Bored with Sex?

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There is a nasty, perhaps Freudian moment in Ford Madox Ford’s novel *Some Do Not*, in which, in the middle of a conversation, something occurs to the hero Tietjens: ‘Suddenly he thought that he didn’t know for certain that he was the father of his child, and he groaned.’ Tietjens, Ford continues, ‘proved his reputation for sanity’ by carrying on the conversation he was ostensibly having without reference to his daunting thought. Sanity for this Englishman is about appearing to be undisturbed by his most disturbing thoughts: it is exactly and exactingly about what he is able not to say. Keeping to the topic, keeping the conversation going is the kind of sanity for which one could have a reputation. ‘But it gave him a nasty turn,’ Ford writes. ‘He hadn’t been able to pigeonhole and padlock his disagreeable reflections. He had been as good as talking to himself.’

This is perhaps a Freudian moment, not because Ford was in any sense a Freudian, but because Freud gave us a language to redescribe these moments of stray thought, these spots of distraught time, in which we are unable to pigeonhole and padlock our more disagreeable reflections: in which, in Ford’s extraordinary phrase, we are as good as talking to ourselves because for some reason we can’t speak these thoughts to others. And also because, as Ford intimates, that ‘we’ is ambiguous: at such moments I am being addressed, but who is addressing me? I am talking to myself but who exactly is doing the talking, the strangely silent talking we call thinking; and who, perhaps more perplexingly, is the listener when we are talking to ourselves? Again it is paternity that is at issue. Tietjens may not be the father of his son, but is he the father of his own thoughts? Something that belongs to you, something as intimate as your own thoughts, could be illegitimate: could come from someone or somewhere else. A lot turns on these nasty turns.

Freud didn’t merely draw our attention to such moments, however, or redescribe the provenance of our more nomadic thoughts. He invented a therapeutic method that traded in nasty turns. And the aim of this method is that people should be able to have their disagreeable reflections without feeling the need to pigeonhole and padlock them. The people Freud saw were suffering, in his view, not only from the insistent, inherited forms of anguish that everyone is liable to, but also from their forms of classification, and the confinement of their narrow-mindedness. What do we imagine they are like, these disagreeable reflections, these unflattering mirrors that our thoughts provide? What is it that is being clichéd and criminalised (pigeonholed and padlocked)? And why is this what we do, or tend to do, with the thoughts we have but can’t agree with? Tietjens didn’t know for certain that he was the father of his child, and he didn’t know for certain what to do about this horrible thought. So he carried on talking about the thing he was supposed to be talking about. Freud says that these moments of not knowing for certain are akin to secular epiphanies. It is when we are thrown by our thoughts, when, however fleetingly, we have lost the plot – when, in short, we can bear to lose our reputation for sanity – that we begin to get some news. But to hear the news we need to do what Tietjens would never do: we have to tell our nasty turns to another person; we have to fall through the holes in the conversation when they occur.

In the therapeutic conversation that Freud invented, and called psychoanalysis, the so-called patient has to be as good as talking to himself, but out loud, in the presence of another person. He is persuaded to make known the interruptions and disruptions he is heir to. What used to be called self-examination, self-questioning, self-doubt could now be called pausing, or making a Freudian slip. (We don’t ‘have’ Freudian slips: we ‘make’ them.) Where once, in the service of self-knowledge, or religious instruction, or medical examination, questions were asked of the self, now, in psychoanalysis, all that was asked of the patient was that he should, in so far as he was able, say whatever came into his head. He was invited to speak as freely as possible; as though he was reporting back from somewhere that he usually called ‘himself’. ‘The treatment is begun,’ Freud writes,

by the patient being required to put himself in the position of an attentive and dispassionate self-observer, merely to read off all the time the surface of his consciousness, and on the one hand to make a duty of the most complete honesty while on the other hand not to hold back any idea from communication, even if (1) he feels that it is too disagreeable or if (2) he judges that it is nonsensical or (3) too unimportant or (4) irrelevant to what is being looked for. It is uniformly found that precisely those ideas which provoke these last mentioned reactions are of particular value in discovering the forgotten material.

Questions are always an odd species of prediction. And it is noticeable in what Freud refers to in the same context as ‘psychoanalysis as an interpretative art’ that – and this in itself is innovative – questions are not being asked. It is a matter, as Freud says, of reading off the surfaces, of abrogating our conventional criteria. The disagreeable (Ford’s word, too), the nonsensical, the trivial and the irrelevant are all to be included. Indeed, the thoughts that elicit these epithets are, Freud insists, ‘of particular value in discovering the forgotten material’. All the moral and aesthetic criteria we use have to be set aside, as though what we pride ourselves on – our judgments of the appropriate and the pertinent, our aesthetic standards, our selection of the Good – were mere cover-stories. Freud is interested in what we exclude by our inclusions. He and his patients are fascinated by the aesthetics of memory; and so by the choices made in every moment of speech.

All you have to do, Freud proposes, is suggest to the patient that he speak as freely as possible and then attend to the difficulties he, like everyone else, will get into in the telling of himself. We don’t need questions (or authoritative information) to interrupt us, Freud says, because we will interrupt ourselves given half a chance; because there’s something about what we have to say that we can’t bear. And this, as everyone now knows, or as everyone now knows that Freud knows, is called sexuality: sexuality, or what Freud more interestingly refers to as the ‘forgotten material’. Memory, Freud asserts, is of desire; the thing we keep needing to forget is sexuality, what Lacan calls the ‘impossible knowledge of sexuality’. Sex, Freud says, is infinitely forgettable. Indeed we talk about it so much precisely because we have forgotten about it. The forbidden is not something you can chat about. If, in its origin, our sexuality is incestuous – if the object of desire is by definition forbidden – everyone is going to be anxious all the time. If what we seek is what we must not find our sense of purpose is askew; whole-heartedness, passion, authenticity, integrity all begin to look rather different if we are so radically averse to what we so radically desire. Irony is the religion of the incestuously-minded.

Freud – and he was not alone in this – thought that sexuality had become especially traumatic for modern people: not just that some people had been sexually traumatised as children – which many of his patients had been – but that there was something intrinsically traumatic about sexuality. People are thought to be decadent at times when the forbidden becomes the impossible; and it was the impossibility of a satisfying erotic life that Freud was hearing about in the form of symptoms (the patient’s symptoms are his sexual life, as Freud remarked). That a normal sexual life was a disturbing sexual life was Freud’s paradoxical conclusion. It is not, in Ford’s language, easy to pigeonhole and padlock what we think of as our sexual inclinations. There are nasty turns at every turn of our erotic life. A reputation for sanity will always be a mixed blessing.

All this is by way of saying that a Master-Mind Lecture series is not an obvious place for Freud.[​＊](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v25/n05/adam-phillips/bored-with-sex#fn-asterisk) I was puzzled as to how I might fit Freud to the brief, a master mind being yet another thing that doesn’t look quite the same after psychoanalysis. But I was helped when I received a letter from the Academy to confirm that the title of my lecture would be ‘Freud?’ This lecture alone, it seemed, would have a question mark after the Master Mind’s name, as though there was a question mark over Freud indicating that his inclusion in this pantheon was uncertain. The letter actually read: ‘Would you kindly confirm that your lecture title is “Freud”?’ The question mark was about the title, not in the title. But taking my cue from Freud – or rather from my misreading, as described by Freud – I want now to follow the error of my way.

I want to keep Freud as a question; and to show how it is integral to the psychoanalysis he invented that there would (and should) always be something questionable about Freud, and about the ‘interpretative art’ and science called psychoanalysis. The endlessly announced death, disproof and fraudulence of psychoanalysis is not merely the sport of bigots. When psychoanalysis is being whole-heartedly endorsed it is not being taken seriously, because the understanding of psychoanalysis involves a continual resistance to it. To accept psychoanalysis, to believe in psychoanalysis, is to miss the point. A French psychoanalyst once said to me that Judaism is the only religion in which you are not allowed to believe in God. By the same token, as it were, you cannot believe in the unconscious, you cannot believe in sexuality, as Freud describes them. Believing in incest is not like believing in God. Your resistance is the only form your acknowledgment could possibly take (there’s no such thing as a free love). And even this isn’t quite right because the notion of resistance implies that there could be acceptance. Psychoanalysis is, among other things, a redescription of the question, what would it be to accept ourselves and others? It is Freud’s view that we are ineluctably averse to ourselves (and others) because our desire is fundamentally transgressive. If what we want is what we must not have we are going to be, to put it as mildly as possible, divided against ourselves. If what we once wanted was to live a good life, or to be redeemed by God’s grace, what we now want, in Freud’s view, is an object that is by definition forbidden. And this is going to make our relationship to our so-called selves at best ironic and at worst horrified. People are only ever ironic about the things that they don’t feel ironic about. So what would be a good life for incestuous animals like ourselves? What would be the values, what would be the moral aspirations of a creature whose desire, whose life-force is utterly transgressive, for whom the taboos are in place as a continual reminder of his most intractable needs?

Freud had a genius for describing the impossibility of our lives. What he master-minded is a story about how and why we are not the masters of what we have been taught to call our minds. Indeed, by privileging the obstacle over the way forward, what can’t be done over what is to be done, by seeing the drama in the interruption, the attention released in the lapse of attention, Freud was encouraging us to prize our incompetence, to be amazed and not merely dismayed by the persistent error of our ways. He wants to tell us the success story of failure. Freud’s genius was to describe to us just how and why it is a good and necessary thing – good because necessary – for us to live in conflict with ourselves and others, and, should we be so minded, to live in conflict with Freud. If psychoanalysis is the kind of common sense that common sense doesn’t want to hear about, if it addresses the recognitions involved in refusal, Freud is someone with whom we will feel uneasy. Enthusiasm is a wonderful thing, but one should be wary of the enthusiasts of psychoanalysis. Admiring Freud may be part of the problem he poses rather than part of the solution. And the problem is: how have we come to believe that looking up to people is a form of self-cure?

Adorno once remarked that in psychoanalysis only the exaggerations are true. Freud was interested in the uses of exaggeration, in the ways a culture which forces people to downplay certain of their feelings makes them play up. A Freudian slip exaggerates the difference between an intention and its result. ‘In normal people,’ Freud writes in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life,*

selfish, jealous and hostile feelings and impulses, upon which the pressure of moral teaching weighs very heavily, quite often make use of slips in order to find some way of expressing their forces, forces that are undeniably present but are not recognised by the higher authorities in our minds. Permitting these slips and fortuitous actions to occur reflects . . . a useful toleration of amorality. Sexual currents of many kinds figure prominently among these suppressed emotions.

In Freud’s view we are, however unwittingly, the active makers of our slips. A slip in this sense is an opportunity, or a genre, or a linguistic medium. In other words, we have to be the artists of our amorality, but we also have to be pragmatists. We ‘make use’ of slips as though they were one of the tools to get us from A to B, to realise a project, to get us something we want. Freud suggests that the internal world too has its higher, forbidding authorities – the mind too is a society – who, he says, won’t recognise certain feelings. But if we can make use of these slips, these secret messages, then there can be what Freud calls a ‘useful toleration of amorality’. And these moments of linguistic extravagance perform this amorality, they don’t merely tolerate it. What might once have been called bad manners, lack of self-discipline, or indeed a mistake, is now referred to by Freud as both a ‘useful’ tool and a moment of artfulness, a way of ‘expressing’ powerful feeling. How does the modern individual deal with unacceptable sexual desires, selfish, jealous and hostile feelings? He makes what he needs to call mistakes, Freud says, so that the amoral finds the expression it is seeking. So to answer my earlier question – what would be a good life for incestuous animals like ourselves? – a good life would be one in which mistakes were continually sought by someone equipped with a rhetoric to discredit their significance. We are the kind of animal that can say: ‘I was only joking’; ‘I didn’t mean it.’

Freud is not exactly satirising our hypocrisy: he is encouraging us to be connoisseurs of the cover story. For him our lives literally depend on the aesthetics of duplicity. If we are not the artists of our own pleasure there will be no pleasure (and no art). Where once there was the moral authority of satire, the high ground of mockery, now there can be a more straightforward, apparently scientific account of the necessities of pleasure-seeking, and of the necessary difficulties of pleasure-seeking. After Freud, being consistent is something that one might be accused of.

But why, in Freud’s view, does the amoral require expression? Why has he replaced the language of will-power and self-control with the language of pragmatic artistry? Why can’t we behave ourselves instead of expressing ourselves, or behave ourselves by expressing ourselves? Freud’s answer is that we live in a continual state of temptation. Even though we love safety and self-preservation, something in us appears to like something else more (the most interesting art is never about safety, but about what threatens safety). Darwin says we want to preserve ourselves in order to reproduce our genes; Freud says there is something he wants to call sexuality that is always threatening to destroy us. Our sexuality endangers us – endangers our sense of ourselves, our ego – because it is transgressive. We are, in Freud’s view, a continual risk to ourselves. So when he tells Wilhelm Fliess in 1897 that he is ‘about to discover the source of morality’ and speaks of his ‘surge of guesses’ it is because interest in the forbidden, in the unacceptable, is by definition guesswork. ‘Only one idea of general value has occurred to me,’ he writes:

I have found love of the mother and jealousy of the father in my own case too, and now believe it to be a general phenomenon of early childhood . . . If that is the case, the gripping power of *Oedipus Rex*, in spite of all the rational objections to the inexorable fate that the story presupposes, becomes intelligible . . . the Greek myth seizes on a compulsion which everyone recognises because he has felt traces of it in himself. Every member of the audience was once a budding Oedipus in phantasy, and this dream-fulfilment played out in reality causes everyone to recoil in horror, with the full measure of repression which separates his infantile from his present state.

We can’t, here and now, establish the truth or otherwise of the Oedipus complex. It has to be conceded, though, that the incest issue tends not to leave people feeling indifferent. Freud’s interpretation of the play, and its possible significance, isn’t as noteworthy as his wanting to account for people’s horror of sexuality. In his great essay ‘Is the Rectum a Grave?’ Leo Bersani remarked that the big secret about sex was that most people don’t like it. The big secret about sex isn’t quite that most people don’t like it, it’s that most people don’t like it because they are with people they aren’t really excited by or with people they are too excited by (which is why most relationships end in either boredom or pathological jealousy). And if they are with people they are not sufficiently excited by, Freud would say it is because they are terrified by their own desire. As budding Oedipuses their desire is incestuous, or it is nothing. Real desire is always a reminder of something at once overwhelming and forbidden. When it comes to the choice of sexual partner, better safe than sorry. Or, when it comes to sexuality, what Freud refers to as ‘the recoil of horror’ is the sign of desire. This, one might say, is against the grain of common-sense assumptions about pleasure-seeking. Isn’t pleasure supposed to be at least a pleasure as well? If sex is that Darwinian project why does it give us so much trouble? Freud shows us how if we are not in trouble we are not having sex.

The bland instance of this recoil of horror is the Freudian slip in which we and/ or our audience recoil in surprise at what has been said inadvertently. Whatever this horror is, Freud is describing himself and his patients, among others, as suffering from it. It puts us at odds with ourselves, but in secular terms. It is still a world of forbidden desires, but an Enlightenment world in which it is acknowledged that the higher authorities, the ones doing the forbidding, are human and not divine in origin.

For Freud, as he works out his own mythology – and his work, as Harold Bloom intimates, should be read as being more akin to Blake’s *Prophetic Books* than to James’s *Principles of Psychology* – the question is: what are the higher authorities higher than in a secular society? Or rather, what is it that requires this kind of distance in order to be believed, and what is it deemed to be distant from? Freud’s answer is that the parents, and the father particularly, are the higher authorities for the child. But, more surprisingly, the thing that we need to distance ourselves from, and create the illusion of mastery over, is our childhood; or rather what Freud refers to as infantile sexuality, which is alive in the adult as unconscious desire. The unconscious, Freud’s word for the lasting, prodigal, extravagant desire of childhood, is the stumbling block. The act alone of describing what is at once irresistible and what one most resists – whether or not ‘it’ exists – is an act of linguistic heroism.

It is in Freud’s desire to describe how what he calls the unconscious works that his claim on us makes itself felt. Our desire, he suggests, is always a work in progress, unfinishing and unfinished; and so, by the same token, is his account of the unconscious. And if you want a picture of the kind of thing the unconscious does, the kind of things we do unconsciously, then think of a dream, Freud says, or a joke, or a slip; or of something you more patently suffer from, like a phobia, or an inhibition, or an intrusive thought (like the one Tietjens suffered from). Freud has created an unusual, perhaps unprecedented category: a category that connects up the dream, the joke, the slip, the symptom, the hesitation. It is a category of unconsciously inspired performances, in which the identity of the performer is obscure, and in which the performance is considered to be a communication, however enigmatic, to the interested parties. The baffling communication is an allusion, a referring back, to the desires of childhood. For Freud childhood is the forbidden, and memory is at best a guilty pleasure. There is nothing more transgressive than talking about one’s childhood – except re-creating it in adult life. It isn’t, in other words, that Freud destroyed the innocence of childhood: he showed us that the idea of innocence was invented to destroy the truth of childhood. We call Oedipus a tragic hero because he is the most ordinary man in the world.

Oedipus, of course, hadn’t seen the play. He is going through it all for the first time, as we did when we were children. And by the time we get to see, or read, or even hear about the play, it is far too late. We are already confounded by our fate. Psychoanalysis – which always as a treatment comes too late – doesn’t cure people so much as show them what it is about themselves that is incurable. Or rather, it shows them the areas of their lives in which ‘cure’ would be the wrong word, in which we have to come up with something to do other than getting better. And one thing we can do, he suggests, is track the unconscious in our lives. We can, he occasionally intimates, learn to enjoy our own unwittingness. There is nothing more entertaining – more daunting and amusing and horrifying – than the ways in which our intentions and attentions misfire. Nothing more poignant and absurd than our hopeless and sincere attempts not to wreak havoc. Freud wants us to reconsider whatever it is about ourselves that we are so tempted to ignore. He invites us to be unselectively attentive, and then to see what happens. Because the problem modern people have is that things keep occurring to them that they don’t know what to do with. Without a sense of sin, they don’t know what to make of the things they are troubled by.

There is a nasty, perhaps Freudian moment in *The Idiot*, when something occurs to Prince Myshkin as he wanders the streets of St Petersburg:

Occasionally he would start peering at passers-by with great curiosity; but most often he did not notice either the passers-by or precisely where he was going. He was tormentingly tense and uneasy, and at the same time felt an extraordinary need for solitude. He wanted to be alone and to give himself over to all this suffering tension completely passively, without looking for the least way out. He was loth to resolve the questions that overflowed his soul and heart. ‘What, then, am I to blame for it all?’ he murmured to himself, almost unaware of his words.

The Prince oscillates between vigilance and self-absorption, at once holding onto external reality – peering at passers-by – and lost in his own thoughts and feelings (to try to ‘resolve the questions that overflowed his soul and heart’ would have been to distract himself from those very questions). Suddenly he finds himself as good as talking to himself. In one sense the all for which he feels momentarily responsible is the fate of Rogozhin and Nastasya Filippovna; but it is also all the suffering and confusion in the world that he believes, as he says to himself, is his fault. It isn’t rare for people suddenly to feel responsible for the terribleness of things. And it is, of course, consoling to believe that someone is to blame, that somewhere there is a responsible agent. But Prince Myshkin murmurs this to himself, ‘almost unaware of his words’. One can be aware of one’s words, the narrator implies: but what is it to be aware of one’s words?

To be almost unaware of one’s words is as good a description as any of telling one’s dream. All the words one uses probably have known referents, and yet what one is recounting makes no sense. Not only that: we are describing something we have seen, but not with our eyes. To speak and to be almost unaware of one’s words sounds more like a trance state, as though at that moment the Prince, rather like the dreamer, is the medium rather than the instigator of what he has to say. He is struck, as we say, because he doesn’t quite recognise himself in his sentence. ‘Something,’ the narrator writes, ‘was certainly pursuing him.’ This, in Freud’s sense, is the self at its most real in its unfamiliarity with itself. The unconscious is the fictive source of news, in Freud’s mythology; it is where the surprises come from, the surprises whose moral status is always ambiguous. Thoughts and feelings that come from the unconscious part of the self have indeterminate consequences. They are the stuff of dreams, not of routines.

Why did Dostoevsky describe the Prince as murmuring that sentence to himself, rather than describe it as simply a thought that crossed his mind? And why did Ford describe Tietjens’s sudden thought as one in which ‘he had been as good as talking to himself’? What both occasions draw our attention to – and why I describe them both as Freudian moments – is the difference between something occurring to someone, someone having a shocking thought, and this thought being spoken, if only to oneself. Freud’s invention of psychoanalysis as a therapy – or as a new kind of conversation – turns on this difference. He invited his patients in effect to talk to themselves, but aloud, in his presence, to be almost unaware of their words – that is, to free-associate, to speak without censorious vigilance whatever happened to cross their minds. There is nothing more defensive, Freud implies, than understanding what one is saying. Psychoanalysis, in short, is based on the idea that talking is different from thinking: but also that surprising or shocking oneself in the presence of another person is of value, indeed that such productive shocks are only made possible by the presence of the other person. The point, the project of the unacceptable in oneself, is to make itself known. The forbidden, the transgressive, is always an annunciation. It is a demand made on at least one other person. Freud invented a therapeutic setting, called psychoanalysis, in which this self could be overheard. The experiment was what followed from that overhearing. Unlike confession, psychoanalysis offers, at best, an essentially unpredictable redescription of what has been said.

The psychoanalyst, the new figure that Freud invented, is a person with an unusual conversational manner. He responds to what his so-called patients say to him not quite like anyone else. And this is because he has two aims, which are more at odds with each other than Freud was prepared to acknowledge. On the one hand, he aims to cure, to relieve suffering, to help make a life more worth living. On the other hand, he aims for what is technically called ‘maximal symbolisation’. He wants, that is to say, to respond only in ways which will facilitate the expression of unconscious desire. He wants to ‘let the unconscious speak’: to modify the person’s defences against what he has to say and what he has to hear himself saying. The question is – and it is, of course, a political question – does freer speech, the frankest possible articulation of wants, give people a life they prefer, or make a better world? By inventing psychoanalysis, Freud invented a laboratory for the evaluation of the effects of free speech, and free listening. And perhaps unsurprisingly, not everyone likes or liked the sound of it. People only want to speak freely about what they must not speak about.

In Freud’s view, the question the modern individual seems to be asking herself is whether she can make her wanting compatible with her (psychic) survival. For Freud, to speak is to articulate one’s wants, to make known to oneself what is absent, what of significance is lacking in one’s life. And the performance of wanting – in mood, in language, in action – puts one’s life in danger. There is the danger of punishment for desiring the forbidden, that Freud infamously refers to as castration; and there is the danger of acknowledged dependence, and the potential for loss. One cannot live, one could not have survived without wanting; and without having achieved some success at it. But the wanting that is our lifeline throws us into interminable conflict: it involves us ineluctably with others and ourselves. ‘Originally,’ Freud writes in *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, ‘renunciation of instinct was the result of fear of an external authority: one renounced one’s satisfactions in order not to lose its love.’ There is the urgency, the emergency of instinctual desire, and there is the fear of loss of love as a ruling passion. A person begins, Freud tells us, in fear of losing his parents’ love; and then, having internalised their authority, he ends up fearing (and courting) the loss of his love for himself. And this self-hatred, that can be obscene in its voraciousness, is called guilt. We can’t avoid being harmed by what we can’t avoid wanting. We have morality to protect us from ourselves.

But Freud redescribes the categories. ‘Good’ now means safe and satisfied, or satisfied safely enough; ‘bad’ means deprived beyond measure of one’s need. ‘Good’ means, as it always has done, desirable, but ‘desirable’ now also means forbidden. What is good is against the law. ‘Bad’ now means traumatic, but ‘trauma’ is another word for living a life. For Freud, in other words, we are in shock: our childhood is more than our development can cope with. We are all in recovery from having been children.

As Freud tracked, in his clinical work, the ways in which the old-fashioned solutions of childhood became the repetitions of adulthood, with repetition as a refusal to remember, and with memory full of hiding-places, he was struck by the peculiar fact that suffering can be transformed when words are applied to wounds. Speaking to another person can be a hopeful act. The task of the modern person, as Freud sees her, is to find new ways of wanting that keep wanting alive, but in the knowledge that wanting is a species of risk. What became known, after Freud, as psychoanalytic theory is an encyclopedia of modern risks. And desire is usually the contemporary word for the risk not taken: the unlived life that seems the only life worth living. People have not been keen to see that the Reality Principle was Freud’s most exciting idea.

So Freud leaves us with one overriding question: what is a good life for incestuously-minded people like ourselves, people who must not have what they really want, people whose fraught love for their parents has made love a hopeless passion? We must start, he seems to be saying, by ironising the masteries of the mind. We must not hide ourselves away for safe-keeping. We must learn to desire with guile and without hope; to love in conflict, rather than betray our desire in fantasies of harmony. We must, in short, take our pleasures where we may. And speak as well as we can of what we want.