

# TRUTH AND ERROR IN FREUD'S SCREEN MEMORIES\*

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The paper aims to demonstrate the significance of screen memories from the perspective of contemporary psychoanalysis and memory research. It is well-known that Freud repudiated his early trauma theory, more precisely the seduction theory, in September 1897. However, during the interval of his last paper on seduction and the letter of its refutation, he formulated rudimentary ideas on screen memories in his unpublished drafts. In this short period, he regarded fantasy as the intrinsic element of, and not the alternative to, traumatic seduction. These drafts focus on the fusion of memory and fantasy, which creates defensive structures for concealing traumatic experi-

ences. He also considered the errors of these pseudo memories, nevertheless, he claimed that a fragment of truth is preserved in these mental states. The paper examines these early ruminations of Freud and the Jungian idea of retrogressive fantasy. Both Freud and Jung tried to discover the element of truth behind the façade of fantasy. The presentation also discusses recent studies on screen memory from the viewpoints of dual-coding theory. Contemporary psychoanalytical approaches argue that screen memories might establish a connection between implicit and explicit memories, and Freud was preoccupied with the implicit memory traces of traumas.

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**KEYWORDS:** *psychoanalysis, seduction theory, screen memory, implicit memory, trauma*

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## Introduction

The recovered memory debate dominated the psychoanalytic and clinical psychological discussions in the 1990s. Elizabeth Loftus and others demonstrated that episodic memory is fallible, and subjects can be easily misguided by suggestive questions [Kris 1956, Loftus 1994, Schacter 1996]. In the psychoanalytic discourse, Donald Spence argued that Freud was unable to convincingly separate the veridical core of a real memory from the subsequent distortion. Experimental research on memory demonstrated that our memory is vulnerable to interfering stimuli, and the so-called “substitutive memories” are much more frequent than we think [Spence 1984: 89-91].<sup>1</sup> The heated debates around recovered memory concluded that the memories of traumatic abuse are the results of therapeutic suggestions. Brewin and Andrews categorized the main problems of memory recovery: 1] the memory may not correspond to an actual event; 2] small minority of memories comprise an unusual content [e.g., satanic ritualistic abuse, UFO abduction, etc.]; 3] the memories that occur in therapies cannot be corroborated; 4] poorly trained practitioners have misconceptions about the nature of autobiographical memory [Brewin and Andrews 1998: 957]. However, the authors also argued that memory recovery can be seen as a robust phenomenon both inside and outside the therapeutic situation. The dual-coding theory of memory, including the distinction between implicit and explicit memories, provided a new perspective for memory research.

The aim of the present paper is not the meticulous analysis of the recovered or false memory debate. Instead, it focuses on the tangential problem of screen memory and Freud’s early drafts concerning the relationship between fantasy and memory.<sup>2</sup> The paper does not focus on issues of clinical psychology but rather tries to explicate Freud’s

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1 Spence underscores the idea that memory distortions are not only the results of dynamic factors but may occur due to the similarity and contiguity of subsequent events. Spence 1984: 91.

2 Mahon provided the concise definition of screen memory based on its salient “ultraclear” quality: “A screen memory is a subjective experience of a memorial event that seems to stand out from the flux or continuity of memory in general, as if to bring attention to itself by what Freud called its *uberdeutlich* appearance. Ironically, this show of brightness is meant to conceal more than to reveal.” [Mahon 2016: 61]

insights on the relation between fantasy and memory. Recently, John Fletcher argued that in his early drafts and letters to Wilhelm Fliess, Freud had developed the “cartography of memory-files” and examined the process of hybridization of memory and fantasy [Fletcher 2013: 51]. It is a well-known fact that Freud repudiated his early trauma theory, more precisely the seduction theory, in September 1897.<sup>3</sup> However, during the interval between the publication of his last paper on seduction [*The Aetiology of Hysteria* (1896)] and the letter of its refutation, he formulated rudimentary ideas on screen memories in his unpublished drafts and letters. In this short period, he regarded fantasy as the intrinsic element of, and not the alternative to, traumatic seduction. These drafts focus on the fusion of memory and fantasy, which creates defensive structures for concealing traumatic experiences. He also considered the errors of these pseudo memories; nevertheless, he claimed that a fragment of truth is preserved in these special mental states. The paper examines these early ruminations of Freud and the Jungian concept of retrogressive fantasy. Both Freud and Jung tried to discover the element of truth behind the façade of fantasy. The paper also discusses recent studies on screen memory from the viewpoints of dual-coding theory. Recent psychoanalytical approaches argue that screen memories might establish a connection between implicit and explicit memories and that Freud was preoccupied with the implicit memory traces of traumas.

### ***Proto screen memories in Freud’s early drafts***

In his early period, Freud wanted to find the original traumatic event that eventuated neurosis but was also well aware of the process of memory distortions. In his unpublished drafts, he admitted that it seemed impossible to reconstruct the chronological order of traumatic memories.

Freud found different solutions to the difficulties of excavating authentic memories. For instance, in *The Aetiology of Hysteria* (1896),

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3 Schimek argued that it is a simplification to interpret the act of repudiation as a radical shift of emphasis from the etiological role of the perverse father, including real events of seduction, to the role of fantasies containing fragments of the past. In Freud’s reported findings, the father was not the most frequent seducer, and the symptom formation was a complicated process not limited to the role of seduction. Moreover, internal psychological processes and transformation had already played a role in the seduction theory [1987: 939].

he contends that emotional living out or enactment of scenes are signs of veridical memories. In the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* [1895] and *Studies in Hysteria* [1895] he ruminates over the after-wardness [*Nachträglichkeit*] of trauma. He presupposes a bidirectional temporal structure in which a retrospective understanding of a prior event—for example, an abusive encounter in childhood—makes the deferred action of the traumatic event possible. Here trauma comprises a supposedly original traumatic event, which is marginalized or forgotten, and an auxiliary moment that resembles the first and precipitates repression and symptom formation. Fletcher argues that this kind of bidirectional temporal structure, in which past and present events equally contribute to symptom formation, will be partly preserved as well as obfuscated with the introduction of screen memories. In his letter of repudiation of the seduction theory, he concludes that the presupposed original traumatic moment has an untraceable origin. Moreover, fiction, as well as true memory, can be cathected with effect. Furthermore, the introduction of the Oedipus complex gave another ground to the interpretation of traumatic seduction as a fantasy stemming from the psychosexual development of the child [Fletcher 2013: 98].

Prior to the refutation of the seduction theory, Freud has written about the defensive function of fantasy. He investigated the role of fantasy under the influence of Charcot and Breuer's cathartic method. Between 1886 and 1898, he theorized that fantasy was the intrinsic element of traumatic seduction and not the alternative explanation of that [Fletcher 2013: 89]. In drafts L, M, and N, the defensive function of fantasy is a recurrent theme. For instance, in draft L, Freud states that "...phantasies are psychological facades constructed in order to bar the way to these [primal scenes] memories. Phantasies at the same time serve the trend towards refining the memories, towards sublimating them" [Freud 1966a: 248]. Fantasies are compromise formations comprising "things that are heard" from parents and things that have been seen by the subject. We can find a more detailed account of this definition in draft M in which Freud contends that some scenes from the past are directly accessible, but others are concealed by fantasies. He also states that there are tendencies in the unconscious that make inaccessible the memory producing the symptoms.<sup>4</sup> Repression and

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<sup>4</sup> As Brewin and Andrews demonstrated, Freud was uncertain about the nature of repression. He distinguished "primary repression" from "repression proper." The first refers to an unconscious, involuntary mechanism, the second

defense against disturbing memories occur with the help of fantasy that falsifies memories through fragmentation. Fragmentation means the chronological rearrangement of memory traces that makes the reconstruction impossible. The result is an “unconscious fiction,” which is not subjected to defense and repression (Freud 1966a: 252).<sup>5</sup> Fletcher argues that Freud’s ruminations revolve around the emergence of “memorial fantasies” or “fantasmic memories” (2013: 113). Before the developmental notion of fantasy, Freud considered the process of hybridization. It is also worth mentioning that the distortion and fragmentation of memories not only serve defensive purposes but also facilitate a belated understanding of the past.

It seems reasonable to assume that the deferred action of retroactive trauma might have reverberated in Freud’s thinking even when he started to realize that fantasy may cause distortions during memory retrieval. Another important facet of these drafts is that the unconscious tendencies responsible for memory distortions can be paralleled with the process of *dreamwork*. Fletcher even calls this process of hybridization “memory work.” Freud emphasizes the defensive function of memories, but he does not yet refer here explicitly to wish fulfillment. In one of his letters to Fliess (July 7, 1898), he considered the possibility that fantasy was a vehicle by which a new experience could be projected back into the past and, therefore, the fantasied past was the mirror image of the present that “prophetically becomes the present” (Masson 1985: 320).

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is a conscious act of suppression, a kind of “after-expulsion.” Contemporary memory research characterizes primary repression as the failure of encoding information with the help of unconscious or preconscious mechanisms that block conscious processing. Repression proper, or after-expulsion, can be paralleled with the concept of “motivated forgetting” in cognitive psychology, and, therefore, it refers to the failure of storage or retrieval (Brewin and Andrews 1998: 950-951).

<sup>5</sup> The outcome of the phantasmatic distortion of memories is the cessation of symptoms. The process of fragmentation runs as follows: “A fragment of the visual scene is then joined up with a fragment of the auditory one and made into the phantasy, while the fragment left over is linked up with something else. In this way, it is made impossible to trace an earlier connection. As a result of the construction of phantasies like this [in periods of excitation] the mnemonic symptoms cease” (Freud 1966a: 252).

## *Jung and the Regression of the Libido*

Jung, in his work *Freud and Psychoanalysis* [1913], follows Freud in the abandonment of the seduction theory and relies on the concept of psychosexual development, including the Oedipal conflict. He states that the presupposed sexual traumas of children were, to a large extent, unreal. However, he also tries to defend Freud from the accusation of planting suggestions into patients, and, in line with Freud's thinking, he claims that in most cases a host of childhood trauma was only fantastic in their nature and was not rooted in actual traumatizing events [Jung 1961: 95]. Jung demonstrates his regression theory with the case study of a young girl who was jealous of her sister. At her sister's wedding, she suffered from nervous intestinal catarrh that developed into an ordinary hysteria. During therapy, perverse fantasies occurred, and she traced them back to a specific memory. She met an exhibitionist in the street when she was only eight years old. On the day of the "revelation," she dreamed of a man in a grey suit that was associated with her father's suit. Thereby, an associative link was established between the exhibitionist and the father. Another "abominable vision" occurred to her: she felt like a child and saw her father standing by her bed "in an obscene attitude" [Jung 1961: 173].

Jung argued that the patient's defense mechanism was not aimed at a memory or a cluster of memories but rather at fantasy activity with specified content. Freud argued that fiction and memory could also be cathected with psychic energy.<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein, Jung argues that the regressive libido selects memory traces of reminiscences that were only partly real, and they would gain significance later as fantasmic memories in a new context, even though entirely based on imaginary contents. Here, regressively resurfaced memory contents of fantastic nature can also be seen as authentic as the recollection of real events [Jung 1961: 162]. Jung criticized Freud's causal and reductionist account of hysteria. He argued that the search for the origins of fantasies in the past was doomed to failure. He contended that the cause of the pathogenic conflict that had manifested itself in maladjustment behavior lay mainly in the present. The history of the neurosis reveals images and scenes in the patient; however, their purpose is to pro-

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<sup>6</sup> "Whenever the libido seizes upon a certain reminiscence, we may expect it to be elaborated and transformed, for everything that is touched by the libido revives, takes on dramatic form, and becomes systematized" [Jung 1961: 175].

vide a *form* for the understanding of an actual, *dynamic* conflict [Jung 1961: 167].

Yiassemides succinctly summarizes Jung's thesis when he claims that the regressive fantasy only signifies the moment in which the event became meaningful [2014: 23]. The fantasy activity that takes place in the analysis is not the real *cause efficiens* but only a constructed explanation that gains significance in virtue of the actual psychic conflict. Yiassemides underscores that Jung's regressive fantasy is not a malfunction of the ego but a teleological orientation: regression to the past serves the purpose of improving the possible future. Furthermore, Jung's theory inspired Freud to revise the question of the primal scene that was the main ingredient of symptom formation in the «Wolf Man Case Study» [1918]. In 1917, Freud revised the study by entertaining the possibility that the memory of the primal scene was constructed during the therapeutic session. In the published version of the text, Freud admits that the scene could have been a constructed memory and not a real event [Yiassemides 2013: 24].

As we have seen previously, Freud did consider the defensive function of fantasy and stated that fiction could be confounded with real events, nonetheless, he was disturbed by Jung's idea that fantasy retroactively altered the past during retrospective meaning-making processes. Freud accepted that traumatic events might have been psychic constructs and not reconstructions, but he was devoted to the idea of psychic reality, that is, the traumatic scene exists at least in the form of *psychic reality* [Yiassemides 2013: 24-25]. Jung revised and criticized Freud's etiological formula by claiming that neither the sexual trauma nor the related incest complex could cause hysteria *per se*. Neurosis may occur when the incest complex is activated by means of the regressive dynamics of the libido; therefore, it can be seen as a retroactively constructed, regressive fantasy activity at the fluctuating border of the conscious and unconscious [Jung 1961: 168].

### ***Fantasmic memories and memorial fantasies***

John Fletcher underscores that screen memory does not denote the simple opposition of memory and fantasy but is more connected to the problem of retrospective fantasy, which is a composite image and the way it is generated is analogous to the emergence of hysterical symptoms [2013: 112-113]. Freud differentiated between *retrogressive* and *progressive* screen memories, and his paper on screen

memories examines the former.<sup>7</sup> Retrogressive screen memories are fantasmic memories or memorial fantasies comprising a recent experience or a wish covered up by a childhood scene. This latter version was meticulously examined by Freud.

Freud, in his essay on screen memories [1899], describes the intense visual expression of a green meadowland with yellow dandelions. Inside the screen, Freud discovers a mini narrative [“one rather long scene”] where his three-year old alter ego collects flowers with the cousins. At first sight the scene seems indifferent for him, so he cannot understand the reasons of its perseverance. The nucleus of the scene is that Freud’s alter-ego and his male cousin snatch away a bouquet from the female cousin. She and later the two boys run to a nearby peasant-woman who gives them a loaf of delicious bread. He finds out why this memory occurred to him. He recollects that he was visiting the same rural region at the age of 17 and stayed with a family who had been friends of his own family. At that time, he had fallen in love with their 15 years old daughter and seen everywhere the yellow color of the girl’s dress.<sup>8</sup> In this period, he fantasized about marrying the girl and living a quiet rural life with her. At the age of 20, when he revisits the grown-up cousins, his father and his uncle propose the plan of Freud marrying the female cousin and joining the uncle’s business. Freud arrives at the conclusion that two fantasies stemming from two different time periods amalgamated and projected back to early childhood. The result is the remembered screen memory. The first fantasy contains the passion of the first love and returning to his homeland, the second is centered on Freud being married to the cousin and joining the family business for prosperity and stability [Freud 1962/1899: 315].

Fletcher argues that Freud echoes the process of retrospective fantasy which concurs with his own *retrospective fantasy* conception,

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7 Interestingly, Freud claims that progressive screen memories are far more frequent than retrogressive, nonetheless, he does not provide an exhaustive account of the progressive version. Fletcher has shown that the progressive screen memories, in which a disturbing experience is moving forwards and covered over by a later scene, approximate the temporal structure of retroactive trauma [Fletcher 2013: 117].

8 Strachey adds in the editor’s note that the name of the family with whom Freud stayed was Fluss, and the girl was Gisela. The cousins in the screen memory were his nephew John and his niece Pauline. The date of the visit is misrepresented by Freud, actually he was 16 at the time of his first return to Freiburg [cf., Freud 1962/1899: 302].



which was introduced during the refutation of the seduction theory, and with Jung's *regressive fantasy* [Fletcher 2013: 144]. Freud unravels the repressed motivations behind retrospective fantasy that create a screen memory. The grabbing of flowers from the little girl symbolizes the adolescent Freud's repressed sexual desire, and the taste of the bread symbolizes the second fantasy, namely, settling down and marrying the cousin [Freud 1962/1999: 314, cf. Fletcher 2013: 114]. Fletcher points out that there is a contradiction between Freud's schematic model and the examined screen memory. The introduction of the paper defines screen memory as a metonymic [associative] relation that replaces a significant element with an insignificant one. However, the retrospective fantasy described in the paper underscores the temporal relation. It is an exceptional example that relies on metaphors, symbolism, and analogy [Fletcher 2013: 117].

As was mentioned above, Donald Spence criticized Freud because of the lack of verification of childhood seduction. Contrary to Jung, Spence focuses on the hindrances of verbal translation; if we attempt to translate a memorial or dream image, the chosen words will infiltrate the material, and we will misinterpret the image. That happens because the selected terms will arouse their own network of association. As he puts it, "Original images are never available for check, they swallowed up by a particular description – lost forever." [Spence 1984: 57]. The patient does not feel surprised when the memory occurs. According to Spence, this means that the patient has already possessed the memory in question. What has been transformed is not the memory *per se* but the skills of description and interpretation. He says provocatively: "Language is the persistent seduction." [Spence 1984: 62]. How does the significance of screen memories come into this picture? Spence claims that the advantage of screen memories is that they are more eligible to verbal descriptions. Memories tend to resemble photographs, but screen memories are like drawings, they are the stereotypic depictions of a theme, their purpose is to make a certain kind of impression. Screen memory is a mnemonic cartoon, an exaggerated piece of reality. Here Spence refers to Freud, who has accentuated the sensory vividness of screen memories.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to the schematic structure of

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<sup>9</sup> "A sort of mnemonic cartoon, it can be described as an exaggerated piece of reality in which, as in bad fiction, subtleties are erased, colors are brighter, and outlines bolder – and, indeed, Freud drew attention to the sensory vividness of the screen memory as one of its defining characteristics." [Spence 1984: 60]

screen memories, true memories are more complicated as one can find subtle gradations of light and shade. Screen memories have already gone through the process of transformation, they are compromise formations obfuscating repressed sexual feelings (Spence 1985: 61).

According to Spence, screen memories demonstrate the indeterminate and untranslatable nature of distant memories. In contrast, Fletcher underscores that Freud observed two particular features of screen memories. On the one hand, screen memories are compromise formations, but they partly remain faithful to the past. On the other hand, in contrast to the above-examined proto-screen memories, the full-blown notion of screen memory obeys the rule of wish fulfillment. In Freud's description, the intense yellow color of dandelions and the taste of the bread are signs of an overdetermined phantasmatic pleasure. Thus, the screen memory replaces the intense fantasy stemming from childhood. The scene from early childhood is only useful source material organized by a fantasy occurring at a later date (Fletcher 2013: 116).

Spence and Fletcher underscore Freud's conclusion in which he calls into question the possibility of encoding memory traces from early childhood. Freud claims that it is possible that we have only memories *relating to* childhood. Freud tries to dissect the remembered scene. He claims that the vivid flowers and the delicious taste of the bread are fantasies or, more precisely, fantasmic pleasures of the repressed and displaced wishes (marry the girl and enjoy financial stability). However, the male cousin, the peasant woman with the bread, and the nurse are elements of real memories. Fletcher observes that, at first sight, screen memory is the parallel of wish fulfillment in dreams. However, Freud *reverses* the dream model: the childhood scene is not the manifestation of a recent wish but rather the raw material of an organizing fantasy that comes from a later period (Fletcher 2013: 116). Another aporia centers on the status of childhood memory. On the one hand, Freud contends that childhood memories must be preserved to be available for rewriting and re-editing. On the other hand, the remembered scene has a spectator's perspective. The subject in the scene is not situated in the situation but observes it from an outer perspective. This observer perspective raises doubts in Freud about the return of genuine memory traces (Freud 1961/1899: 321, cf. Fletcher 2013: 119). Thus, retrogressive screen memory presupposes the raw material of the organizing wish, but the prehistoric authenticity of childhood memory traces can be called into question. Recent memory research suggested a solution to Freud's aporia.

## *Implicit Memory Traces and Screen Memory*

In contemporary neuropsychanalysis, several authors argued that Freud was on the brink of the discovery of implicit memories. Mario Mancia claimed that Freud had almost arrived at the concept of implicit memory, but, in the end, he introduced screen memory indicating the repression and displacement of memory traces. However, he was well aware of the fact that a past experience can be present in a non-recollective form [Mancia 2017: 32]. Mancia, Alan Shore, Mark Solms, and other scholars introduced the ideas of the *unrepressed unconscious* and the *implicit self*. The former is based on the early relationship between the child and mother [i.e., caretaker] and founded on sensory experiences. Traumatic experiences in early childhood may lead to ingrained “unconscious misconceptions” about the world and others. These implicit memory traces cannot be represented and repressed, even though they organize an early unrepressed unconscious [Mancia 2017: 34]. In general, the discovery of implicit and explicit memory systems inspired psychoanalysis to differentiate between the unrepressed and the repressed unconscious in contemporary memory research. The repressed unconscious stores and represses such cognitive and emotional experiences which have already been verbalized and symbolized. This unconscious develops around the age of two and onwards. The unrepressed unconscious is identical to implicit memory and stores non-symbolized affective experiences [Guignard 2015: 178].

Alan Schore distinguished between explicit and implicit selves: the former is verbal, conscious, and analytic, and the latter is non-verbal, non-conscious, holistic, emotional, and corporeal. The implicit self is also generated through the infant-mother relations and is responsible for homeostasis and affect regulation. Shore has broadened the view of implicit cognition, he speaks of implicit effect, implicit communication, and implicit self-regulation as well [Shore 2017: 77]. For present purposes, Clara Mucci’s textual analysis is of paramount importance. Mucci has shown that Freud and Breuer, in the *Studies on Hysteria* [1895] and especially in *Preliminary Communication* [1893], vacillated between two different descriptions of trauma, namely between the model of deliberate/intentional repression and the splitting of consciousness [i.e., dissociation]. Dissociation was thoroughly investigated by Pierre Janet and Sandor Ferenczi. Ferenczi, in his *Clinical Diary* [1932], proposed that the traumatized child suffers from a permanent cognitive distortion because of the internalization of the overwhelming interpersonal

experience [the process includes the identification with the aggressor] [Mucci 2017: 111]. Ferenczi and Janet accentuated the bodily reaction to trauma; however, Freud introduced the problem of retroactive trauma that neglected the issue of implicit memory traces which are inscribed in the body in the first traumatic moment, and placed emphasis on the role of fantasy [Mucci 2017: 112]. Even though the possibility of dissociation resulting from overwhelming trauma occurs in several places in the *Studies* [1895] and Freud was aware of the possibility of implicit memory traces [i.e., early bodily responses to trauma]. At last, he has abandoned the problems of “unconscious memories” in favor of voluntary repressions by which the ego “decides” to repudiate the incompatible ideas [cf. Mucci 2017: 109].

Florence Guignard examines Freud’s screen memories from a developmental perspective. On the one hand, he agrees with Freud about the deep emotional quality of screen memories; on the other hand, she claims that in children’s screen memories, the non-symbolized part of the oedipal situation [the archaic love of the primal object] is also portrayed. Freud was preoccupied with conflicts between symbolized wishes and their repression. However, recent neuropsychanalytical studies discovered more primitive, non-symbolized emotions that do not undergo repression because of the lack of their symbolic expression. According to Guignard’s hypothesis, screen memories are the *translations* of these early emotional contents [Guignard 2015: 174].

Levine and Reed underscore that Freud’s paper on screen memories and the *Three Essays* [1905] took into consideration implicit memory, or, as the authors formulate, “the failure of assembly of memory.” The latter can be contrasted with explicit memory, which is organized by conflicts and the ego’s defenses against anxiety. The early implicit memories remain unprocessed because of the lack of *narrative* constructive capacities. Levine and Reed conclude that the belated *construction* of early events, according to the actual psychological motivations, calls into question the historical veridicality of memories. In other words, the *dynamic function* of memory, which plays a significant role in the assembly of dreams and screen memories, can be separated from the need for historical and factual corroboration [Levine & Reed 2015: 189]. The authors and Guignard highlight the emotional importance, unity, and coherence of screen memories which play a significant role in the processing of traumas and maintain the integration of the ego. Levine and Reed argue that the constructive elements in screen memories do not entirely rule out the possibility of an underly-

ing traumatic event. The relation between the “screen” and the “historically true event” is analogous to the polarity of manifest and latent content in dreams. Levine and Reed raise the possibility that under the guise of screen memory: 1) we can assume a real past experience kept out of awareness; 2) the screen reflects only a “potential memory,” the fact that some implicit content has not yet achieved a narrative form, but their affective-emotional motivations invaded consciousness [Levine & Reed 2015: 190].

The introduction of implicit memory into the psychoanalytic discourse sheds new light on the problem of memory traces of Freud’s seduction theory. The elusiveness of the traumatic event could have been the result of its unprocessed status: it was, according to Guignard, partly symbolized and then repressed; therefore, the sensorial consequences of the trauma remained in the implicit memory. The possibility of implicit memory traces adds new significance to Freud’s observation, according to which the repressed instinctual derivatives exert a magnetic pull on subsequent memory traces. The unfortunate consequence of stored but unrepresented memory traces is the life-long process of working through them [Guignard 2015: 178-179]. And this is the point where screen memories gain new significance.

According to Guignard, screen memories could escape the defenses of *repression proper* and even *splitting* of the ego. They do not only create a connection between a wish and its fantasized realization but they can also be understood as an “attempt at understanding.” They constitute a *link* between implicit and explicit memory. Screen memories escape repression; they are artistic, creative formations including the processes of condensation and displacement—they can be seen as tentative “explanations” before the onset of the reality principle. These memories may express the “strength of the life drive” in case of mourning, they are momentary pauses in the process of working through [Guignard 2015: 183]. In a similar vein, Lucy LaFarge proposed that the child creates a specific organization for traumatic content through vivid and enduring screen memories. This type of memory is an individual construction that bolsters the self and explores the self-other relations with its onlooker and immersive aspects. It can bolster and reintegrate the self not only with the fusion of fantasmic and memorial elements but by the “feeling of organization,” by a specific way of remembering as well. Screen memories give the impression that something is happening that is real and knowable [LaFarge 2015: 56].

## Conclusions

In sum, the factual errors in screen memories cannot be compared with false recovered memories. The aim of screen memories is not the faithful representation of the past, rather they bolster the ego and spontaneously transform implicit memory traces into meaningful, although hybrid units. The retrospective falsification and rewriting of the past are the dominant aspects of screen memories; however, they have the advantageous function to symbolize and give meaning to the pre-symbolic effects and motivations of the psyche. At the end of his paper written about screen memory, Freud claims that memories of the earliest years are unavailable to us, and, at a later date, memories do not *emerge* but are only *formed* by motives without historical accuracy (Freud 1962/1999: 322). This third type of screen memory—besides the regressive type and progressive one—is closely connected to retrospective fantasy with which Freud was struggling in several case studies, including the ‘Rat Man’ (1909) and the ‘Wolf Man’ (1918).

As we have seen, neuropsychanalysis hinted at the idea that not only do screen memories fulfill the purpose of covering repressed wishes but are also probably related to the unassimilated affections of the unrepressed unconscious. Screen memories are tools of pre-narrative attempts of translation for the traumatized subject; despite their close resemblance to memories, they can orient the ego to the future by means of fantasmic memories. They constitute a link between implicit and explicit material in order to facilitate the integrity of the ego. As we have seen, screen memories are *dynamic memories* which do not respect the historical accuracy of past events, but they can also be connected to unprocessed traumas. Freud concentrated on the defensive aspect of screen memories. Concerning the problems of seduction theory, Jung highlighted the teleological orientation of the unconscious.

In this respect, Jung’s regressive fantasy conception might contribute not only to the refutation of the seduction theory but also to the exploration of progressive, teleological aspects of screen memories which were also explored by contemporary psychoanalysis.

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