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**The National College of Art & Design**  
**Faculty of Fine Art, Department of sculpture**

**THE ARCH OF  
HYSTERIA:  
CHALLENGING  
FREUD'S DORA.**

**BY HELEN KILLANE**

**Submitted to the faculty of History of Art  
& Design and Complementary studies in  
candidacy for the Degree in Fine Art  
specialising in sculpture , 1998.**



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to acknowledge with special thanks my tutor Elaine Sisson, for her help and encouragement throughout this thesis. I would also like to thank Alan, Stephen, Margaret, Michael, Robert, Judy and Isabelle for their support.

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Mixed Media by Louise Bourgeois
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by Louise Bourgeois



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Fig. 11. Cellulose I (1983)  
Photograph by Robert M. B. B.

Fig. 12. Cellulose I (1991)  
Plastic & Steel by I. G. B. B.

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Plastic, Marble, Wood, Metal & Paper  
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Fig. 14. Cellulose I (1991)  
Plastic, Marble, Wood, Metal & Paper  
by I. G. B. B.

Fig. 15. Cellulose I (1992)  
Plastic, Marble, Wood, Metal & Paper  
by I. G. B. B.

## INTRODUCTION

... the hysteric is to my eyes, the typical woman in all her force. It is a force that has turned its back against Dora, but if the scene changes and if women begin to speak in other ways, it would be a force capable of demolishing those structures. (Cixous quoted in Bernheimer & Kahane, 1985, p.285)

In the above statement the French feminist writer, Helene Cixous highlights three points of interest to this thesis, these are:- the notion of the female hysteric,- the case study of Freud's famous hysteric Dora,- and the hysteric as a subversive and revolutionary force for women.

The first chapter of this thesis gives a brief history of hysteria: the malady that had reached epidemic proportions at the turn of the century. Hysteria is the precursor to neurotic disorders such as: anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and shell shock, amongst others; all of which are hysteria's modern equivalent. This chapter traces the cultural history of hysteria concentrating on Dr. Charcot's treatment of the disorder at the Salpetriere clinic, in Paris, from 1870. It further discusses Sigmund Freud's work on hysteria up to 1905 when "Fragment of an Analysis of a case of Hysteria" (the case history of Freud's hysteric patient, Dora) was first published.

The second chapter looks at Freud's famous case history of Dora, which has given so much, not only to the world of psychoanalysis and medical science, but also has had a huge impact on a great many other areas of study; including feminism, art theory and art practice. Freud, by publishing this case history, opened up the field of psychoanalysis to debate and new developments. These



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debates have questioned Freud's assumptions about femininity and female desire and have offered new perspectives on Freud's analysis. The second chapter also considers Cixous' proposal of hysteria as a creative female force and focuses on other feminist critics, for example Catherine Clement, who have written extensively on Dora.

Chapter three examines in particular, the life and work of the artist Louise Bourgeois and proposes Bourgeois as the woman beginning "to speak in other ways" and as such is "a force capable of demolishing those structures" to which Cixous refers. This chapter examines the similarities between Dora's and Bourgeois' early childhood experiences, which affected both women deeply in adult life. Although Dora and Bourgeois were born twenty nine years apart they both grew up in a patriarchal society, which had not yet experienced much change. Bourgeois' family background is almost identical to Dora's. Both had adulterous fathers who were irresponsible and selfish towards their families. Both fathers had their mistress live in the family home under the pretence of being a governess for their children. Dora's and Bourgeois' mothers seemed to tolerate their husband's behaviour and in doing so failed to shield their children. Both women were neurotic; Dora's mother was completely obsessive with cleaning the house, making it difficult for the rest of the family to enjoy living at home. Bourgeois' mother became hysterical when her husband went off to war. She dragged her children around with her as she went from camp to camp following her husband. Dora and Bourgeois, as sensitive and highly intelligent young children, were badly affected by their parent's behaviour. They felt betrayed by everyone they loved and trusted. It is interesting to see how their childhood experience affected their adult life, but it is more interesting still to see the differences in how

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each one coped with that experience.- Dora gained fame as one of Freud's patients. By contrast Bourgeois achieved her reputation by herself. Freud speaks for Dora. When Dora speaks she can articulate herself only through her hysterical body- With Dora there is silence, there is absence; whereas Bourgeois speaks for herself.

Although both Dora and Bourgeois have become a source of inspiration for feminist writers, there is no extant material on the connections between the two women despite the similarities of their childhood experiences. Bourgeois has in recent years, made hysteria the subject of much of her work for example "the Arch of Hysteria" (1993) and the series of work called "Cells" (1991-1996), while Dora was Freud's most famous female patient/hysteric. Bourgeois states that all her work is inspired by her childhood years in France: "But my memories, my sculpture... relates to my life before I married, before I came to America." (Gardner, 1997, p.19). And again Bourgeois states: "Everything I do is inspired by my early life." (Gardner, 1987, p. 21). Bourgeois, through her work, continually analyses her repressed feeling of jealousy, hatred and betrayal. Bourgeois has a fascination with psychoanalysis: "I am a scientific person. I believe in psychoanalysis, in philosophy, for me the only thing that matters is the tangible." (Bienal De Sao Paulo Homepage,1997, p.2) Bourgeois' work gives her an outlet for expression, an outlet that Dora searched for all her life, but never found and instead internalised her feelings, so that they remained repressed, trapped within her body. These repressed feelings manifested themselves in the symptoms of hysteria. Dora suffered from convulsions, depression, hysterical unsociability, a nervous cough and loss of voice with no pathological cause for these symptoms. By contrast in 1982 Bourgeois, at the age of

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seventy, finally received her long over due recognition in the art world. Bourgeois had been virtually ignored by art critics up until 1980, even though many of her contemporaries and friends had long received critical acclaim. Since the seventies Bourgeois has been the force that in part helped to demolish the structure of the art world with its modernist preoccupations.

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# HYSTERIA: A BRIEF HISTORY

## CHAPTER 1

Hysteria is the subject of the oldest known medical text; dating from ancient Egyptian times (1900 B.C.). These documents show that a connection had been made even at this time, between hysterical symptoms and 'abnormal' sexual activity; which included abstinence. From the beginning hysteria was associated with women; its name comes from "hystera" the Greek word for uterus. Plato's writings from ancient Greece describe the womb as an animal which if not satisfied in its natural role of motherhood wanders around the body causing confusion. In these ancient times and for centuries to come, the recommended treatment was marriage and childbirth.

The womb is an animal which longs to generate children. When it remains barren too long after puberty, it is distressed and sorely disturbed and straying about the body cutting off the passages of the breath it impedes respiration and brings the sufferer into the extremest anguish and provokes all manner of diseases besides. (Plato quoted in Bernheimer & Kahane, 1985, p.3)

In medieval times hysteria was seen as a sign of witchcraft and the symptoms, such as speech disturbances, mutism, convulsions, limps, paralyses, coughs and headaches, were seen as signs of demonic possession.

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were a weaker, more nervous sex, suffering from fainting fits and were eroticized as hysterical nymphomaniacs.

By the eighteenth century the nerves of the brain were held responsible for hysterical symptoms and it followed that men might also suffer from hysteria. It is interesting to note that because hysteric symptoms were so numerous and varied, doctors often diagnosed hysteria when they were unable to pin point an illness.

The modern medical history of hysteria starts with Jean-Martin Charcot (1825 - 1893), the famous clinical neurologist who was head of the Salpetriere woman's hospital in Paris from 1862. It is at this point that all the elements that account for the affliction come together : the doctor, the patient and culture. From 1870 until the time of his death Charcot studied hysteria and as Sigmund Freud, a former pupil of Charcot's, declared "restored its dignity to the topic (of hysteria)." (Freud quoted in Bernheimer & Kahane, 1985, p.6). Sufferers of hysteria were viewed with cynicism until Charcot brought to the subject a scientific approach which reinstated hysteria as a genuine medical complaint. According to Freud "Charcot had thrown the whole weight of his authority on the side of the reality and objectivity of hysterical phenomena." (Showalter, 1987, p.148). However Charcot's contribution lies less in medical advances than towards finding relief for his patients and more in scientific analysis and classification of the disease.

Charcot's definition of hysteria was "an inherited disease of the nervous system that could be triggered by an emotional or physical trauma in vulnerable men or women." (Showalter, 1997, p.33). Although Charcot asserted that hysteria could manifest itself in both men and women, he believed hysteria to be associated with the female personality and he equated the female personality with



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vanity, deceitfulness and self-dramatisation. Indeed Charcot's assistant, C. Ricet, saw the symptoms of hysteria as, "varieties of female character... one might even say that hysterics are more womanly than other women." (Richet quoted in Showalter, 1997, p.34).

In 1878 Charcot reintroduced the use of hypnosis (which prior to this had lost its credibility in the medical profession). Charcot wanted to demonstrate that the startling seizures of the 'grande hysterique' could be stopped or started by hypnosis whereby the stages of the fit could be examined. In this way Charcot was able to prove that the symptoms of hysteria were produced by emotions rather than physical injury and that the patient genuinely suffered from the symptoms which were not under the conscious control of the patient. Charcot also maintained that being susceptible to hypnosis was in itself a sign of hysteria.

Charcot developed a concept of hysteria that was based on experimental observation of the 'whole and regular' major hysterical dance. Charcot categorized the fit into four stages. He found three categories of hysterical stigmata and twenty hysterogenic zones. The symptoms of hysteria included visual disturbances, local numbness and ovarian sensitivity. One of Charcot's treatments was to apply pressure to the ovaries or testicles to stop attacks. However it is not surprising that these treatments often made patients more hysterical. Many of Charcot's practices are quite shocking to us but even at the time Charcot was a controversial figure.

Together with hypnosis Charcot made use of photography to document his patients during their attack. Charcot had a photographic studio with a full time photographer (Andre Londe), at the hospital to record the women's movements and expressions.



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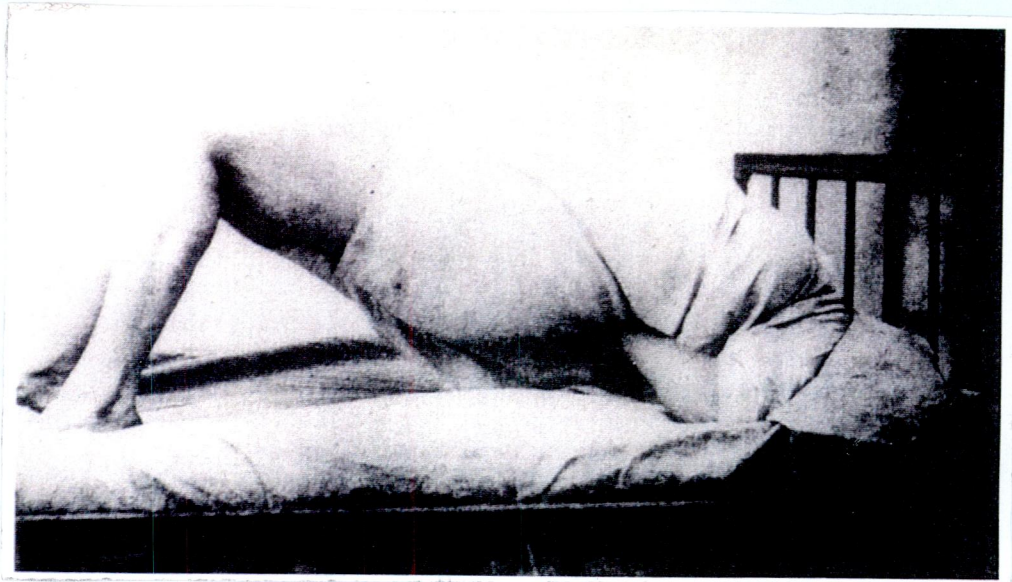


Fig.1 "Photographic Icons of The Salpêtrière" (1879/80)

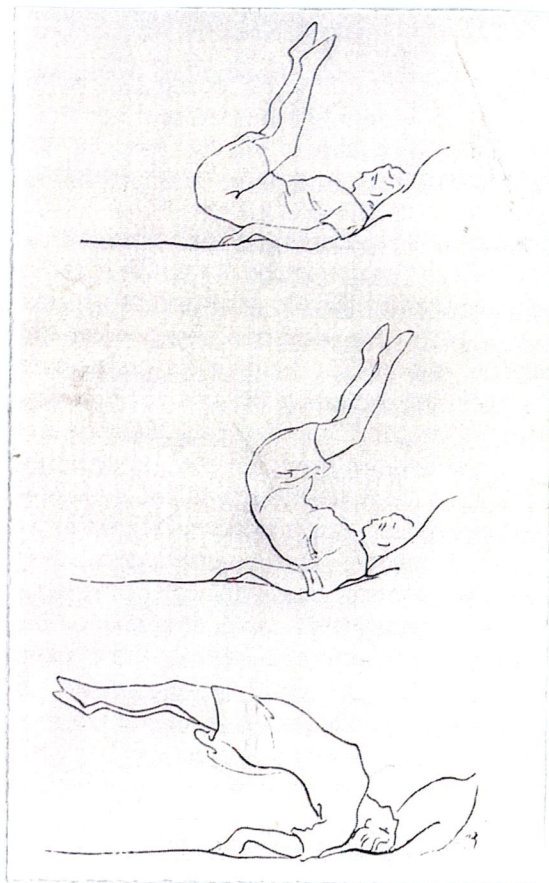


Fig.2 "Phases of a hysterical fit."(1881)





Fig. 1. "Photographic form of the Salpêtre" (1870/80)



Fig. 2. "Phases of a historical lit." (1881)



Photographs as well as sketches and paintings of the patients went on sale to the public. These images were particularly popular with artists and writers of the time and the images influenced novels and plays which led to popularised image of the hysteric.

...George Du Maurier's best-selling novel "Trilby"(1894), ...became a great hit play of the fin-de-siecle stage. [The story is about a] young artist's model Trilby, [who] suffers from crippling migraine headaches; she is cured by the mesmerism of the Jewish musician Svengali, under whose hypnotic gaze and instruction she becomes a great singer. "Tribly" sold over two hundred thousand copies in its first year... The stage and film versions played up Svengali's Jewishness and futher demonized the mesmerist; Trilby became a popular icon of hysterical suggestability and feminine attractiveness. (Showalter, 1997, p. 35)

Hence society was 'educated' as to how the hysteric should act. In this way the hysteric was seen as a role model albeit a negative one. Although hysteria had its place or role in society it was outside that society, (or at least on the perimeter), as hysteria involved socially unacceptable behaviour.

The most famous of these saleable images from Charcot's hospital, is Andre Brouillet's lithograph titled; "Doctor Charcot lecturing in his clinic" (1887). A copy of this hung in Freud's consulting room. The lithograph depicts one of Charcot's 'Tuesday' lectures, illustrating the huge public interest in his work. By the late 1870's Charcot gave demonstrations twice weekly, which were open to the public and were attended by doctors and laymen alike. Charcot presented in a most theatrical manner, hysterical patients to a "crowd of curiosity seekers." (Showalter, 1987, p.148). The



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patients would go through the sequence of movements or the dance that Charcot believed made up the full hysterical fit. Andre Brouillet's famous lithograph clearly reveals the politics of the situation.



Fig.3 "Doctor Charcot lecturing in his clinic"(1887)

The feminist writer, Catherine Clement describes the lithograph:

To the left, about thirty spectators, (all male), dressed in suits, or in white aprons, with moustaches, beards, and pince-nez. On the wall, a clinical engraving, depicts a woman in the acrobatic posture of the 'arc hysterique', her head and feet on the ground, supporting the weight of her body, her whole body completely arched. To the right, a hypnotised woman. Partly stripped, her breasts exposed to the public gaze. A doctor supports her, with a Christ-like look on his face; near him a woman, a nun perhaps. The stretcher is there. In the middle, Charcot is holding forth, standing near his female monster. The same fascinated eyes, the same cranked necks, a circle of watchers. And, in the middle, the eternal couple:



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doctor-patient, sorcerer-patient, healer-pain, the exceptional doctor before the exceptional patient. Charcot with his piercing eye, an exception. Charcot, who performed miracles and made paralytics walk again. Charcot, who was rediscovering, under thick layers of knowledge and repression, the practice of cure in all its violence. Charcot, who didn't exactly know what he was looking for, nor what he was doing, who could only say that it all had to do with something genital, and that theory never prevented anything from existing. This meant stating the necessity of the spectacle of the cure, and also its fleeting vanity. Once hypnosis is over and the paralytic woman has fallen back into her little chair with her legs inert again, the circle dissolves, the pose is broken. And in the famous print I am now describing, in the middle of the circle, men of letters. And not shown, an unknown person who was pretty shrewd, Freud. He was as fascinated by Charcot as he was by Sarah Bernhardt, another kind of show, trance, circus. (Clement, 1978, p.52).

Charcot regarded his Salpêtrière clinic, in a thirteenth century building where roughly five thousand women were accommodated, as "a living pathological museum" (Schade, 1995, p.505), patients turned into museum pieces. Under Charcot's direction at the Salpêtrière the number of hysteric women diagnosed rose dramatically from 1% in 1847 to 17% in 1883. Two thirds of these women were working class.

Towards the end of his life Charcot began to have doubts about some of his theories and felt he should have concentrated more on social conditions and psychological elements of his patient's lives. Charcot's theories were challenged by many of his peers and he was accused of coaching his patients in order for them to perform the 'grande hysterique' fit.



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Towards the end of his life Charcot began to have doubts about some of his theories and felt he should have concentrated more on social conditions and psychological elements of his patients' lives. Charcot's theories were embraced by many of his peers and he was accused of coaching his patients in order for them to perform the grand hysteria fit.

Elaine Showalter sums up the consequences of Charcot's investigations effectively when she writes;

Having started with the intention of making objective scientific discoveries about hysteria, Charcot ended with a rigid model, a theoretical cage into which he squeezed all his patients. In the highly contagious environment of the hospital, hysteria took on the immense power of suggestion. People came in with problems; with psychosomatic conversion symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorders and other emotional responses to their unhappy lives. Charcot gave them a degree of legitimacy. But he took away their dignity and their hope. They were pressed into mass conformity, put into solitary confinement and turned into chronic even life-long patients. (Showalter, 1997, p. 36).

Catherine Clement criticizes both Charcot and his successor Freud for not administering relief to their patients. Clement comments that they did not 'abreact' anything, meaning the free expression and consequent release of previously repressed emotion. Clement implies that both Charcot and Freud sacrificed the needs of the patients for their own needs; which were to develop their theories through scientific experiments and clinical observations.

All Charcot did, again, as a doctor was endlessly to revive the crisis of the woman dangling there, neglected, momentarily freed and relieved. Freud took over this power and turned it into a science. By adding progressively, slowly, through successive experiments; the abreaction of the patient to the abreaction of the Shaman. (Clement, 1978, p.53).

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Charcot's work was concentrated around the 'grande hystérie' and Freud, who had studied under Charcot at the Salpêtrière,

from October 1885 to February 1886, worked with the less dramatic 'petite hysteric' , whose more subtle symptoms included coughs, limps, headaches and loss of voice. Freud was impressed by Charcot's careful observation and orderly classification; but it was Charcot's controversial method of using hypnotism to produce and remove hysterical symptoms that had the greatest impact on Freud.

Freud's clinical practices, between 1895 and 1905, led to a whole system of ideas to which he gave the name of psychoanalysis. Freud's accumulation of knowledge brought about discoveries of the workings of the mind that were universal to both sick and healthy alike. Freud was able to demonstrate the normal development of sexual instincts in infants and children. However, his most famous and possibly greatest break-through is his detection and exploration of the unconscious: a primary force that influences our thoughts and actions. This he discovered through his examination of dreams.

Although Freud admired Charcot, one of the most striking differences between them was in their approach and method of gathering information. Charcot kept thorough visual records of his patients but there are almost no records made of patient's accounts in their own words. Whereas Freud, in collaboration with Dr. Breuer, a friend and older colleague, was the first to begin to listen, examine and record patient's stories. Psychoanalysis began with an interpretation of the dialogue between the patient and the doctor rather than the interpretation of a pictorial record of the patient by the doctor.

Freud and Breuer published their initial findings in "Studies on Hysteria"(1895), in which they declared that the hysteric was not weak or mentally deranged, but quite the opposite, they were "people of the clearest intellect, strongest will, greatest character and



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"people of the clearest intellect, strongest will, greatest character and

highest critical power" (Showalter, 1985, p.157). For the first time it was acknowledged that the cultural environment was a major factor. Freud and Breuer argued that all hysteria, male and female, had traumatic origins. Unlike Charcot they suggested that the traumas were not a trigger to a latent inherited disease. Freud defined hysteria as "a neurosis caused by repression, conflicted sexuality and fantasy" (Showalter, 1997, p.37). These traumas could be a disturbing sexual experience patients had repressed, which resulted in the symptoms of hysteria. The reason, Freud and Breuer proposed, for this repression was that the trauma occurred when the patient was in an hypnotic state as a resistance to pain. The memories were therefore registered outside consciousness which resulted in bodily symptoms or symbols of the repressed trauma. Freud and Breuer proposed that if a patient under hypnosis could recall these memories the symptoms would vanish. Freud stated that this procedure differed from hypnotic suggestion as the patient was questioned as to the origin of the trauma which they could not remember when conscious.

Throughout his career Freud's theories on hysteria moved through several stages. In 1896 Freud put forward his 'Seduction Theory', in which he proposed that hysteria was caused by repressed child or infant sexual abuse, based on his experience with a number of hysterical patients. Freud concluded that in most cases the fathers were the seducers and abusers. But in 1897 Freud had to abandon his 'Seduction Theory' as the high percentage of child abuse by fathers seemed statistically quite improbable because it would have to exceed the incidence of hysteria. He found it difficult to distinguish between fact and fantasy in the stories of the unconscious patient, and also the fact that the memories of abuse



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Throughout his career Freud's theories on hysteria moved through several stages. In 1896 Freud put forward his Seduction Theory, in which he proposed that hysteria was caused by repressed childhood sexual abuse based on his experience with a number of hysterical patients. Freud concluded that in most cases the fathers were the seducers and abusers. But in 1897 Freud had to abandon the Seduction Theory as the high percentage of child abuse by fathers seemed statistically quite improbable because it would have to cover the incidence of hysteria. He found it difficult to distinguish between fact and fantasy in the stories of the unconscious patient, and also the fact that the memories of these

never surfaced when the patients were conscious even when the conversation was emotive. Freud modified his theory by concluding that rather than remembering real incidents of abuse patients were expressing fantasies. Initially Freud used the method of hypnosis as Charcot had done, but soon abandoned it in preference to his new method of Free Association.

Pivotal to this thesis is one of Freud's best known case histories which he published in 1905. Freud documents the case of an eighteen year old girl, Ida Bauer, whom he renamed "Dora" for publishing purposes. Originally titled "Dreams and Hysteria", the case study was later called "Fragments of an Analysis of a case of Hysteria", and is considered a classic analysis of the structure and genesis of hysteria. This case study illustrates the methodology of Freud's dream interpretation in treatment. Analysis of Dora's dreams revealed a complicated web of emotions; love, hatred and jealousy; which had been so deeply repressed that she was unaware of them. Freud wrote to his friend Dr. Fleiss in October 1900 to tell him that he had just started treating a new patient, an eighteen year old girl, (Dora), but her treatment came to an end three months later in December, when Dora abruptly broke off the treatment. Freud wrote the case history directly after this and it was finished by the end of January 1901.

In a further letter to Dr. Fleiss, Freud indicated that there was a natural progression from his study on dreams to Dora's case and highlighted the link between dreams and hysteria.

... Explanations are grouped into two dreams, so that it is in fact a continuation of the dream book, ['The Interpretation of Dreams'(1900)]. It further contains solutions of hysterical symptoms and considerations on



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the sexual-organic basis of the whole condition... I hope you will not be disappointed by "Dreams and Hysteria ". Its main concern is still with psychology; an estimation of the importance of dreams and an account of some of the peculiarities of unconscious thinking. (Freud quoted in Richards, 1977, p.32)..

This short case history opened up a great debate amongst feminist scholars, nearly seventy years after it was first published in 1905, who were interested in Freud's treatment of Dora and subsequently the narrative that he based on her case. For feminist scholars Dora, became the symbol for a scientific practice that was heavily ideological and that imposed patriarchal views of femininity on to women patients with detrimental and long lasting effects.



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# DORA'S STORY AND FREUD'S INTERPRETATION

## CHAPTER 2

In the autumn of 1900 the eighteen year old Ida Bauer (Dora) was sent by her father for treatment following an incident. Her parents had found a suicide note in her desk. Dora had suffered from various hysterical symptoms since she was eight years old. Dora's somatic and mental symptoms included: laboured breathing, a nervous cough, loss of voice, migraine together with depression, hysterical unsociability and *taedium vitae* or weariness of life- prone to suicide, (although Freud felt this was probably not a genuine threat in Dora's case). Dora's parents complained of her mood swings. She was clearly not satisfied with herself or her family. Her attitude to her father was unfriendly and she was on very bad terms with her mother. Freud found out that Dora was very close to her father's sister who also suffered from hysterical symptoms and had had an unhappy marriage.

Dora's psychological problems can be linked to her social background. Freud noted that Dora was an attractive, highly intelligent, young, Jewish woman who had very little if any scope for independent activity. As the marriageable daughter of a bourgeois family she was strictly guarded and confined in that role. For many years Dora's father and mother had become estranged. Freud considered Dora's mother to be uncultivated and neurotic; obsessed with cleaning the house, which Freud referred to as "housewife psychosis" (Freud quoted in Richards, 1990,p.49)



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Dora's psychological problems can be linked to her social background. Froud noted that Dora was an sensitive, highly intelligent young Jewish woman who had very little if any scope for independent activity. As the marriageable daughter of a bourgeois family she was strictly guarded and confined in that role. For many years Dora's father and mother had become estranged. Froud considered Dora's mother to be masculinized and neurotic, obsessed with cleaning the house, which Froud related to as 'homosexuality psychosis' (Froud quoted in Richards, 1990, p. 49).

Dora's mother was determined that Dora should participate in the house chores. Dora felt contempt for her mother's life. Dora tried to avoid social intercourse and despite the fatigue and lack of concentration she suffered, attended lectures and studied by herself without supervision. She was interested in pursuing higher education and wished to avoid marriage; a role for which she was destined. Dora also had to contend with the rising anti-semitism of Austrian society. Dora had an older brother, Otto, one and a half years her senior.

Dora's father was a handsome intelligent man and the dominating character in the family. From a very young age Dora had been very close to her father. Dora's attachment to her father had grown stronger still after he had been seriously ill. She had fretted over him and grown protective towards him. Her father had suffered a series of illness. In 1888 Dora's father had contracted TB. In 1892 he suffered a detached retina and in 1894 he contracted a sexually transmitted disease. In 1888 the family moved to a health resort, by a lake in the Alps, so that Dora's father could recuperate. While at the resort Dora's family became very friendly with a married couple, the K's, who had lived there for several years. Frau. K. helped to nurse Dora's father. Dora idolised Frau K., all the more so because she didn't get on with her own mother. Herr. K. gave Dora a lot of attention and often went on long walks with her and had given her presents. Dora used to mind the couple's young children.

However one day when Dora was out on a walk with Herr K., he made a pass at her, Dora was fourteen at the time. Dora told her father, who questioned Herr K., but he denied the incident totally. Herr K. blamed Dora's pubescent dreaming, claiming that she must have imagined the whole scene. Dora's father blamed this



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she must have imagined the whole scene. John's father blamed the

incident for his daughter's depression and suicidal tendencies. Dora asked her father to break off relations with Herr and Frau K. Dora's father refused, telling Freud that he could not understand his daughter's behaviour. Freud later learned that the real reason was that Dora's father was having an affair with Frau. K. He chose his mistress' happiness over his daughter's happiness. Dora's father begged Freud to "bring [Dora] to reason" (Freud quoted in Richards, 1990, p.56). Freud recounts the conversation Dora's father had with him when he sought Freud's help:

I myself believe that Dora's tale of the man's immortal suggestions is phantasy that has forced its way into her mind; and besides I am bound to Frau K. by ties of honourable friendship and I do not wish to cause her pain. The poor woman is most unhappy with her husband... I am her only support. With my state of health I need scarcely assure you that there is nothing wrong in our relations. We are just two poor wretches who give one another what comfort we can by an exchange of our friendly sympathy. You know already that I get nothing out of my own wife. But Dora, who inherits my obstinacy, cannot be moved from her hatred of the K.'s. She had her last attack after a conversation in which she had again pressed me to break with them. (Freud quoted in Richards, 1990, p.56).

Dora had grown very hostile towards her father by the time Freud started his analysis. Dora's aggression towards her father occurred for several reasons: - a few years prior to her treatment with Freud, Dora believed her father had an affair with her governess. Dora felt she was being used and that the governess was neglecting her studies because she was in love with her father. Although the governess had been a very progressive woman and



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competent tutor, Dora arranged to have her dismissed and from then on, without a tutor, struggled to teach herself.

Furthermore Dora felt pressurised by her father. She believed, and Freud concurred, that she was being used as a pawn in a game between her father and "Herr. K."; the husband of her father's new mistress. Dora's father intended to trade his daughter in exchange for "Frau. K", so that he could carry on his affair with Herr. K's wife undisturbed. Herr. K had made a sexual pass at Dora twice, once when she was 14 and once when she was 16. When Dora complained to her father, he did not protect her, but rather he told her she must have misinterpreted Herr. K's intentions. According to Dora her father wanted her cured into giving up her opposition to his affair, and to accept her role as the victim of a male power game and take Herr. K as her lover. Dora believed that her father wished Freud to bring her to her "senses" and persuade Dora that her perceptions about her father's affair were just teenage fantasies. Dora felt utterly betrayed as her father sought Freud's treatment for his own ends rather than out of any concern for her well being. Dora felt a double betrayal: she also felt deceived by Frau.K. whom she idolised and had trusted implicitly.

Dora's visits to Freud lasted only three months before she broke off the treatment. Records show that Dora's became a life-long suffer of hysterical symptoms. She had an unhappy marriage and it appears she had a miserable life. Freud, himself, believed that he had failed in his treatment of Dora.

Freud published his case history of Dora in 1905, five years after it was first written. Freud claimed that the physical trauma and disturbing sexual experience Dora encountered with Herr K. resulted in hysterical symptoms. Freud also believed that Dora developed





hysterical symptoms because she repressed her sexual desire for her father. Freud hypothesized that Dora originally desired her father but that she felt betrayed by him because of his infidelities. According to Freud Dora had transferred her feelings of hatred of her father onto Herr. K. who Dora admitted was an attractive man. Freud made an assumption that a young pubescent woman like Dora, would have a natural sexual attraction to him. Dora consistently and vehemently denied that she had any attraction towards Herr. K.. Freud concluded that Dora's repression of her sexual attraction to Herr. K. was therefore an *hysterical reaction* (the repression of sexual desire) and at the same time an Oedipal reaction (the rejection of her father). Based upon his interpretation, Freud attempted to get Dora to admit her repressed desire for Herr. K., Dora resists Freud's pressure and broke off her treatment.

There are a number of reasons why Freud's treatment of Dora failed. The most important one shown by recent feminist study of hysteria and especially Dora's case study, has made links between the 'feminisation' of hysteria and the patriarchal narratives of Freudian psychoanalysis. Although Freud was able to pin-point the cause of Dora's problems, he was unable to successfully treat her problems as Freud only briefly touched on the outside influences or social factors that affected women. Dora's act of resistance to Freud's interpretation is now seen as Dora's refusal to be fixed or 'famed' within a patriarchal narrative.

From the 1920s through the 1930s a number of women, some of whom were analysts themselves, criticized Freud's account of the female Oedipus complex and female sexuality. Freud responded to these criticisms in his paper on femininity (1933). Karen Horney, one of Freud's colleagues, together with Helene Deutsch and Ernest



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Jones wrote their criticisms in the "International Journal of Psychoanalysis". Horney, although she valued psychoanalytic theory, criticises Freud for his characterization of femininity (Horney quoted in Wright, 1992, p.132). Horney claims that Freud's representation of femininity was "partial and value laden" (Wright, 1992, p.132). However she was committed to finding a scientific account for Freud's theories; amending rather than disregarding these theories; so that they could be universally applied (for both men and women). In this respect Horney was different than feminists of the 1960s, who were interested in developing a women's perspective exclusively.

In the late 1960s feminism emerged as a political movement. It focussed on the politics of theory as well as the status of women. Psychoanalysis was under attack. Many feminists, including Greer, Millet, de Beauvoir, Friedan and Weisstein, denounced Freud's account of Oedipus and castration complexes and also penis envy. They accused Freud of asserting that: women's scope for social possibilities/abilities were less than man's because of a predestined biological make-up. They accused Freud of reinstating male supremacy over women.

However feminists in France including the group "Psychanalyse et Politique" saw psychoanalysis as a relevant means by which they could explore women's oppression. Juliet Mitchell defended Freud in her text "Psychoanalysis and feminism" (1974). She states that Freud gave a scientific account of women as they were constructed in a patriarchal society and not an account of how he would like to see women, as some feminists maintained. Mitchell's text opened up the debate as to how feminists should interpret Freud.



James was then criticized in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. Having, although she cited psychoanalytic theory, criticized Freud for his characterization of femininity. (Harris quoted in Wright, 1997, p. 112). Harris states that Freud's representation of femininity was "partial and false" (Wright, 1997, p. 113). However she was committed to finding a scientific program for Freud's theories, maintaining that this distinguishing these theories so that they could be universally applied for both men and women. In this respect Harris was different than feminists of the 1960s who were interested in developing a woman's perspective exclusively.

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However, feminists in France included the concept of psychoanalysis of Freud as a relevant means by which they could explore women's oppression. Juliet Mitchell detailed Freud in her text "Psychoanalysis and Feminism" (1974). She states that Freud gave a scientific account of women as they were constituted in a patriarchal society and not an account of how he would like to see women, as some feminists maintained. Mitchell's text opened up the debate as to how feminists should interpret Freud.

Other feminists including: Julia Kristeva, Helene Cixous, Michele Montrelay, Sarah Kofman and Luce Irigaray, differ from Mitchell. Rather than being critical of prevailing feminist attitudes to psychoanalysis, they are critical of psychoanalysis' assumptions about femininity. They appropriate the systems of psychoanalysis and utilise them for feminism. They assert that psychoanalysis is a narrative of male subjects and male perspectives, rather than a human science. These feminists acknowledged that psychoanalysis "describes what patriarchy expects and men require of women"(Wright, 1992, p.133).

For contemporary feminists Dora's case history has become "a melodrama of sexual politics...(and) a pragmatic text on patriarchal assumptions about female desire." (Showalter, 1987, p.160). Showalter proposes that "Freud failed Dora because he was too quick to impose his own language on her mute communications. His insistence on the sexual origins of hysteria blinded him to social factors contributing to it." (Showalter, 1987, p.160). Showalter criticizes Freud's closed mind once he has set on a course of action.

Freud wanted to demolish Dora's intellectual defences... In his case history of Dora, if not in the actual treatment, Freud is determined to have the last word... He uses his text to demonstrate his power to bring a woman to reason and to bring reasons to the mysteries of woman. (Showalter, 1987, p.160).

Some feminists see Dora's walking out on Freud as a triumph in the power struggle between herself and Freud; between "feminism" and "patriarchy". Jane Gallop states that if feminism calls into question sexual identity then *hysteria is a "prototype" of feminism*. In "The Newly Born Woman" (1986), Cixous and



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Clement discuss the political potential of hysteria. They see Dora's hysteria as a protest, a silent revolt against male power. Though they disagree as to the effect of hysteria as a political weapon.

The French feminist and theorist, Helene Cixous, sees Dora's hysteria as a powerful rebellion against a patriarchal system. Cixous sees hysteria as: "a kind of female language that opposes the rigid structures of male discourse and thought" (Showalter, 1985, p.161). She also states:

Silence: silence is the mark of hysteria. The great hysterics have lost speech... their tongues are cut off and what talks isn't heard because it's the body that talks and man doesn't hear the body. (Showalter, 1985, p.161)

~~Cathartic element~~ Clement feels that the hysteric is not at all empowered and that patriarchy is happy to recognise the hysteric because this role offers no real power to change society's structure.

Hysteria is totally tolerated because in fact it has no power to effect cultural change; it is much safer for the patriarchal order to encourage and allow discontented women to express their wrongs through psychosomatic illness than to have them agitating for economic and legal rights. (Showalter, 1987, p.161).

If hysteria is a revolt against male power, as is the case with Dora, it is counter productive, because although Dora reacts against the intolerable situation she is in and causes the people around her to take notice, ultimately she is the one who suffers. Hysteria is not a powerful weapon unless, the hysteric can learn to articulate itself in other ways rather than through the mute body. In an article written in 1957, Felix Deutsch gave an account of Dora's life,



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subsequent to Freud. He wrote that her hysterical symptoms continued and she made life unbearable for her family. She came to resemble her neurotic mother, with her fetish for house cleaning. Dora tortured her husband throughout their marriage and Deutsch states that "her marriage had served only to cover up her distaste for men." (Deutsch quoted in Bernheimer and Kahane, 1994, p.192). Dora developed psychosomatic constipation and died from cancer of the colon. Deutsch concludes: Her death seemed a blessing to all those who were close to her. She had been as my informant phrased it one of the most repulsive hysterics he had ever met."(Deutsch quoted in Bernheimer and Kahane, 1994, p.192).

The rewards of the attention and sympathy of family and doctor were small compared to the sacrifices of power and speech. To the hysteric's ultimate situation of powerlessness and silence, the feminist movement's articulation of hysteria as a by-product of woman's place in the patriarchal order, meant that the figure of the hysteric within feminist discourse was:

...offered a potent alternative to the self-destructive and self-enclosed strategies of hysteria and a genuine form of resistance to the patriarchal order; an alternative to the silence. (Showalter, 1987, p.162)



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# CHALLENGING HYSTERIA

## CHAPTER 3

Louise Bourgeois was born on the 25th December 1911, twenty-nine years after Dora. Despite the gap in ages there are many similarities between Bourgeois' and Dora's lives. -Both girls were brought up in an atmosphere where adultery was accepted without question by their mothers. -Their family backgrounds were very similar. Both came from the newly formed middle class, or bourgeois elite within a society of patriarchal order. It was for the most part, a duplicitous society where culture excessively constrained the sexual impulse, but in reality the family, as the archetype of society, was often a hotbed of adultery and promiscuity which was tolerated and even endorsed by patriarchal society. The story of Dora's and Bourgeois' childhood experiences are a reflection of that society.

Bourgeois was born in Paris into an affluent family. She was the middle of three children. Her older sister Henriette, did not always live at home; but typically of the French, she often stayed with grandparents or other relatives. Her younger brother Pierre, had been a major disappointment to his parents. Bourgeois was named after her father Louis, and was his favourite because she looked like him and for the same reason was her mother's favourite. As her parents relationship became more strained, the young Bourgeois, found herself in the middle of a tug of love, with each parent vying for the affection of their favourite child. Commenting on her father Bourgeois says, "we had a tradition of having charming, stylish men in the family. Papa was quite a charmer. He



# CHALLENGING HYSTERIA

## CHAPTER 3

Lucas Bourgeois was born on the 1st of December 1911, twenty-two years after Doris. Despite the gap in ages there are many similarities between Bourgeois and Doris's lives. Both girls were brought up in an atmosphere where authority was accepted without question by their mothers. Their family backgrounds were very similar. Both came from the north, formed middle class backgrounds since within a society of patriarchy, order is key for the most part, a patriarchal society where culture extensively contained the sexual impulse, but in raising the family as the prototype of society, was often a method of authority and dominance which was tolerated and even endorsed by patriarchy. The story of Doris and Bourgeois' childhood experiences are a reflection of this society.

Bourgeois was born in Paris into an affluent family. She was the middle of three children. Her older sister, Léonora, did not always live at home, but typically of the French she often stayed with grandparents or other relatives. Her younger brother, Pierre, had been a major disappointment to his parents. Bourgeois was named after her father's aunt, and was the favourite because she looked like him and for the same reason was her mother's favourite. As her parents' relationship became more strained, the young Bourgeois found herself in the middle of a tug of war, with each parent vying for the affection of their favourite child. Commenting on her father Bourgeois says, "we had a tradition of father's ebullient style, men in the family always were quite a character. The

had many mistresses."(Gardner, 1994, p.17). Of her mother Bourgeois says, "Maman gave me confidence. I still remember her love and being held closely. My father would often make me feel small. Then Maman would explain, 'Men are like children. You have to humour them.' " (Gardner, 1994, p.17). Although Bourgeois was very close to her mother, it disturbs Bourgeois greatly even to this day that her mother put up with and accepted her father's affairs. "Maman was very practical, as are most French women. My father had his affairs which she ignored, but it had an effect on all of us." (Gardner, 1994, p.17).

When Bourgeois' mother became ill the family spent winters in the south of France and it was here that Bourgeois' father met and then took as his mistress, Sadie. She came to live in the family home as the childrens governess. She was supposed to teach them English but she was really there for the father. Bourgeois still has strong emotions when she talks about the mistress:

She lived in our home. She rode in the coup with him, in the front seat. Maman and I sat in the back. I hated her. But Maman knew it was much easier to keep an eye on Papa this way. It kept him from running around... Right after the war the mistress appeared. She was introduced into the family as a teacher for Pierre and myself. And she slept with my father. The thing about Sadie is that she lived in the house. And she stayed for ten years, the formative years of my sister and myself. (Bourgeois quoted in Galleries Hauser & Wirth Homepage, 1997, p.2).

These formative years have been the source of inspiration for Bourgeois' life work, which has spanned over sixty years. Bourgeois is driven by her past. Her work is largely



had many mistresses" (Gardner, 1994, p.17). Of her mother Bourgeois says, "Maman gave me confidence, I still remember her love and being held closely. My father would often make me feel small. Then Maman would explain, Maman and his children. You have to protect them." (Gardner, 1994, p.17). Although Bourgeois was very close to her mother, it disturbs Bourgeois greatly even to this day that her mother put up with and accepted her father's affairs. "Maman was very practical, as are most French women. My father had his affairs which she ignored, but it had an effect on all of us" (Gardner, 1994, p.17).

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These formative years have been the source of inspiration for Bourgeois' life work which has spanned over sixty years. Bourgeois is drawn by her past. Her work is largely

autobiographical and she states that all her work finds inspiration in the early years of her life. Referring to Bourgeois' approach to her art, particularly her carved stone pieces, Gardner comments that "Bourgeois is on a psychological dig." (Gardner, 1994, p.15). Bourgeois also states that anger and hatred of the mistress, the intruder in their home, are motivating forces in her work:

The story of Sadie is to me almost as important as the story of my mother in my life. The motivation is a negative reaction against her... It shows that it is really the anger that makes me work. I'm not very good at talking about the mistress because by now, half a century later I have overcome the effect she had on us and I can now take her with a little grain of salt. So I am not terribly passionate or excited about her.' (Bourgeois quoted in Galleries Hauser & Wirth Homepage, 1997, p.2)

Bourgeois felt betrayed by both parents; by her father who deceived and tormented her, and by her mother because she accepted his deceitfulness. Bourgeois comments:

Now you will ask me: How is it in a middle class family this mistress was a standard furniture? Well the reason is that my mother tolerated it! And this is the mystery... I was betrayed not only by my father dammit but by her too. It was double betrayal. I'm sorry to get so excited but, I still react to it... my father betrayed us by not being what he was supposed to be. First of all by abandoning us and going off to war and then by finding another woman and introducing her to us. It is just a matter of, the rules of the game are such, that a minimum of conformity is expected. (Bourgeois quoted in Galleries Hauser & Wirth Homepage, 1997, p.2)



autobiographical and she takes this as her work. In the early years of her life, Houghton's approach to her art, particularly her choice of subjects, is very much that of a "psychological dig" (Gardner, 1994, p. 13). Houghton also states that anger and hatred of the masses, the number of her home, and her own forces in her work.

The story of *Edith* is to me almost an important episode of my mother's life. The revelation is a negative reaction against her. It shows that it is really the anger that makes me work. I'm not very good at talking about the masses because by now, half a century later, I have overcome the effect she had on me and I can now take her with a little grain of salt. So I can not really speak about her except about her. (Houghton, quoted in Gardner, 1994, p. 13)

Houghton was betrayed by both parents, by her father who deserted and committed her, and by her mother because she accepted his deal, the thought of comments.

Why you will ask me, how is it in a middle class family this mother was a standard function? Well, the reason is that my mother believed in and did in the 1930s. I was betrayed not only by my father, but also by her. It was a double betrayal. I'm sorry to have said that. I still react to it. My father betrayed me by his being what he was supposed to be. First of all by allowing me to go off to school and then by finding out that I was and producing her to be. It is just a matter of the mix of the same we speak of a transition in continuity is needed. (Houghton, quoted in Gardner, 1994, p. 13)

Bourgeois explains that she grew up in an environment where very little was hidden from her. As a child she had to endure a tense home atmosphere. What is evident from her comments about her early life, is her helplessness as a child, her inability to affect the situation. Her parents betrayed the trust that exists between parents and their children.

Trust is something that is important to me. When it is not there I am frightened, I retreat, I hide... Later my mind as an artist was conditioned by that affair, by my jealousy of that dreadful intruder. (Bourgeois quoted in *Galleries Hauser & Wirth Homepage*, 1997, p.2)

Both Dora and Bourgeois had been their father's favourites, but when they reached adolescence they lost the love and respect they had for their fathers: Dora felt that she was being used by her father in an attempt to pacify his mistress' husband. Bourgeois was caught in the middle of a tug of love; each one trying to outdo the other, vying for her attention. Both fathers had deceived their daughters by having an affair with their children's governess, whose supposed role was to teach and protect their charges, and had a total disregard for their children's feelings by allowing adultery into the family home. Every adult in a position of trust had let them down.

Freud described Dora's mother as neurotic, but Bourgeois describes her mother's action at one time as hysterical. When her father went off to fight in the 1st World War:

My mother got hysterical as soon as he was gone. She proceeded to follow him from camp to camp and she dragged me along... He got himself wounded and landed in Chartres hospital... Now a new phase appeared in my mother's life. She became jealous of the nurses at the



Bourgeois explains that she grew up in an environment where very little was hidden from her. As a child she had to conduct a wide home atmosphere. What is evident from her comments about her early life is her helplessness as a child, her inability to affect the situation. Her parents betrayed the trust that exists between parents and their children.

Trust is something that is important to me. When I was a child I was frightened. I trust I had. I was not afraid as an adult was conditioned by that often by my jealousy of the deceased mother. (Bourgeois quoted in Galanter & Wirth Hompage, 1997, p. 2)

Both Leonard and Bourgeois had been their father's favorites. But when they reached adolescence they lost the love and respect they had for their father. Leonard felt that she was being used by her father in an attempt to pacify his mistress, husband. Bourgeois was caught in the middle of a tug of love; each one trying to win the other, vying for her attention. Both fathers had deceived their daughters by having an affair with their children's governess, whose supposed role was to teach and protect their charges, and had a total disregard for their children's feelings by allowing adultery into the family home. Every adult in a position of trust had let them down. Leonard described Leonard's mother as maternal, but Bourgeois describes her mother's action at one time as hysterical. When her father went off to fight in the 1st World War:

My mother got hysterical as soon as he was gone. She proceeded to follow him from camp to camp and she begged me along. He got himself wounded and landed in a Chinese hospital. Now a new phase appeared in my mother's life. She became jealous of the nurses at the

hospital. And I felt that. I felt great tensions between them. (Bourgeois quoted in Galeries Hauser & Wirth Homepage, 1997, p.2)

Both fathers were irresponsible, selfish men, who apart from being deceitful, had caused their families anxiety, which was particularly stressful for their young daughters. However Bourgeois learnt to adapt to this situation, indeed her life's work has a cathartic element, where over and over her work revolves around the theme of her childhood. Bourgeois has always been able to adapt. "I learnt the way to survive is to make yourself indispensable to someone else. My father needed me. I pleased him. I was never rejected, but it often made me sad." (Gardner, 1994, p.19)

Dora and Bourgeois were two highly intelligent young women with aspirations of going onto further education and this is where their stories diverge. Bourgeois was privileged over Dora in that she was able to attend university. Aged twenty, Bourgeois studied at the Sorbonne, in Paris, in the same year her mother died. Mathematics represented a world of order she sought. From this point Bourgeois began a journey that would lead to her finding a means of expressing all her anger, jealousy and fear; the very same feelings that Dora expressed through her hysteric symptoms.

Paris in the 1930s was experiencing a golden age culturally. The atmosphere was bohemian, this culminated in the emergence of surrealist and cubist movements. In 1936 when she was twenty five Bourgeois began to study art and art history, at the Ecole des Beaux- Arts and the Grande Chaumiere in Montparnasse. "In order to stand unbearable family tensions, I had to express my anxiety with forms that I could change, destroy and rebuild." "The



hospital. And I felt that I felt great tension between them. (Hougeon, quoted in Glick, *Class & War*, Montpelier, 1977, p. 3)

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atmosphere was alive and you had to prove that you had something to say."(Gardner, 1999, p.22).

From this point Bourgeois 'never looked back', or more correctly - always looked back to her childhood for her art, but it was liberating. "Art gives Bourgeois the ability to pay the debt to her past and no longer be a prisoner to her memories." (Sculpture,1996, p.61). Bourgeois was able to empower herself, to turn the tide. Through her work Bourgeois was able to speak, to vent her feelings of anger, jealousy and hatred. "It seems to me that art is created with a capacity for feeling, for processing pain, and expressing experience and memory." (Bourgeois quoted in Gardner, 1994, p.40). This "processing of pain" is illustrated in Bourgeois' description of her first "sculptural solution" which is directly related to her feelings about her father:

Once when we were sitting together at the dining table, I took white bread, mixed it with spit, and molded a figure of my father. When the figure was done, I started cutting off the limbs with a knife. I see this as my first sculptural solution. (October, 1995, p.71).

A "sculptural solution" in Bourgeois' terms is one that performs an aggressive or desiring operation on an object and is repeated over and over again in an attempt to free herself from early experiences of fear and hatred. Bourgeois states that "you just have to abandon every day your past. And accept it. And if you can't accept it then you have to do sculpture." (Galerie Hauser & Wirth Homepage, 1997, p.2)

Bourgeois has in recent years made, hysteria the subject of her work. This body of work is probably Bourgeois' most significant to date. A development can be seen Bourgeois' Work.



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Bourgeois has in recent years made history the subject of her work. This body of work is probably Bourgeois' most significant to date. A development can be seen Bourgeois' work

Her early works as 'self-examinations' of her childhood have informed the proceeding work which presents a critical analysis of hysteria. The combination of these elements in Bourgeois' work have insured that it is wholly inclusive body of work unlike Freud's case study of Dora which failed to look beyond the narrow patriarchal perimeters.

In Bourgeois' "Arch of hysteria" (1993), fig.4, the artist refers directly to Charcot's observations and analysis of hysteric 'female' patients. Yet this piece can be seen as a critical reaction to Charcot's assumptions. Bourgeois' bronze figure leans backwards in an arch, hands are nearly touching feet. The piece depicts a headless male figure which is dangling, suspended in mid air. The piece mocks Charcot and Freud, for here we have the spectacle of the hysteric dance, dangling, suspended, on show; as were the women in Charcot's public lectures. Yet Bourgeois challenges these "great" psychiatrists, for Bourgeois puts on display a male hysteric and calls into question Charcot's and Freud's assumptions about femininity. Bourgeois states that the connection between hysteria and sickness in women is a "superstition based on Charcot and Freudian theory." (Bienal De Sao Paulo Homepage, 1997, p.3) Bourgeois' figure is headless and therefore speechless, we read the piece through the hysteric's body, but just like Charcot's female patients, he is powerless, suspended, trapped.

Bourgeois' series of work "Cells"(1991-1996), including fig.5&6, and related works such as "Precious Liquids"(1989), fig.7, are made from mesh, iron cages, doors or windows fitted together to form individual installations, into which are placed sculptural works. Rather than placing her work in a given area Bourgeois creates a self contained, architectural space which is a



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political parameters.

In Bourgeois' 'Arch of Hysteria' (1957) she said  
refers directly to Charcot's observations and analysis of hysteria  
remains present. Yet this piece can be seen as a critical reaction to  
Charcot's assertions. Bourgeois' phrase 'figure heads backwards'  
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about femininity. Bourgeois states that the connection between  
hysteria and hysteria in women is a 'suspension based on Charcot  
and Freudian theory' (Bonal De Saunier Holograph, 1997, p. 3).  
Bourgeois' figure is headless and therefore speechless, we read the  
piece through the hysteric's body, but just like Charcot's female  
patients, he is powerless, suspended, unposed.

Bourgeois' series of work 'Cells' (1991-1998) including  
'Head' and related works such as 'Hysteria' (1997)  
(1997) are made from mesh, iron cages, doors or windows that  
connect to form individual installations, and which are placed  
sculptural works. Rather than placing her work in a given area  
Bourgeois creates a self-contained architectural space which is a





Fig.4 "Arch of Hysteria" (1993), Bronze,





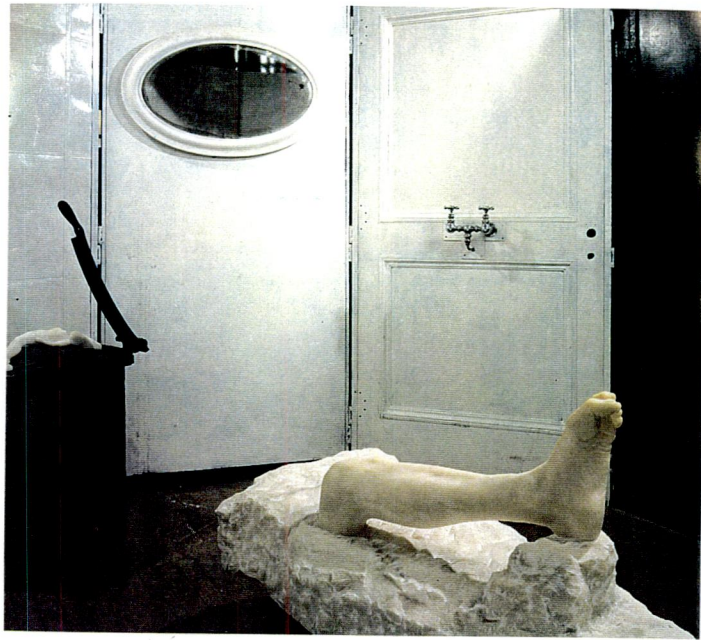


Fig.5 "Cell III." (1991)

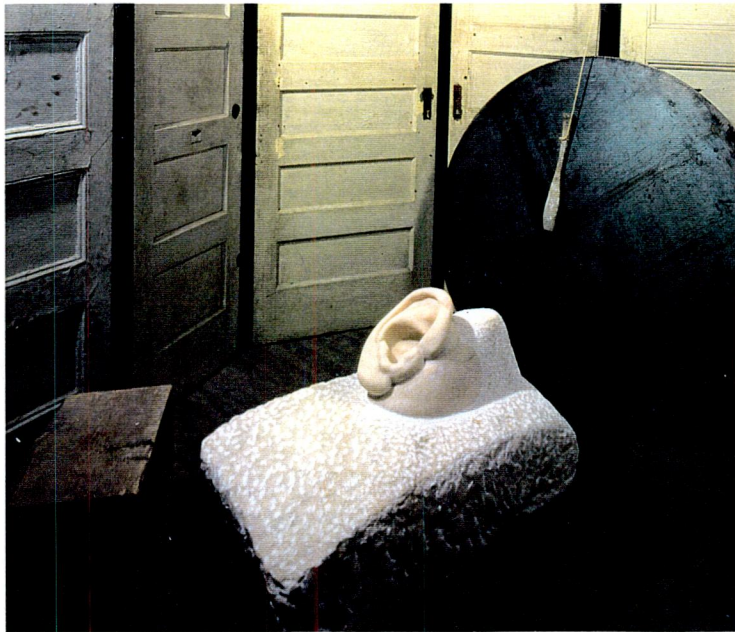


Fig.6 "Cell IV." (1991)





Fig. 2. (CIVIL) (1991)

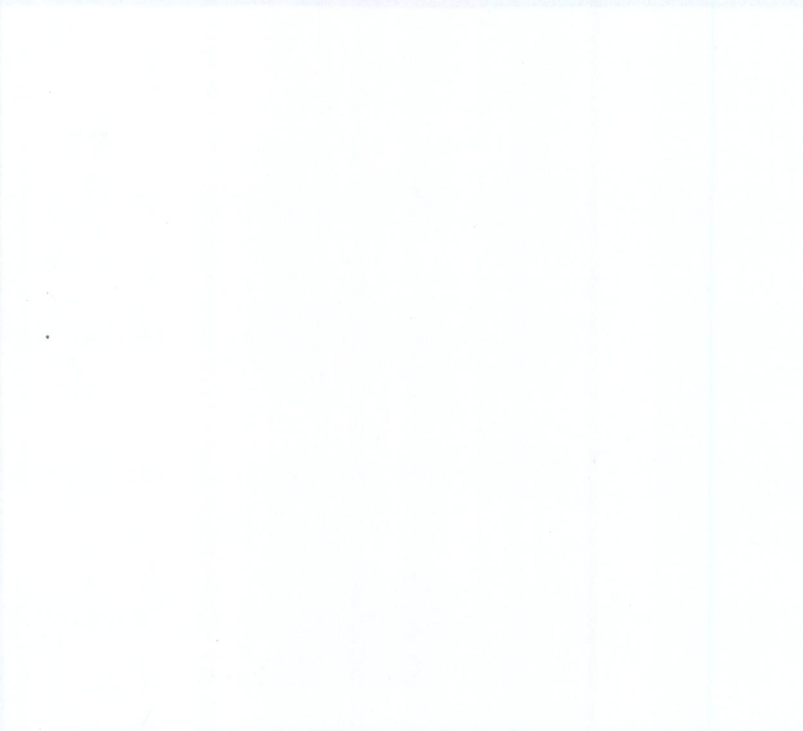


Fig. 3. (CIVIL) (1991)



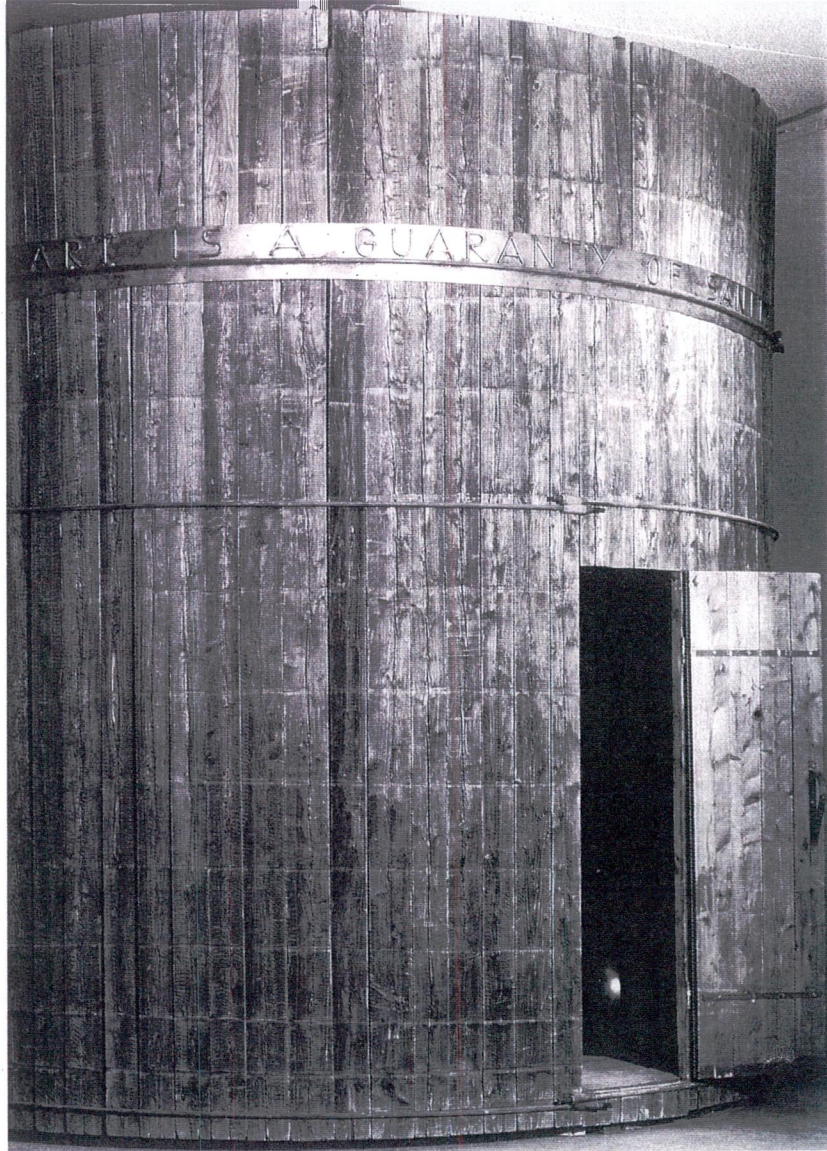
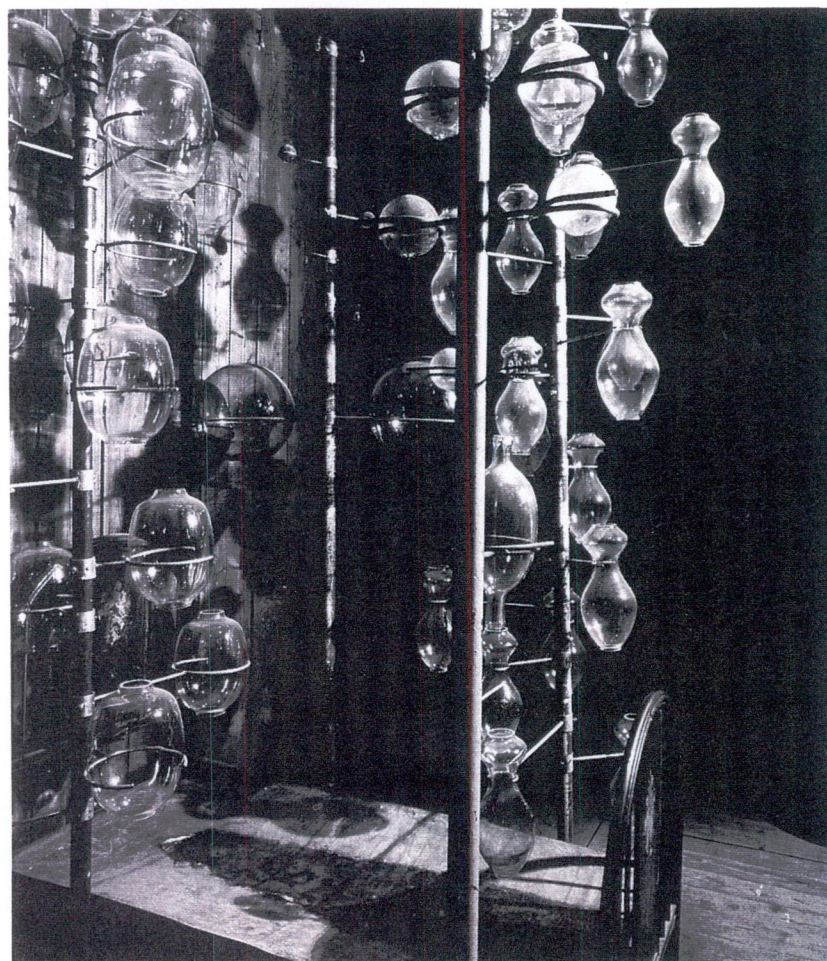
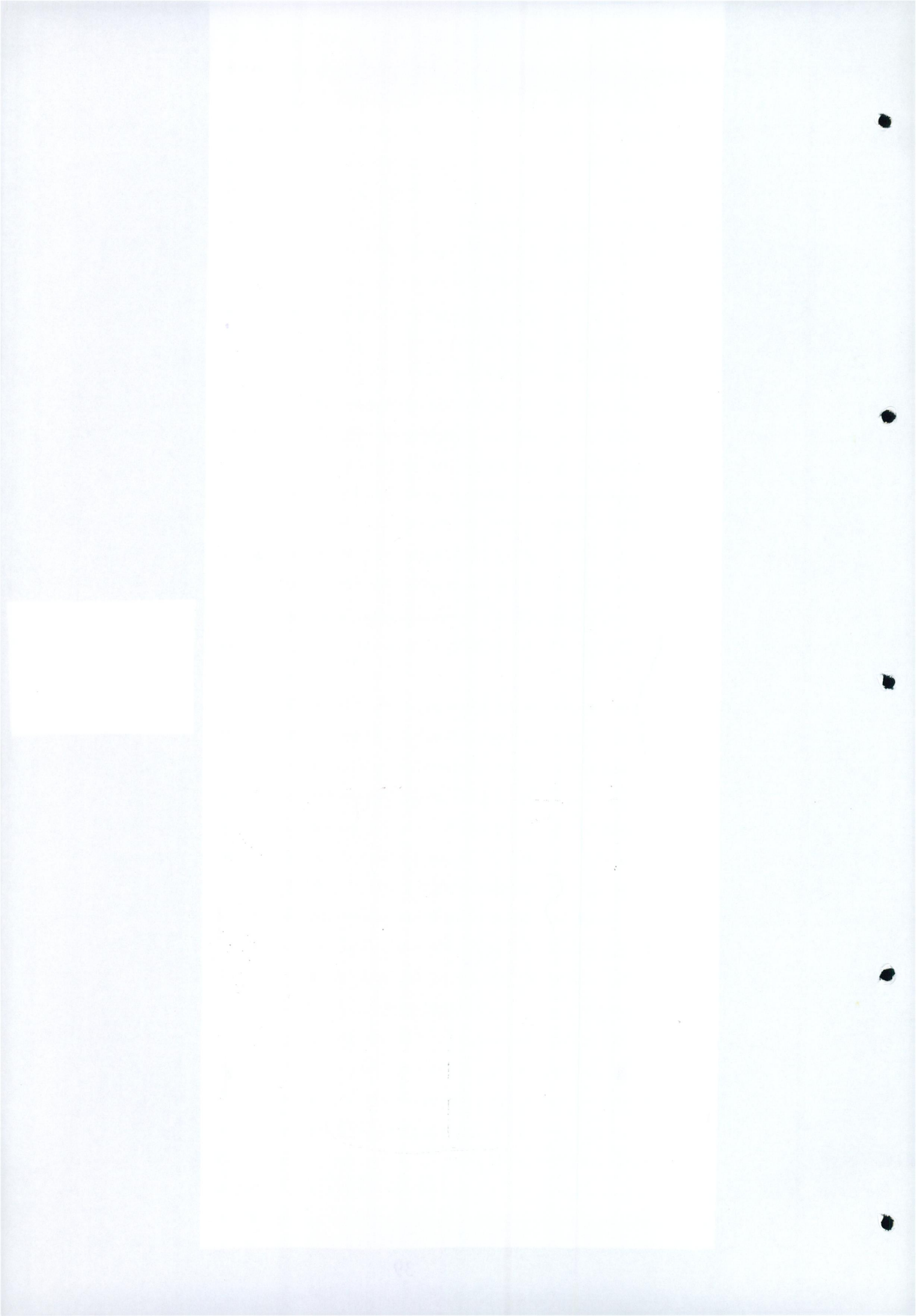


Fig.7  
"Percious Liquids"  
(1989)







materialisation of the artist's own psyche. The "Cells" protect Bourgeois from her childhood feelings of abandonment and betrayal. They provide security. At the same time the title "Cells" suggests imprisonment, they are restricted spaces. The title also suggest cells of the body, an examination of cells through a microscope, an internal examination or a corporal experience. The pieces contained within the "Cell" space are sculptures of body fragments which deal with themes of fear memory and voyeurism. They are the focus and play an ambivalent role, they are more than symbolic objects. Beautifully carved pieces of marble, its toughness disguised by its lush veneer, are juxtaposed with other materials. Similarly found objects are used to articulate and reinforce the narrative that is being presented, rather than being used as fetish objects. We are attracted to the Cells, they draw us in, yet in certain pieces they are physically closed off; we are prevented from seeing too clearly. They are liberalisations of dreams and nightmares, the beautiful and erotic and the horrendous and neurotic.

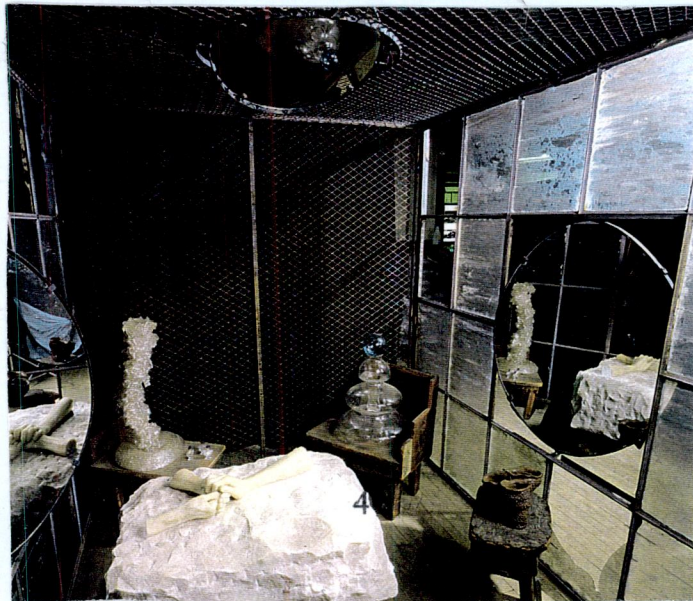


Fig.8 "Cell"(You Better Grow Up),1993



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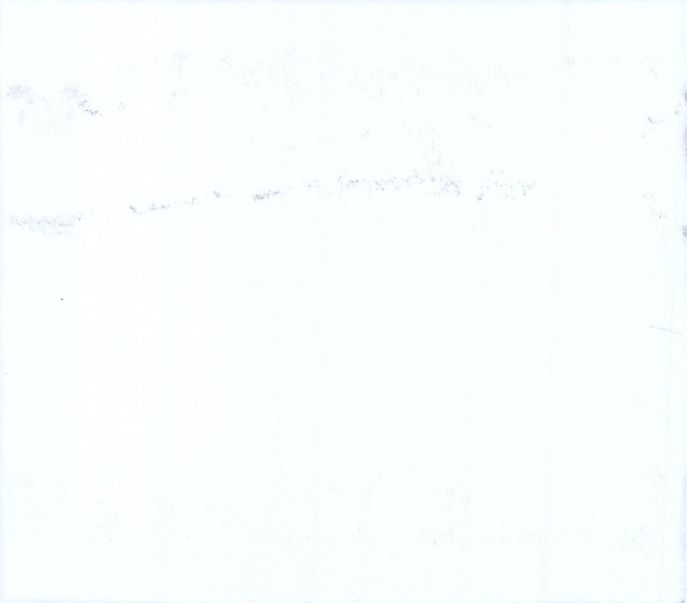


Fig. 8 "Cell" (You Better Grow Up) 1992



Bourgeois adds that being fearful "is a passive state. The goal is to be active and take control. The move is from the passive to the active. If the past is not negated in the present, you do not live."(Bourgeois quoted in Cole, 1996, p.1)

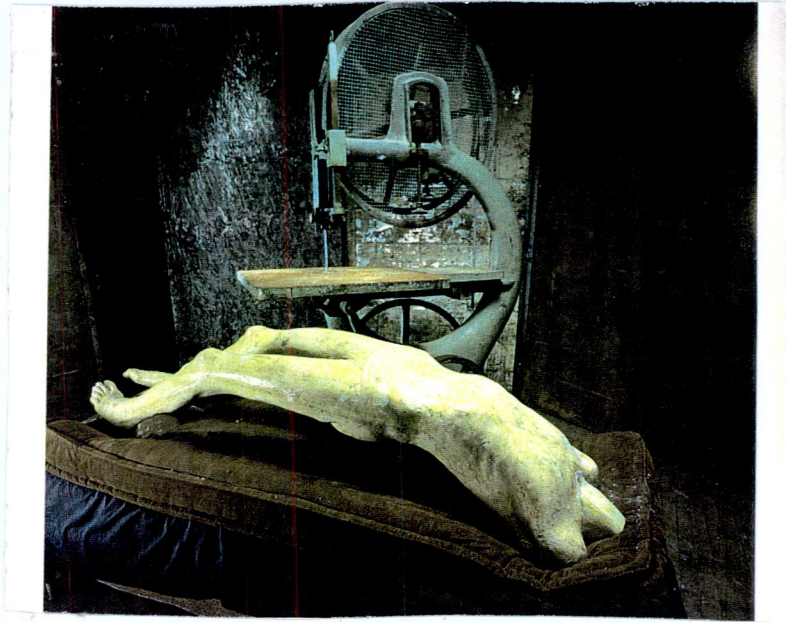


Fig.9 "Cell (Arch of Hysteria)" 1992-1993

In Bourgeois' work the same themes are repeated again and again but each time processing an alternative, processing of emotion. For example In "Cell (Arch of Hysteria)"1992-1993, fig.9, Bourgeois appropriates the hysteric arch again. In this piece the figure appears androgynous, however Bourgeois states that it is male. The artist Jenny Holzer recognises that Bourgeois':

work seems neither male nor female, but both with a vengeance. I imagine Bourgeois knows that everything is possible between people and that the unthinkable occurs routinely. (Holzer quoted in Nicoletta, 1996, p.47)



Bourgoin adds that being fearful "is a passive state. The goal is to be active and take control. The move is from the passive to the active. If the past is not negated in the present, you do not live." (Bourgoin quoted in Cole, 1993, p. 11)

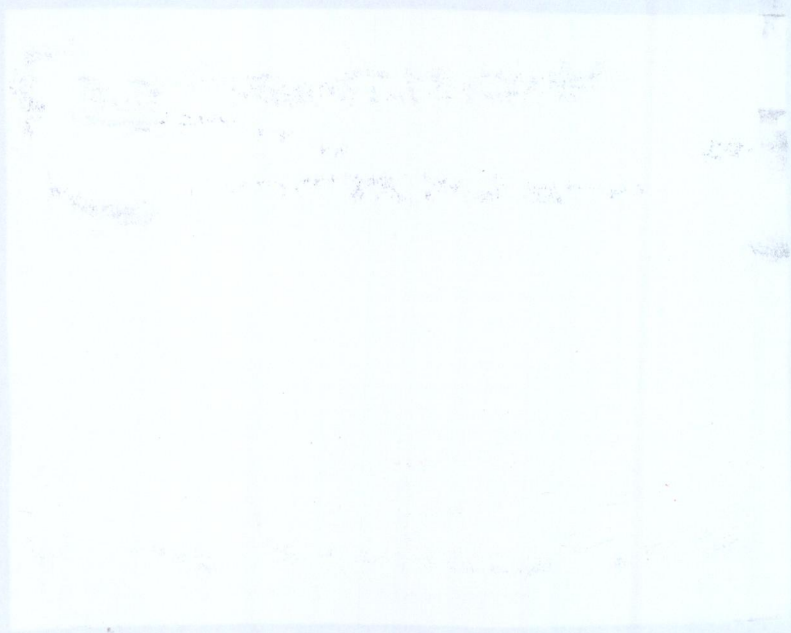


Fig. 2. "Cell (Arch of Hysteria)" 1902-1903

In Bourgoin's work the same themes are repeated again and again but each time processing an alternative processing of emotion. For example in "Cell (Arch of Hysteria)" 1902-1903, Fig. 2, Bourgoin approximates the hysterical arch again. In this piece the figure appears ambiguous. However Bourgoin states that this male. The artist Jean Holzer recognizes that Bourgoin

work seems neither male nor female, but both with a vengeance. I imagine Bourgoin knows that everything is possible between people and that the unbridgeable occurs routinely. (Holzer quoted in Nicolini, 1990, p. 25)



"Cells" (You Better Grow Up), 1993, fig.8, is an installation enclosed by fencing and windows. There are two large round mirrors, these dictate the acceptance of the self and reflect the main elements of the work, which are: a marble block with three interlocking hands carved out, these represent Bourgeois letting go of the past, a ceramic container with three openings, four round glasses and three small perfume bottles. Bourgeois comments on the various elements in the piece:

"The perfume bottles put us in a nostalgic mood with the powerful recall of smell. In our refusal to confront our fear, we retreat into nostalgia.... The tiny figure inside the stacked glass shapes is cut off from the world. That's me. The little hands are mine. They are self-portraits. I identify with the dependent one. The world that is described and realized is the frightening world of a child who doesn't like being dependent and who suffers from it. So the moral of the Cell is, you better grow up."(Bourgeois quoted in Bicoletta, 1996,p.46)

Bourgeois states that there is no cure from pill, potion or psychotherapy, for the anxieties, fears and nightmares. The only relief is to make art, but this also means that she is "condemned to an eternity of self-examination."(Bourgeois quoted in Cole, 1996, p.1). However this allows her to confront her fear, to "give it a physicality so I am able to hack away at it. Fear becomes a manageable reality."(Bourgeois quoted in Cole, 1996, p.1) Bourgeois states that:

The Cells represent different types of pain; the physical, the emotional and the psychological, and the mental and intellectual. Each Cell deals with fear. Fear is pain often it is not perceived as pain, because it is always disguising itself." (Bourgeois quoted in Cole, 1996, p.1)



Cole's (1996) *How to Grow Old* is an installation enclosed by fencing and windows. There are two large round mirrors, these distorts the acceptance of the self and reflect the main elements of the work which are a marble block with three protruding hands carved out. These represent Bourgeois' letting go of the past, a ceramic container with three openings, four round glasses, and three small perfume bottles. Bourgeois comments on the various elements in the piece:

"The perfume bottles put us in a nostalgic mood with the powerful recall of smell. In our refusal to abandon our past we transfer into nostalgia. The tiny hands inside the stacked glass shapes is cut off from the world that's in. The little hands are mine. They are self-contained. I identify with the dependent one. The world that is described and realized is the frightening world of a child who doesn't like being dependent and who suffers from it. So the mirror of the Cell is you better grow up" (Bourgeois quoted in Ficolens 1996, p. 48)

Bourgeois states that there is no cure from pain, poison or psychotherapy for the anxieties, fears and nightmares. The only relief is to make art. But this also means that she is "concerned to an extent of self-examination" (Bourgeois quoted in Cole 1996, p. 1). However, this shows her to confront her fear to give it a physicality and to be able to look away at it. She becomes a narcissistic reality (Bourgeois quoted in Cole 1996, p. 1). Bourgeois states that:

"The Cells represent different types of pain, the physical, the emotional and the psychological, and the mental and intellectual. Each cell deals with fear. Fear is pain often it is not perceived as pain because it is always distancing itself" (Bourgeois quoted in Cole 1996, p. 1)

Bourgeois says that this piece is:

Really about tension, the body. The fact that it is a man is not terribly important. It is a remark about the hysterical, and in the time of Jean Martin Charcot, any ill, any disease, was attributed to hysteria, to be precise, and hysteria was attributed to women, which was absurd.... The large object in [this piece] is a saw; you know arms were cut, heads were cut.... And you don't know exactly what, but something vibrates in you; you see that everything has been cut, so you cut the poor creature, because you have been cut off from your past. It is a move from the passive to the active. In my art I'm the murderer. (Bourgeois quoted in Steir, 1993, p.87)

Bourgeois has never been content with being silenced. As a child she was helpless, but as an artist she is a rebel. "She revels in controversy and scandals that tweak the establishment"(Bourgeois quoted in Gardner, 1994, p.27). In 1989 Robert Mapplethorpe's photographic work was causing an up-roar. Bourgeois had posed years earlier for him. She wore a fluffy fake fur and held a plaster and latex sculpture that resembles a giant erect penis. The sculpture is titled "Filette"/"Little Girl" (1968), fig.10. In the photograph Bourgeois smiles mischievously. Bourgeois explains that this photograph "is a comment on the sexes 'because they are so mixed today" and is also suggestive of self-invented possession and power over the phallus. The "Filette" (1968), fig.11, sculpture was made in response to her father's mockery of her lack of penis. Bourgeois originally displayed this piece on a hook. Ironically this photograph of Bourgeois has often been reproduced with the phallus cropped out, as if to make the image more palatable or as an attempt to silence Bourgeois. But even when the photograph is cropped, the



Really about tension, the body. The fact that it is a man  
is not terribly important. It is a woman about the  
historical, and in the case of Jean Aron, Chavet, and  
of any others, was attributed to history, to be precise,  
and history was attributed to women, which was  
there. The large object in [the piece] is a man, you  
know, that was cut, heads were cut. And you don't  
know exactly when, but something comes in you, you  
see that everything has been cut, so you cut the body  
because you have been cut off from your past.  
It is a move from the passive to the active, in my opinion.  
The numbers (10 pages) quoted in (2000, p. 87)

Thompson has never been content with being a student. As a child  
she was helped, but as an artist she is a rebel. She works in  
collaboration and research that breaks the traditional boundaries  
of art. In 1989 Robert Rauschenberg had passed  
photographic work was common in the 1970s. Thompson had passed  
years earlier for her. She wore a flirty look for and held a playful  
and lack sculptural that resembles a giant great penis. The sculpture  
is titled "Henry's Table (Art)" (1988-1990) in the photograph  
Thompson makes a sculpture. Thompson explains that the  
photograph is a comment on the ways that the art is created  
today, and is suggestive of self-mutilated obsession and power  
over the object. The "Henry's Table" (1988) (Fig. 11) sculpture was made  
in response to her father's mockery of her lack of penis. Thompson  
originally displayed this piece on a table, however, the photograph  
of Thompson has often been reproduced with the penis replaced  
with a phallus to make the image more palatable or as an attempt to  
soften Thompson. But even when the photograph is stopped, the

sweetly smiling old lady is still in control of power, this is a false representation and Bourgeois smile hides what is really under her arm.



Fig. 10 "Louise Bourgeois" (1982) by Robert Mapplethorpe



... ..  
... ..

... ..

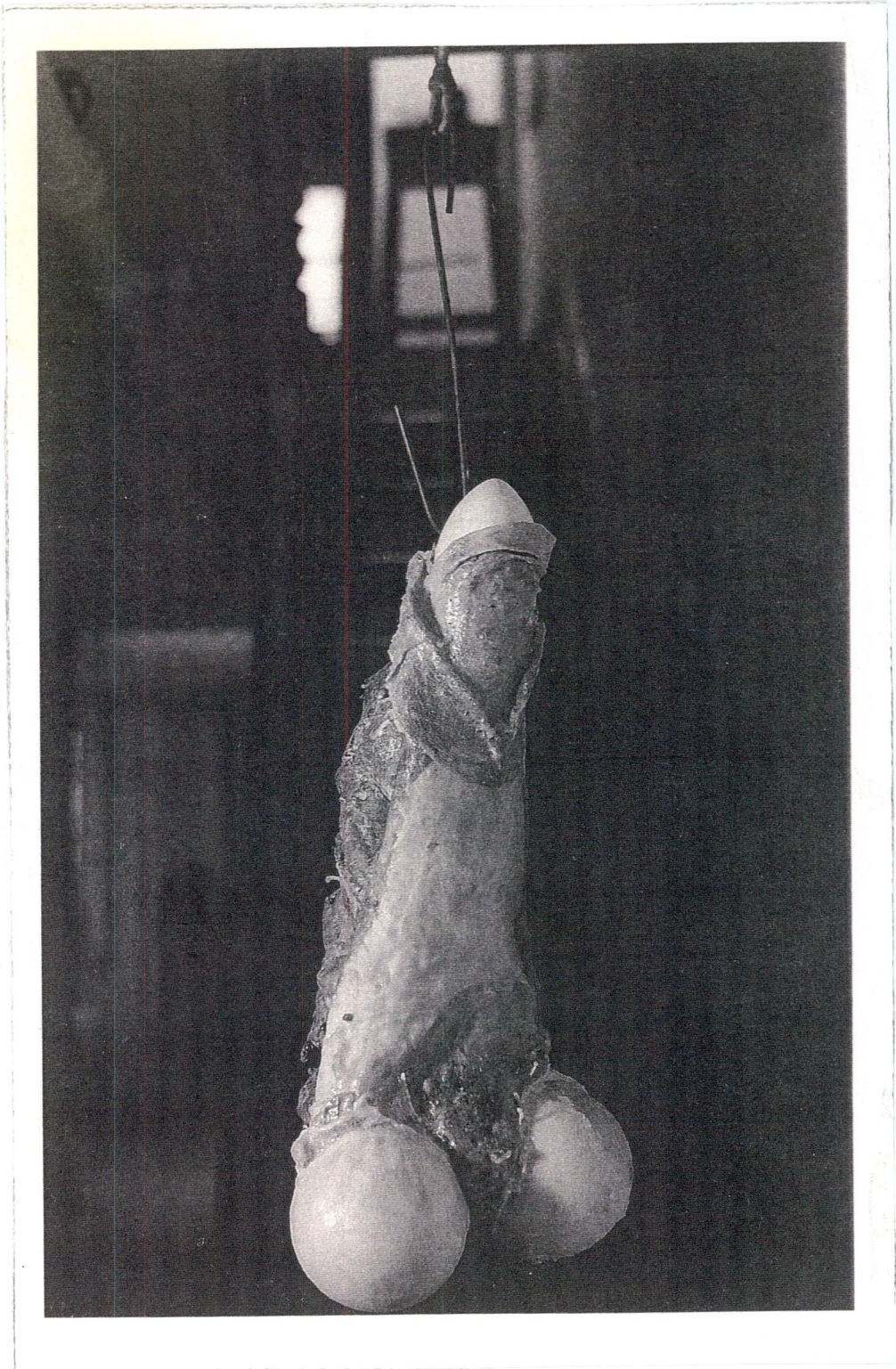


Fig. 11 "Filette" (1968)



11. (b) (5) - Exemption

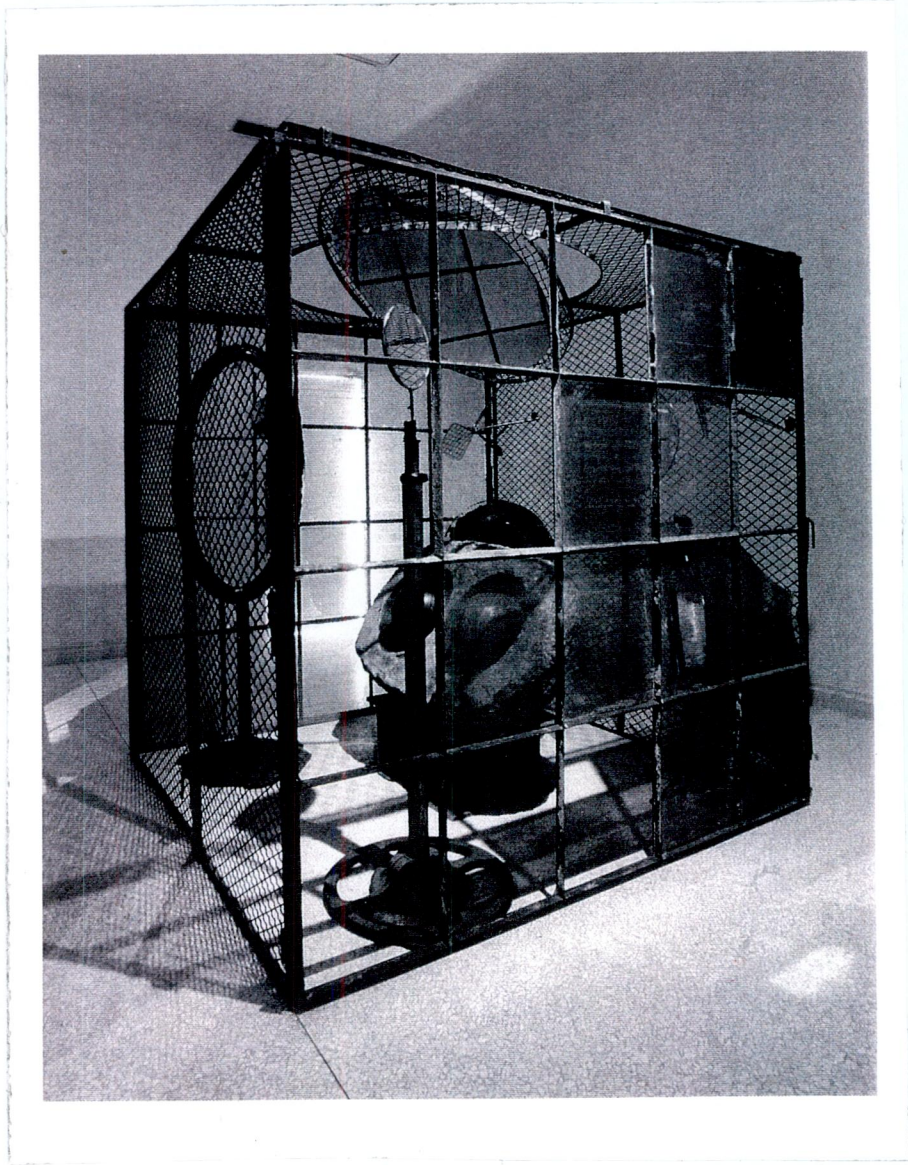


Fig. 12 "Cell (Eyes & Mirrors)" (1990-1993)





Fig. 12 "Cell Types of Mammals" (1990-1991)



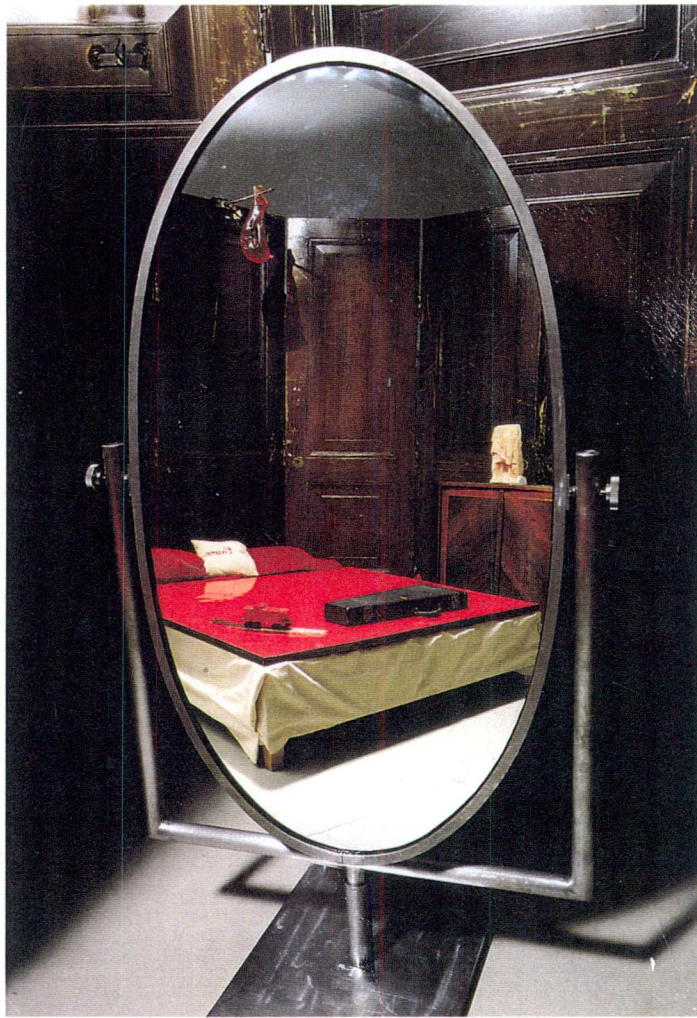


Fig. 13  
"Red Room (Parent)"  
(1994)



Fig. 14  
"Cell (Hands & Mirror)"  
(1995)



For 1971  
R. L. ...  
1971

1971  
R. L. ...  
1971

## CONCLUSION

Bourgeois' recent work is a profound indication of the magnitude of her success as an artist and as "a woman speaking in different ways." Despite the similarities between Dora and Bourgeois, Bourgeois has escaped Dora's fate. Bourgeois has empowered herself through her work, she has stated that in her work there is an element of catharsis. In her recent work Bourgeois has not only performed a self examination, whereby she delves into her memories for inspiration, but has also interrogated Charcot's and Freud's interpretations of hysteria.

Bourgeois' work embraces domestic objects and makes the private arena public and in doing so challenges patriarchal structures. Bourgeois investigates gendered spaces where the public space is seen as man's territory and the private the woman's domain. Bourgeois focuses on the domestic site and in doing so her work questions, "the social partitioning of space in public and private spheres" (Spector, 1992, p.72). The home signifies comfort and safety but it also stands for what is not revealed, what is hidden, suppressed and censored.

If woman's place is in the home, one must ask exactly what is being sublimated in this... environment and how does this phenomenon of repression contribute to the cultural construction of femininity."(Spector,1992, p.72)

Significantly Bourgeois' work also presents a way out of the hysteric bind. Bourgeois defiantly states: "The artist is not neurotic. To be an artist is a guarantee of sanity." (Bourgeois quoted in Gardner, 1994, p.35). Martin Puryear when discussing Bourgeois,



## CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the present study has shown that the relationship between the amount of her mother's work and her own work is a complex one. It is suggested that the relationship between her work and her mother's work is not simply a matter of the amount of her mother's work, but also of the quality of her mother's work. It is suggested that the relationship between her work and her mother's work is also a function of the quality of her mother's work. It is suggested that the relationship between her work and her mother's work is also a function of the quality of her mother's work.

It is suggested that the relationship between her work and her mother's work is also a function of the quality of her mother's work. It is suggested that the relationship between her work and her mother's work is also a function of the quality of her mother's work. It is suggested that the relationship between her work and her mother's work is also a function of the quality of her mother's work. It is suggested that the relationship between her work and her mother's work is also a function of the quality of her mother's work. It is suggested that the relationship between her work and her mother's work is also a function of the quality of her mother's work.

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says that "her work relates to the human condition". She even has said, "I'm in the business of pain". "But ultimately she is a survivor. Her work is a tool for survival, a means of putting the pain out and dealing with it. Bourgeois is a person who talks about pain, but her stance is not at all a stance of a victim."

Although her recognition was a long time coming; Bourgeois along with other feminist artists challenged the structures of the male dominated art world. Bourgeois has been making work consistently since the 1940s, but it was not until 1982 at the age of seventy, after years of marginalisation, Bourgeois received critical acclaim with her first retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In 1993, Bourgeois represented the U.S. in the Venice Biennale. Bourgeois is now considered one of the world's most important and influential artists.

By contrast Dora gained fame by being one of Freud's patients. The extensive feminist texts on Dora have focused in on Freud's interpretations and have little concern with her life after Freud. It could be argued that they ironically have simply added to Freud's interpretations. Bourgeois channelled hysteric energy into art. Dora failed to do this, by contrast Dora became a life long sufferer of hysterical symptoms.

Toril Moi provides a possible explanation as to why Dora was unable to direct her hysteria less destructively:

Hysteria is not, (as Cixous claims), the incarnation of the revolt of women forced to silence but rather a declaration of defeat, the realization that there is no other way out. Hysteria is, as Catherine Clement perceives a cry for help when defeat becomes real, when the woman sees that she is efficiently gagged and



and that the world exists in the human condition. The even less  
could this be the nature of man? This ultimately was a question  
that was a test for survival, a means of putting the past out and  
dealing with the future as a person who took control over his  
fate, not in the sense of a victim.

Although his reputation was a long time coming, Bourgeois  
along with other feminist artists challenged the structures of the  
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consistently since the 1940s, but it was not until 1982 in the age of  
postmodernism that many of his paintings, Bourgeois received critical  
acclaim with his first retrospective exhibition at the Museum of  
Modern Art, New York. In 1983, Bourgeois represented the U.S.  
in the Venice Biennale. Bourgeois is now considered one of the  
world's most important and influential artists.

In contrast, Goss gained fame by being one of the first  
female artists to have her work shown in a gallery. The artist's feminist texts on Goss have focused on  
female consciousness and have little concern with her life after  
1960. It could be argued that her conceptually heavy work was  
feminist in nature. Bourgeois' channelled female energy into  
her work which is to the by contrast Goss became a life long  
sufferer of personal problems.

Both also provide a possible explanation as to why Bourgeois  
was able to succeed but Goss has been relatively

Hysteria is not the Cixous claim, the resolution of  
the revolt of women, hence to silence that under a  
discussion of desire, the realization that there is no  
other way, the Hysteria is as (Luce Irigaray) Cixous  
pursues a way for help which itself becomes real when  
the woman sees that she is ultimately gagged and

chained to her feminine role. (Toril Moi quoted in Bernheimer and Kahane, 1995, p.192)

Dora's hysteria would seem indeed to be a 'declaration of defeat'. When Dora was first presented to Freud, he declared that she suffered from a case of "Petite hysterie" and that her symptoms were considerably less severe than the dramatic "Grande hysterie" with which Charcot was associated. However Freud's treatment and all subsequent treatments by other doctors were failures. Dora's hysteria as a protesting force was destructive and ultimately destroyed her life.



...found in her journal (Lloyd, 1992, p. 192).  
Lloyd's history would seem indeed to be a history of  
... When Lloyd was first diagnosed as having the disorder that  
... and that her symptoms  
... low severity than the chronic CM mood history  
... however, Lloyd's treatment  
... and all subsequent treatments by other doctors were failures.  
Lloyd's history as a thinking person was described in and discussed  
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