, withdraws from the
conflict! But Mabel, you can pull it all over them! You always looked them straight in the face
and told them to go to Hell, and you should continue to do so.” Mabel writes of a visit from
psychoanalyst Sandor Rado: “Tell me—is Dr. Rado a wonderful analyst or just a little boy?”
Brill is amused: “Concerning Monsieur Rado, Mabel you are great! Your characterization of him
is perfect … I note that he did not fool you much.” To Mabel’s mention of a bout with writer’s
block and her reliance on him to help pull her out of periods of depression—“Why don’t you
come out here & give me a whiff of analysis to start me off?”—Brill responds: “I feel very badly
that I am not near you now to pull you out of this grey period.” “I am always delighted to receive
letters from you,” Brill concludes. “They are so refreshing that I can always imagine that you are
talking to me. You see I love you just as much as I ever did…."

Mabel Dodge Luhan, Notes on Awareness, manuscript with corrections by A. A. Brill. From
the Mabel Dodge Luhan Papers.

The author describes this unpublished volume of her autobiography as “an analysis of
psychoanalysis.” Brill reviewed the manuscript and made changes to Luhan’s language
throughout; correcting her use of the term “libido,” Brill wrote: “it is the motivating force—as
crudely gasoline is the motivating force in a car.”

12. Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant and C. G. Jung

Bernice B. Perry, Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant at the MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, New
Hampshire, [1956?]. From the Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant Papers.

Journalist, literary critic, and novelist Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant’s most successful book,
Shadow-Shapes: Journal of a Wounded Woman (1920), recounted her experiences as a war
correspondent for The New Republic. She relocated to Taos, New Mexico, in 1920 while
recovering from an injury received touring a French battlefield in 1918 and became a member
of the early twentieth-century community of writers and artists there, which included D. H.
Lawrence, Mabel Dodge Luhan, and Willa Cather. In 1929, Sergeant traveled to Zurich, Swit-
zzerland, to study with Carl Jung. She worked with Jung and his colleague Toni Wolff until 1931.
From Zurich Sergeant wrote about Carl Jung and Jungian psychology for women’s magazines
including Cosmopolitan, McCall’s, and Ladies’ Home Journal.

Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, “Portrait of Dr. Jung,” Harper’s, May 1931. Corrected
typescript and galleys.

Carl Jung to Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, July 28, 1931. With facsimile of verso.
Sergeant’s 1931 *Harper’s* article “Portrait of Dr. Jung” casts the psychoanalyst as a kind of cross between a doctor and a faith healer: “He is the sort of wise man whom an American Indian would touch on the shoulder, as if he were a medicine man of the tribe, and begin to question on secret and elemental matters. Contact with Jung is, indeed, like contact with the elements. Today you meet the benignant sun, to-morrow the piercing, drastic wind. Though the range of his mind is universal, and his psychological thought synthesizes the extreme modern point of view, even his intellectual concepts grow out of a sort of ancient wisdom that ties up to the world of the primitive.” In his response to the article, Jung objected to Sergeant’s praise: “I should prefer you would not praise me. Instead you could say something more about the very important fact, that all neurotic troubles and all problems culminate in the one great problem of our general attitude to life, a question of religious philosophy, or one that is answered by the great religious systems of the world.”

13. Jean Toomer


Photograph of Jean Toomer, [1932]. *From the Jean Toomer Papers.*
Jean Toomer, “Meditations on Jung,” holograph draft and notes, undated.

Jean Toomer, pages from journals, including dreams and “notation of events,” 1949.

*From the Jean Toomer Papers.*

Toomer kept extensive journals during the period of his Jungian analysis, including detailed records of his dreams and occasional blow-by-blow accounts of his analytic sessions. Pages here represent Toomer’s record of his first meeting with his analyst and a list of “dreams not yet read,” suggesting that he deliberately structured sessions around his written accounts of dreams. In a dream dated June 25, Toomer describes finding himself in the sea, watching a silver fish move in the waves; the dream images recall the poet’s description of his analysis in a letter to his wife: “It is deep sea diving that I am doing, a going down into my own darkness as never before.”

14. F. Scott Fitzgerald: *Tender is the Night*

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night, a Romance*, Edward Shenton, ill., NY: Scribner’s, 1934.


If Fitzgerald’s early work touches on psychoanalysis as one of many ultra-modern theories on the minds of his contemporaries, his late novel *Tender is the Night*, explores the subject in greater depth and emotional complexity. The novel’s main character, Dick Diver, is an American psychiatrist who, after a period of study and analysis with Freud in Vienna, becomes a resident analyst at a clinic in Switzerland. There he encounters Nicole, a young American woman suffering from complicated neurosis, the result of an incestuous relationship with her father; doctor and patient eventually marry. Fitzgerald makes light of the Psychiatric Congress Dick attends in Germany: “He had no intention of attending so much as a single session of the congress—he could imagine it … the paper by the American who cured dementia praecox by pulling out his patient’s teeth or cauterizing their tonsils … [and] there would be … some man of Freud’s from Vienna. Articulate among them would be the great Jung, bland, super-vigorous, on his rounds between the forests of anthropology and the neuroses of school-boys.” Touted as the “first novel about abnormal psychology,” parallels are often drawn between the plot of *Tender is the Night* and Fitzgerald’s life—especially his wife’s Zelda’s breakdown and hospitalization and the novelist’s own fear that his great potential as a writer had been wasted as he sank in midlife into despair and alcoholism (examples of Fitzgerald’s early works are exhibited on the alternate side of the mezzanine).
Ivan Moffat, *F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Tender is the Night* (screenplay), [Los Angeles]: [20th Century Fox], 1961.

Photographs of Zelda Fitzgerald; Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald; Sara Murphy; Gerald and Sara Murphy. Undated. *From the Gerald and Sara Murphy Papers.*

*Tender is the Night* begins on the beach in Antibes, where a young actress admires a beautiful couple, psychoanalyst Dick Diver and his wife and former patient, Nicole. Though some events in the Divers’ lives are drawn from Fitzgerald’s own, in their way of life and personal style they closely resemble the author’s friends, American expatriates Gerald and Sara Murphy. Well-known for their beach parties—attended by Dorothy Parker, Pablo Picasso, and Ernest Hemingway, among others—Fitzgerald immortalized the Murphys in what he called “[a sincere] attempt to preserve a true fragment rather than a ‘portrait.’” In Nicole, Fitzgerald preserved Sara’s habit of wearing pearls at the beach and her beauty: “Nicole Diver, her brown back hanging from her pearls … her face could have been described in terms of conventional prettiness, but the effect was that it had been made first on the heroic scale with strong structure … molded with a Rodinesque intention, and then chiseled away in the direction of prettiness to a point where a single slip would have irreparably diminished its force and quality.” In Dick, Fitzgerald celebrates Gerald’s gift for friendship: “to be included in Dick Diver’s world for awhile was a remarkable experience … he won everyone quickly with an exquisite consideration and politeness that moved so fast and intuitively that it could only be examined in its effect. Then, without caution … he opened the gate to his amusing world.”

15. Eugene O’Neill: *Long Day’s Journey into Night*


Eugene O’Neill’s literary archive documents stages in the development of this very personal play; set in his family’s summer cottage on the Connecticut shoreline, in notes and drafts O’Neill refers to it as the “NL Play,” his New London play. In his famously small handwriting O’Neill made lists of possible character names (including a list of surnames headed “Irish”) and shifting family alliances (“Father, two sons versus Mother; Mother, two sons, versus Father); he suggests that the family’s verbal “battles” should be emphasized by the cast members’ movements on stage. In addition to a rough sketch of the set, O’Neill includes elaborate stage directions, describing the scene in great detail, including the titles of books on the shelves. (Additional examples of O’Neill’s creative process and interest in Freudian ideas are exhibited on the alternate side of the mezzanine.)


*From the Eugene O’Neill Papers.*

After previews at the Shubert Theater in New Haven, *Long Day’s Journey into Night* premiered on Broadway to critical acclaim and popular success. Directed by José Quintero, the production was awarded the Tony Award for Best Play; Fredric March won the Best Actor Tony for his portrayal of family patriarch James Tyrone.

Eugene O’Neill, *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, New Haven: Yale UP, 1955. O’Neill’s most plainly autobiographical play, *Long Day’s Journey into Night* depicts a day in the life of the Tyrones, a deeply troubled family based on O’Neill’s own. He described it as a “play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood … [with] deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones.” O’Neill’s deep interest in Freudian principles is evident in his depiction of the Tyrone’s family dynamics. Eternally locked together in nearly unbearable conflict, the family compulsively repeats painful patterns; “the past is the present isn’t it?” says Mary Tyrone, “It’s the future too.” Though he felt it was his best work, O’Neill left instructions that the play was to remain unpublished for twenty-five years after his death and that it was never to be performed. His wife, Carlotta, ignored these wishes and the play was published just two years after O’Neill’s death in 1953; it was first performed on Broadway the following year.

16. Lawrence Kubie

**Lawrence Kubie, M. D.**

Born in 1896, Dr. Lawrence Kubie was the child of German-Jewish immigrants; he studied at Harvard and Johns Hopkins, and eventually became one of the most celebrated psychoanalysts in New York City. A respected scholar and academic, he also treated entertainers and literary celebrities, including actor Sid Caesar, playwright Tennessee Williams, director Josh Logan, and pianist Vladimir Horowitz. In the 1940s, Kubie joined the faculty of the Yale School of Medicine. One student, Stanley A. Leavy, described him as a “rather elegant figure with his precise diction and scholarly attainments … through and through a clinician and one whom even those already committed to psychoanalytic psychiatry respected for his neurological knowledge as well as his psychological perceptiveness.”


Kubie began to treat Moss Hart while the playwright was suffering from depression and writer’s block; Hart meet Kubie as often as twice a day for two decades. Hart was inspired by his analysis with Kubie to write *Lady in the Dark*: he based the play’s “Dr. Brooks” on Kubie, and for a time he planned to call the play “I Am Listening,” the words with which his doctor began each session. Writing as “Dr. Brooks” in a preface to the play, Kubie framed the drama, highlighting the impact of Freudian concepts on societal understanding of depression and mental illness and praising the “revolution” occurring “in the realm of psychic pain, removing it from the sphere of art and morals to that of scientific inquiry and medical therapy.”

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In the 1930s, Kubie wrote articles for the *Saturday Review of Literature* giving psychoanalytic readings of works by William Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, and Ernest Hemingway. His study of Hemingway’s short stories was never published; after reading the article in manuscript, Hemingway threatened a libel suit should the article appear. Though Kubie claimed that the scope of his analysis was strictly limited to the novelist’s work, at the time he was treating Hemingway’s mistress, Jane Manson, and so had access to private details of Hemingway’s life. Kubie’s awareness of the conflict is evident in the fact that he wrote Hemingway saying he knew nothing of the writer’s personal life, but to his editor he openly referred to the essay as a “speculative personal analysis.” In the 1960s when Robert Penn Warren proposed republishing his essay, “William Faulkner’s *Sanctuary*,” Kubie wrote Warren recounting his experiences with Hemingway and the *Saturday Review*. In hindsight, Kubie conceded that Hemingway was right to object to the article: “I am not sure I had the moral right to publish it…. For years I felt smug about it…. I had said ‘This is not about the man…. This is about a certain type of fantasy which happens to appear in his work.’ I can no longer kid myself.”

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A “practical guide-book,” Kubie offered this volume to “help people recognize sound analytical procedure when they meet it” and to “exterminate pseudoanalysis by inadequately trained or
irresponsible analysts.” Practical Aspects of Psychoanalysis served as a structuring text for Moss Hart’s representation of psychoanalysis in Lady in the Dark; in the play, Liza Elliott’s treatment closely follows the broad stages outlined in Kubie’s description of a successful analysis.


Kubie’s fascination with the creative process and its relationship to mental illness is evident in this study of “those particular aspects of Man’s symbolic processes which constitute the instrument both of his creativity and his psychological illness.” Kubie argues that creativity and the neurotic process are “intertwined yet mortal enemies” and suggests that both are universal, arising “not out of exceptional circumstances but out of simple and ubiquitous human experience.”

17. Moss Hart


Hart was deeply engaged in his own analysis with Dr. Lawrence Kubie when he wrote Lady in the Dark, perhaps the first theatrical musical about psychoanalysis. Lady in the Dark tells of Liza Elliot, a successful but unhappy fashion magazine editor who goes into psychoanalysis with Dr. Brooks when she finds herself “going to pieces [for] no reason at all … [and] in a constant state of terror and anxiety.” The show’s musical numbers are occasioned by Liza’s reports to Dr. Brooks about her dreams. In his introduction to the play, signed “Dr. Brooks,” Kubie wrote: “In this gay and tender play … the struggle of a vigorous and gifted human spirit to overcome deep-seated, unconscious, self destructive forces is portrayed accurately … out of the fantastic furor of her dreams, out of the artful analytic synthesis of memory and fantasy which emerge from these dreams in the analyst’s office, [Liza] recaptures the freedom of spirit which had been hers not merely before she had became ill, but even before the childhood hurts had forced it into a protective shell.” The wildly successful musical set records for ticket sales in its first season.

United States Steel Corporation presents the Theatre Guild on Air production of Lady in the Dark, adapted for radio by Philip Lewis; rehearsal script, October 17, 1947. From the Theatre Guild Records.

18. Gregory Zilboorg


Russian-born American psychoanalyst Gregory Zilboorg pursued a remarkable range of interests, personally and professionally. As a student in New York in the 1920s, Zilboorg translated plays by contemporary Russian playwrights Leonid Andreyev and Eugene Zamiatin. Zilboorg established a psychoanalytic practice in the late 1920s; as a result of his connection to the theater many luminaries were among his clientele, including George Gershwin, Lillian Hellman, Ralph Ingersoll, and Kay Swift. His analytic practice did not prevent Zilboorg from pursuing his interest in the history of psychiatry and the life and work of Sigmund Freud. His many publications include: The Medical Man and the Witch During the Renaissance (1935), History of Medical Psychology (1941), Mind, Medicine and Man (1943), Sigmund Freud, His Exploration of the Mind of Man (1951), and Freud and Religion: a Restatement of an Old Controversy (1958).

[Gregory Zilboorg, Heinz Hartmann, Anna Freud, Grete Bibring, Ernst Jones, and Leo Bartemeier, 1950s]. From the Gregory Zilboorg Papers.

An avid and accomplished photographer, Gregory Zilboorg’s archive includes examples of the portraits he made of friends and colleagues. His photographs of fellow medical historians John Farquhar Fulton and Henry Sigerist appeared with their obituaries in the leading journal in the field. Zilboorg likely took this photograph at the 1951 International Psychoanalytic Association Congress, held in Amsterdam; those pictured are members of the Central Executive Committee.


As a student at Columbia, Zilboorg translated several Russian plays, including this avant-garde tragedy by Leonid Andreyev about a failed writer who joins a carnival of misfits in an effort to escape the real world. Zilboorg’s translation was produced by the Theatre Guild in 1921 to great acclaim. In his New York Times review of the play, critic Alexander Woollcott wrote: “[Theatre Guild’s production has] taken the baffling, tantalizingly elliptical tragedy out of the Russian and brought it to life on their stage in thirty fifth street where you may find it now, alive in its every moment and abrim with color and beauty.”
Gregory Zilboorg, [Freud], notes, holograph manuscript, corrected typescript, [1951].
*From the Gregory Zilboorg Papers.*


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