

Original Paper

A Couple Sharing the Oasis: Love and Memory in the Novel The Unwritten Autobiography of Martha Freud by Teolinda

Gersão

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Abstract

This essay examines the book of Portuguese writer Teolinda Gersão (2004), unwritten autobiography of Martha Freud. In the work, she gives voice to the wife of the father of psychoanalytic theory, using Martha's published letters. Incorporating evidence from the letters, it details the couple's life, from their engagement to their marriage, their fruitful and laborious life in Vienna, their children, and their exile in London. These concerns are set against the backdrop of the European history between 1880 and 1940, highlighting the social position of the family and the woman. After her husband's death, Martha writes her autobiography, recovering her personal life and Jewish roots.

Keywords

psychanalyses, Freud, dandy, Martha, Viena, letters, memory, Judaism

1. Introduction

In the music of the American singer Pat Benatar, *Love is a battlefield*, between two lovers, attentively observing the movements of the other, longing for the exact moment to subdue the antagonistic partner:

Love is a battlefield

We are strong

No one can tell us we're wrong

Searchin' our hearts for so long

Both of us knowing (Benatar, 1983)

The central idea of this essay is to suggest that *unwritten autobiography of Martha Freud*, by Teolinda Gersão, a celebrated Portuguese, writer and Germanist, describes love between two human beings as a battlefield, oscillating between love and resentment. Metaphorically, Martha and Sigmund lived in the

safety of the Viennese oasis, Berggasse 19, where, for more than fifty years, they shared the grass, the well, and the protection of the shade, surrounded by a hostile social desert. The Portuguese author's book describes the Freud home, the family residence, workplace, and laboratory of the unconscious, as her most secret refuge, her Sistine Chapel, and the Altamira cave. The narrative from Martha's point of view suggests the public exposure of private wounds, originating in this family battlefield. In the 19th and 20th century Germanic culture, university students fought using swords, a sport called *Mensur*, producing wounds whose scars were the *Schmiss*, which were a permanent bodily memory and "a public proof of bravery" (Gay, 1993). The adversities of married life were private, the scars imprinted in the memory of Martha and Sigmund belonged to the small circle of family and followers. The time of the staging of this private drama is between 1880 and 1940, when the world and Europe experienced intense acceleration and the catastrophes that resulted from it.

1.1 A Marriage thus Unfolds between Two Centuries

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, published a vast seminal work and an abundant correspondence that is well known to the general public. Meanwhile, a small number of letters written by his wife, Martha Bernays, were known. The Freud family did not publish them fully, fueling the suspicion that they would give rise to embarrassing revelations (Ivry, 2012). Merkin considers it inadmissible that "Martha Freud looms as an underappreciated figure on the history of psychoanalysis" (Merkin, 2024). The content of Martha's few published letters fueled the imagination of Gisa Llobregat and Laurence Paton, who published a fictional narrative entitled *Forever, Your, Marty: A Review of The Flash and Outbreak of a Fiery Mind: The love letters of Martha Bernays Freud 1882-1886*, where she "re-invented the lost correspondence that took place over their courtship," creating what Karen Randall called "biographical fiction," or indirect analyses of Martha (Randall, 2012).

Teolinda Gersão's work is different from all the others. No, it is not a biography, like the excellent ones produced by Katja Behling, Peter Gay, Appignanesi, and Forrester. The originality of the book is entitled *Unwritten Autobiography of Martha Freud*, claiming a place as a "biographical fiction," narrating Martha Freud's life alongside her husband and family, their encounters, and their disagreements.

2. Giving Voice to Martha Freud

Ferreira-Meyers considered that an author of autofiction does not intend, nor desire, to tell the story of a life through imprecise or actual events from the past that he/she remember. (Ferreira-Myers, 2015) At that point, the British writer Jenny Diski said, "Martha was a paragon among the wives" (Diski, 2006). Martha appears in the *Unwritten Autobiography* as an upright and solid woman. At the end of Sigmund's life, she was stripped of significant roles in the home she had built, relegated to the background of the Freudian stage. Teolinda presents Martha as a fascinating woman, subjected to the disciplinary concepts of the male hegemony of her time. As the sand in the hourglass ran down and the

couple grew older, the children grew up, history moved around them with its inescapable gear. At that point, they lived the whirlwind of the Second Industrial Revolution, the internal combustion engine, electricity, and the chemical revolution. The Great War broke out. The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian empire, the Soviet Revolution, and the economic and social crises. The Roaring Twenties, the rise of modern totalitarianism, cinema, radio, the recording industry, jazz, and the destructive and creative thirties.

Michelle Perrot wrote that power, the state, politics, and advances in science and technology are the backdrop to the history of private life and family. In the same vein, believes that the memories in Martha's letters refer to "contemporary public history and to family history" (Motzkin, 1994,).

2.1 Where Are Martha Bernays' Letters?

Peter Gay considers the correspondence between Martha and Sigmund, during their engagement, between 1882 and 1886, an authentic "autobiography of Freud in the early 1880s" (Gay, 1998). However, why wouldn't it also be an autobiography of Martha? Had Gay read them all? Teolinda argues that, between 2011 and 2019, the publication of the letters was planned for the first time, totaling four volumes: "although we imagined that they would all be published, it was not like that. Only Sigmund's were published and not Martha's". The fifth volume, planned but not published, forced the author to resort to other means of access. (Gersão, 2024) Letters, like any other sources, do not speak for themselves; it is necessary to question them. Teolinda uses them as raw material, full of subjective memory, elaborating the narrative through her authorial fiction. For Motzkin, a historian, like a scientist, writes considering "the subject matter of his narrative; on this point, history and fiction have more in common than either do with memoirs, which reflected the tension between subjective and objective that was a central philosophical problem of the age". (Motzkin, 1994)

As active sources, the author uses letters exchanged between "Freud and Eduard Silberstein, Minna Bernays, Wilhelm Fliess, and Anna Freud (among others), considering that in intimate letters, written without a filter, the personality of the writer is reflected, more intensely and genuinely" (Gersão, 2024). Each letter is a written unit, containing an argument waiting for a response; they are works endowed with two voices, and both "have an equal right to be heard, because a letter is only complete if we know what response it received." (Gersão, 2024). Teolinda considers them "intimate writings of real people," questioning them and, with the revelation in hand, "one must try to understand them." The profusion of letters produced by Sigmund Freud reminds us of Derrida, for whom every "great thinker is like a great courier" (Derrida, 1980).

2.2 A Text Becomes Self-named in Its Complicity with the Public

James Olney considers autobiography "the least complicated of writing performances, it is also the most elusive of literary documents." No one can accurately or comfortably analyze an autobiography, "there are simply no general rules available to the critic." The term is paradoxical, "both the simplest of literary enterprises and the commonest" (Olney, 1980).

The domains of literature are not immutable or stagnant, but always put to the test, and it is not up to

the professional critic to give the definitive word. As authors, it is essential to unveil and experiment with new literary frontiers. Ferreira-Myers agrees with Colonna that it is the public and only it, as “an interpretive community,” that is the sole authority and source of “literary vitality since it is the only one capable of using “new reading strategies, new hermeneutic postures” (Ferreira-Myers, 2015).

Eliana Alda de Freitas Calado discussed the difficult boundaries between history, literature, and autobiography. Not being a subgenre of history, it is neither one nor the other. However, it has a small quantity of each: “The autobiographical narrative is constructed by historical and literary devices, but it goes beyond them, not fitting into either one area or the other. After all, definitions can never be understood as fixed essences, but only as precarious, quite provisional combinations, proposed to be deconstructed” (Calado, 2009). Genette calls hypertext a work written by gathering previous texts, the letters, which results in a fictional narrative, eventually reconstructing and replacing historical reality. Thus, Teolinda’s work is a complex procedure, engendering mimetic work by the author’s art without, as she claims, interfering in the content of the letters. As Ferreira Meyers suggested, the notion of unwritten autobiography is an “auto-fictional pact of the peritext”, allowing the author to delve deeper into issues. On the other hand, for Sicart, in an autobiographical novel, the author hides behind another, like Teolinda, written by Martha Bernays (Sicart, 2005).

3. After the Exodus, Life Begins Again

Teolinda, a fiction writer, imagined that Martha, for years before, especially after the death of Sigmund, whom she had survived for twelve years, wanted to reconstruct her journey. “To find herself and the complex and multifaceted man in her life” (Gersão, 2024). Despite the pain caused by the death of her long-time companion, father of her children and grandfather of her grandchildren, from her mourning came resurrection, a return to her existence. As we will see later, she rediscovered her Jewish roots and with them her symbolic role in the home. Self-assured Martha considered herself an exemplary and irreproachable wife, hiding behind social masks. (Gersão, 2024).

Like a freed prisoner, Martha rediscovered everyday and prosaic joys. For example, when walking freely through the streets, she sees passersby as “genuine people and each one lives as they can”. Human beings like her, because: “we breathe the same air under the same sky, and consciously or not, we are part of history”. (Gersão, 2024). She retraced her lost steps “in the house in Marsfield Gardens”, disregarding her husband’s psychoanalytic writings, “which did not interest her”, preferring her treasure, “the letters they exchanged, and those she wrote to other interlocutors, who, for the most part, she did not know” (Gersão, 2024).

3.1 An Autobiography as Recovery of the Self

Martha, *liberata et restituta*, dedicated herself to the long-postponed undertaking: “Writing my autobiography”. Faced with this challenging task, she wrote countless pages. She soon regretted it and then burned them. She feared the reaction of the family guardians of Sigmund’s estate, hampered as she was by the time, by society, by her imagination, and thus, she paralyzed the writing of the work

(Gersão, 2024). Martha remembered the moment when the blocking mechanism was triggered during the writing of the *Autobiography*: “I had already written more than a hundred pages, in long afternoons when I was completely oblivious to my surroundings and immersed myself in the narrative that demanded all of me, without being aware of anything else, when suddenly I had a shock: the force, the danger of putting words on paper. I put down the pen and, with my hand trembling, for a long moment, I was paralyzed” (2024).

Phillippe Lejeune, who had a similar experience, considered writing his autobiography almost impossible (Lejeune, 2005). In an essay, Jenny Diski points out that Sigmund, in a letter to his friend Fliess, wrote that Martha, after the birth of her sixth child, suffered “from writer’s block. Impossible to imagine why” (Diski, 2006). Derrida described the drive according to Sigmund Freud, for whom: “A drive (Trieb) would therefore be an impulse (Drag) that lives in the animate organism and that aims at the restoration (Wiederherstellung) of a previous state that the living being should have renounced under the influence of disturbing forces coming from outside, a kind of organized elasticity or, if we prefer, the expression of the inertia of organic life” (Derrida, 1980).

The fictional Martha is aware that writing in secret is one thing, but publishing the work will shake the solidity of the walls of the citadel of others. She will shake the golden door of her own prison: “they will believe that I betray them, and the family they thought they had (...) Causing them suffering, undoing images of the past, robbing others I love of good memories, even if they were not as they think, is a perspective that makes her suffer”. The seduction of writing, despite being intense, clashes with the tribe; she hesitates to hurt loved ones: “Should I, therefore, sacrifice myself once again?” (Gersão, 2024).

For her, this indecisive period was a “remote reality, almost invisible, as if I had lost myself somewhere along the way,” and the work “would have helped me to bring some order to the chaos that is life”. Writing a work can be rewarding; however, publishing it makes it public, making others aware of the other side of life in the “oasis”. Hesitant, overcome with remorse, she imagines that publishing it could ruin the project of countless lives, including her own. So, she concludes that “at that price, I do not want it” (Gersão, 2024).

3.2 Sigmund Freud Inc. A Heritage to Be Protected

Continuing her literary project, Martha came into conflict with the fierce guardians of Sigmund Freud’s work, among them Anna, the high priestess of the cult, “the fiercest defender of his legacy” (Gersão, 2024)

Sara Boxer would agree with this statement, describing Anna as “the keeper of her father’s flame” (Boxer, 2024), controlling Freud’s publications and those written about him. Hence, Martha is completely vulnerable in the face of the multiplied power of her daughter and father’s intellectual heir: “I have no doubt that, if a publisher contacted her, Anna would immediately claim the manuscript and destroy it” (Gersão, 2024).

The Freudian legacy is an apocryphal gospel, a legacy to which both mother and daughter contributed.

Martha knows her fragility in the face of so many opponents: “I am just an extra in someone else’s narrative, already written and considered perfect, watched day and night with an almost religious devotion by a multitude that assumes it, propagates it and defends it, without allowing any change, because they believe in it blindly, or make it their way of life” (Gersão, 2024). Moreover, it is this fierce barrier that her narrative will have to overcome.

4. Life as Theater

During the final phase of married life, on the Freudian stage, Martha’s role is contained in a narrative: “already written and considered perfect, watched over day and night by an almost religious devotion by a multitude who assume, propagate and defend it, without allowing any change, because they believe blindly, or have converted it into their way of life” (Gersão, 2024). For Lejeune, in an autobiographical project, appropriate filters are adopted, and “and sincerity to the limit is impossible. It is natural to demand from an autobiography the project of telling the truth, it is naïve to reproach it for not having done it and for having arrived” (Lejeune, 2004). Before getting married, Martha saw herself as an outgoing young woman: “happy, full of confidence, facing life and sharing everything without fear. She was free” (Gersão, 2024). Her records of the past, like the famous photos of Stalin’s circle, are subject to interventions, cuts, additions, restrictions, and censorship beyond her control. Her leading role in the play risks being discredited and, who knows, suppressed.

The manuscript is a testimony, which places her before a new dilemma: who should she trust once it is finished? It is a child still in the womb, and, under pressure, she could abort it, deny it life, that is, give it to the public. “What paralyzes me is the certainty that, if I cannot leave the manuscript in safe hands, it will always be destroyed before it sees the light of day” (Gersão, 2024). At this point, writing is a libel of accusation denouncing oppression and a cry for freedom of expression: “My narrative—as long as I can sustain it, and I can—has as much right to exist as anything else. Am I free, therefore, to continue writing, selfishly, from my point of view, without caring about the consequences, as Sigi always did” (Gersão, 2024)?

4.1 *Linear Time, Time of Life: Clothesline of Memory and Comfortable Convention*

As Paul Ricoeur recognizes, the sequential and linear time applied in the memorial narrative suggests following that of existence (Ricoeur, 2006). For his part, Abrams considers that the narrated time reconstructs the social world, evoking the characters as if they actually existed, “and that such things might well happen” (Abrams, p. 260). Therefore, Martha’s narrative, delving into the past, recovers feelings, objects, space, and environment. From this, we can infer that, in this “fog”, not all experiences are clear, many images are imprecise, and others are diffuse, even erased. According to Lejeune, this inaccuracy is part of the chosen form: “that which distinguishes autobiography from the novel, is not an impossible historical exactitude, but rather the sincere project of highlighting and understanding one’s own life” (Lejeune, 2004). Martha arranges the episodes in a linear temporal sequence: “only chronology could give them meaning, as in any narrative.” If, in the beginning, it was the Word, Martha

exists through writing, or in the definition of Foucault and Barthes, she becomes defined in the formation of her discourse. (Ferreira-Myers, 2015). “Rereading them became increasingly compulsive, in response to mixed feelings. A desire for order and perspective—I am obsessively tidy and organized” (Gersão, 2024).

Significantly, this search for singularity in a “discursive formation,” presenting “her” truth, or her reasons, regarding the couple’s life, recalled the conclusions of Sara Brechey who, analyzing contemporary Nordic literature, dialogues with Brenda K. Marshall, for whom: “To speak of a discursive formation is to speak of the logic of a specific place and time (in the sense of ideology, ‘common sense’ assumptions about the way things are). This discursive formation goes beyond the rationality of place and time; it is, rather, what enables that rationality to appear as rational” (Marshall, 1992).

5. Life Is Not a Dream; It Is a Writing

In a project nurtured during their engagement, Sigmund and Martha wanted to write a serial novel together, a work never completed. Based on the correspondence exchanged between them, they would create epistolary strategies typical of serial novels, leaving “readers in suspense until the next episode”, which she called a “novel in episodes” or “a love story”. The second is the unwritten Autobiography, a personal project and a desire postponed as “a remote, almost invisible reality, as if it had been lost somewhere along the way” (Gersão, 2024).

The raw material for Teolinda is the correspondence produced by the couple, whose relationship, at least in the beginning, was deeply marked by writing, as Martha attests: “at the time I had no idea that almost everything essential that was said between us ended up, in fact, being written” (Gersão, 2024). To remember is to put together fragmentary elements and compose a narrative. All the protagonists of the family drama are witnesses of memories, as Ricoeur explains, “the actors of memory are those who transmit it and those who revive it after the memory is presented” (Ricoeur, 2006). This combination of memory and history occurs in the practice of writing, and the most appropriate strategy is fiction, as Vidal-Nacquet explained about the Jewish Holocaust. The history of the event, too multifaceted, resisted explanations produced by competent professionals in the field. For Vidal-Nacquet, the most significant works came from historians, but from intellectuals who lived through it, such as Primo Levi, political scientist Raoul Hilberg, and filmmaker Claude Lanzmann with *Shoah*. (Vidal-Nacquet, 1981) The Autobiography confirms that fiction is the best way to grasp the subjective truth of the past, situated between memory and history. Pierre Nora wrote: “At present, the boundary between the two is blurring; following closely upon the successive deaths of memory-history and memory-fiction, a new kind of history has been born, which owes its prestige and legitimacy to the new relation it maintains to the past” (Nora, 1998).

5.1 Writing, between Memory and the Object, Is the Trigger for Reminiscence

In the *Autobiography*, the objects participating in the couple’s life are present and silent records of

memory. Pierre Nora wrote, “Each gesture, down to the most everyday, would be experienced as the ritual repetition of a timeless practice in a primordial identification of act and meaning. With the appearance of the trace, of mediation, of distance, we are not in the realm of true memory but of history” (Nora, 1998). Objects bear witness and feed the narrative with the authority that comes from their presence in the past. This “having been,” this being present in remote times, for Paul Ricœur, irrevocably consecrates the role of testimony: “I cried for him or I cried for him, I am not” (Ricœur, 2006). During the dinner to which she was invited “at the Freuds’ house, Sigmund asked her as a souvenir for the card that indicated my place in the order of the plates and cutlery, I took the opportunity to shake his hand (warmly, yes!) under the table, as announced in my letter” (Gersão, 2024).

5.2 Sequential Narrative of the Germanic-Jewish Existence

Martha Bernays met Sigmund in May 1882, “although by that time my family had been living in Vienna for several years and I had good relations with his then unmarried sisters.” (Gersão, 2024) In June of the same year, they became engaged. Behling describes the rapture between them as an arrow from Eros. (Behling, 2006), facing the opposition of her mother, Emmeline, Martha undertook a personal exodus. Leaving family servitude, she entered the promised land. Imbued with a romantic temperament, she considered her fiancé a heroic and daring man, facing the world by her side, a faithful ally and companion. The letters exchanged draft a contract that underpins the future life of the young couple. As in Benatar’s song:

We are Young

Heartache to heartache

We stand

No promises, no demands

Love is a battlefield. (Benatar, 1983)

Following the wave of secularization in Europe, many Jews believed they no longer belonged to a prominent and sacred congregation that guided the people. They assumed the modern status of a religious minority among powerful religions. The French Revolution eliminated the ghettos and freed the Jews who were part of French culture (Sand, 2010).

Over the 19th century, political and social changes allowed Jewish families to prosper, expanding their presence at all levels of social life. This process opened up a temporal and cultural gap between modern Jews, integrated into Christian society, and traditional Jews, connected to the past. The Bernays family, despite being integrated, as Appignanesi and Forrester wrote, originated from a Swedish family of Sephardic origin. Although Martha’s mother, Emmeline, was balanced, intelligent, and well-educated, she came from an Orthodox Jewish background. (Appignanesi, Forrester, 1992).

Sigmund came from a secular family background integrated into the modern world. For him, religious devotion was a distressing habit, and after their marriage, he forbade Martha from performing Jewish rituals. (Behling, 2006) An ardent defender of modernity, Sigmund was perhaps concerned about the

Sephardic and conservative ancestry of the Bernays. Thus, he modernized and secularized “his” family, avoiding a return to archaic habits. Martha, like her siblings, Minna, Elias, and Isaac, received a traditional, religious, and Germanic education. After moving with her family to Vienna in 1869, Martha remained faithful to her German origins, an admirer of the Hohenzollern imperial family, and “spoke perfect standard German” during the fifty-five years of Austrian residence (Behling, 2006).

6. Autobiography

The *Autobiography* suggests that the young and enthusiastic couple envisioned their life together as a radiant future at the beginning of their relationship. When faced with the young Freud’s powers of seduction and persuasion, Martha realized the tyrannical nature of her fiancé and linked her destiny with him. During their long engagement, a merger transformed four years of more than one thousand five hundred letters stored randomly in old boxes. I wished they would be destroyed on our wedding day because I told her many times that they spoke of our private life” (Gersão, 2024).

Marriage kidnapped an important part of Martha’s life. A widow writing at the age of eighty wanted to recover herself. When narrating her life story, she aligned the facts of her existence chronologically, searching for a meaning for herself. Massaoui wrote that an “autobiography is not really “about” the facts and events related; it is about how the writer chooses to interpret, and make sense of, these events.” (Massaoui, 2014)

6.1 *Difficulties of a Jewish Fiancé*

An intelligent woman and a voracious reader of classics, she idolized the British writer Charles Dickens. She gave Sigmund a volume of Dickens’s *David Copperfield*, perhaps suggesting that the eponymous Israelite hero, Dickens’s character David, and Sigmund, her fiancé, could face giants, charting their own destiny (Phillips, 2011).

In the *Autobiography*, Martha sees Sigmund as a hungry lion about to devour her. To this essayist, he resembles a bull, a mythological animal, a symbol of physical strength and masculine potency in the symbolic area of the Mediterranean, attested by archaeological findings, both on ancient Jewish and Mediterranean altars (Dever, 2005). Sigmund’s attachment is Taurean; it attacks with the sun on its horns, a desire to mate noisily. “Sigi had the illusion that functional love was salvific, and forced me to make sacrifices and obligations and to give him constant proof that I loved him” (Gersão, 2024). Sigmund admired the Carthaginian general Hannibal, his prototype hero, a “Semite”, the terror of Rome. Freud aspired to succeed in life, to become an excellent academic and researcher, to produce new knowledge, and to be admired and celebrated for his success. Getting married, having a wife, children, and being loved was imperative to achieve this project. Living in a bourgeois home suggests respectability and security. Martha was this haven. Or as in Benatar’s song:

No one can tell us we’re wrong
 Searchin’ our hearts for so long
 Both of us knowing

Love is a battlefield (Pat Benatar, 1983)

Jenny Diski wrote in her letters to Fliess that “to whom he wrote that no woman had ever replaced the male comrade in his life” (Diski, 2006). Biblical reminiscences? In addition to women being the ruin of the righteous, could the love of a friend, like Jonathan’s for David, surpass the love of women?

Despite her fiancé devouring her like “a lion’s prey,” the fearless Martha came first. The first time, she beat him to the punch, showing her affection and saying yes to the authentic acceptance of the marriage. The second time, as we will see later, was when the Nazi authorities searched her home in Vienna and she boldly expelled them. Believing Sigmund to be an ideal male destined to bear fruit for her, the father of her children: “It was I who ran to him, knowing that I was being bold, perhaps daring, and that the initiative should be the man’s, not the woman’s. “I wrote a letter with clichés that said between the lines, “Yes, yes, come, I will wait for you” (Gersão, 2024). This declaration is not a surrender but an invitation to a pact, a treaty between equals. It is an act of faith and trust in the future. As in the song:

You are beggin’ me to go.

You are makin’ me stay

Why do you hurt me so bad?

It would help me to know

Do I stand in your way

Or am I the best thing you’ve had?

Believe me, believe me

I can’t tell you why

But I’m trapped by your love

And I’m chained to your side

We are Young. (Benatar, 1983)

Martha defended herself, stating that her common sense “was stronger than my blindness, I did not let my guard down against hypnotic surrender, and I returned to the alert state of watchfulness.” She continued to “be bold, although I modestly placed myself in the background, granting him the false primacy of being the first to act. The institution told me that he wanted to take the first step, and I fabricated, to please him, that version of the story” (Gersão, 2024).

For both, marriage constitutes a life project guided by their differences. First of all, Freud’s goal is to achieve. He wanted a home so he could triumph in the monogamous social relationship. Martha aspired to be a housewife, mother, and exemplary wife. Thanks to her tact and emotional balance, she provided essential support for Sigmund’s intellectual activities.

6.2 *The Past Returns to Objects and Gestures*

Many objects are associated with preparing food, which is full of mystery and feminine functions and is not exempt from magic. Operating on the borders between culture and nature. On June 11, 1882, Martha was in the kitchen making “a cake that would arrive to the recipient accompanied by the letter” (Gersão, 2024). In her book, Susan Ackerman calls for a historical approach that reveals the ancient

and hidden female deities in the primitive Jewish religion, baking cakes to delight their beloved consorts. The author illuminates Martha's role in her marriage to Sigmund. Confirming that, in the biblical tradition, there were "women of valor" and "capable wives" (Ackerman, 2022).

The *Autobiography* recalls joys, suffering, and perplexities. Socially, looking back gestures provide a polyhedral image of remembrance. "I remember well that you, instead of sitting at the table with us and your sisters, in a calm, decent and bourgeois manner, ran like a lion in a cage from one side of the room to the other, stopping now and then standing next to the table, listening indifferently to our girlish conversation and, occasionally, throwing me furious looks, or so it seemed to me". For his part, Sigmund recalls the episode, seeing in the room: "a little girl, sitting at the family table, who was talking so gently, peeling apples with her little fingers, left me breathless and paralyzed" (Gersão, 2024). Martha recalled Sigmund's inexcusable rudeness if she had not loved him. After dinner, she and her sister Minna retired and Sigmund refused to accompany them, leaving them "against all rules" alone at night, "in the fog of the horrible Emperor Josef Street. "How unchivalrous. We criticize you enough."

6.3 *Between Languages and Nationalisms, an Ashera Is at the Root of the Macho Ideology*

During their engagement, Sigmund gifted his beloved, a voracious reader, with a book that greatly displeased her: the work of the German nationalist writer, Felix Dahn (1834-1912), entitled *Odhins Trost*. (1880) This actor was perplexed by Sigmund's choice of an intellectual who was a staunch defender of racial purity. Dahn's work integrates the foundations of the National Socialist ideology, defending "the volkisch doctrine, which was essentially a product of late eighteenth-century romanticism" (Welch, 2004).

Sigmund Freud used a grandiloquent and theatrical tone in his letters: "Dearest, ardently beloved (...) I knew that only when you were gone would I become aware of the extent of my happiness and the immense weight of your absence. I still cannot understand. If the little casket with your portrait were not in front of me, I would think that everything was nothing more than the phantasmagoria of a dream, and I would be afraid to wake up [...]" Baudelaire highlighted that, for artists, women went beyond the level of mere reproducers of the species. They were a Divinity, reviving the ancient Ashera, the Tree of Life, the statuette with an enormous vagina and a thinking head, analyzed by archaeologists. (Dever). For the French poet, she was: "a star that presides over all the conceptions of the male brain, the reverberation of all the charms of nature condensed in a single being" (Baudelaire, 1923). As in *Hymne à la Beauté*, Freud's love speech echoes in Baudelaire's stanzas:

"Of Satan or God, what does it matter? Angel or Siren,

What does it matter if you surrender, — faith in the eyes of velours,

Rhythm, perfume, light, oh my unique queen!

— The universe is more hidden and the moments more lordly?" (Baudelaire, 1943)

In the letters, Sigmund deifies his fiancée, proclaiming to the universe: "Martha is mine, the sweet young woman of whom everyone spoke with admiration who, in our first meeting alone, despite all

[my] resistance, imprisoned me, whom I was afraid to court and who came to me, with a very noble confidence that gave me more self-esteem and more hope in my ability to work, a moment when I needed them most” (Gersão, 2024).

Martha thoughtfully considers that “He is grateful to me, therefore, for having been the one to take the first step (I also took the following ones) which gave him self-confidence and hope for a successful professional future.” Her response is pure love, in a single burst of happiness for meeting her soulmate: “Sigi, my Sigi (...) For the first time, I called you by your name, by your dear name, which I already liked before I met you. (...) Beloved, I am happy, happier than I have ever been in my ‘long’ life [...] Today I am so happy, so joyful, that I feel like falling on the grass, among the flowers, looking at the blue sky and laughing at it as it laughs at me”. In a rush of happiness she prophesies, her beloved “is putting the finishing touches on what will make him famous, although I do not know how it will happen” (Gersão, 2024). As in the lyrics of Benatar’s song:

“But if we get much closer.

I could lose control.

And if your heart surrenders.

You’ll need me to hold”. (Benatar, 1983)

7. Martha Bernays: Woman in a Masculine Century

The French Revolution of 1789, which had been hopefully inaugurated, confiscated women’s freedoms, changing the course of their existence in the century of certainties (Gay, p. 3, 1993). Skipping ahead of the nineteenth century, Martha Bernays’ education, childhood, and youth took place in a contradictory century for women, a time masterfully described by the British Charles Dickens, in the introduction to *Tale of Two Cities*:

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair. (...)

It was the best of times for wealthy women, who were not part of the labor market, confined to a home full of utensils and ornaments. (Hobsbawm, 1988) It was the worst of times for poor women in the “war of life”, washing, ironing, and sewing clothes, plowing the land, and working in the mines and factories. Prostituting themselves honorably, supporting themselves and their children, or going to the barricades. Beaten by adversity, they may not have the time or inclination for hysteria.

Never would a woman from the upper classes, celestial beings, protected by “metres of skirt, bustle and corset,” tread the slums and hovels where prostitutes, workers, in short, poor women lived (Appignanesi, 1992).

However, privileged women were stripped of the achievements of the Enlightenment, falling under the protective shadow of domestic walls, confined to routines, motherhood, domestic economy, and, above all, the grace of their ignorance (Gay, p. 3, 1993).

In her *Autobiography*, Martha summarizes her life “in a few lines.” Without being “different from most others, by the model of the life of almost all women. Or was it? (...)” Widowed, after fulfilling her duty, Martha confesses in her *Autobiography* that she lost the man “to whom I dedicated more than five decades, and I cannot deny that I loved him. I am over eighty years old, I am reaching the end, I feel fragile and tired, I know what it is to live and die, to raise children and grandchildren, to be a wife, a mother, a hostess” (Gersão, 2024).

Writing and publishing were tasks performed by many women in the 19th century, especially when female production grew in the last decades of the 20th century. However, the overwhelming majority of female writers fit into the established norms. Independent and bold female characters, protagonists only in novels, were an exception. For some authors, however, women were cunning “ladies who posed as slaves,” even though in Western countries, whether Christian, Catholic or Protestant, with Jewish minorities, they were subject to the maxim of Saint Peter: “You wives, be subject to your husbands” (Gay, 1993).

7.1 Metanarrative, Historical Novel, the Author Claims Not to Be, Is It Metafiction?

Teolinda did not write “a ‘historical novel’, a style of which she is not a fan, but a narrative that respects the characters and seeks to interpret them objectively, without any inevitable subjectivity” (Gersão, 2024). In his classic analysis, Georgy Luckács considers that works of this nature portray “the kind of individual destiny that can directly and at the same time typically express the problems of an epoch” (Luckács, 1962). Linda Hutcheon considers a work of this nature “a kind of postmodern novel which rejects projecting present beliefs and standards onto the past and asserts the specificity and particularity of the individual past event”. (Hutcheon, 1988)

Teolinda’s work describes a family and personal construction process set in the turbulent period between 1880 and 1940, when, according to Michelle Perrot, tyrannical intimacy dominated the public man. This period is a phase of modernity, tragically interrupted by the Great War, which precipitates, blocks, and inflects an evolution that, in truth, was never completely interrupted. Furthermore, the backdrop is the history of private life (Perrot, 1987).

7.2 Martha: The Modern Heroism of a Housewife and the Oasis

The *Autobiography* narrates the life story of a woman managing the home, caring for the children, the sociability, and the husband, in glorious trophies similar to those captured from an antagonist in battle. A heroic narrative, the *Autobiography* narrates the epic division of labor, functions, and practices in a private space between 1880 and 1940.

The apartment at Berggasse 19 was the Freud family’s grand family theater for more than forty-five years. A theater where the meticulous variations of family life, staged the birth of children, their learning of “a thousand fragments of knowledge, discourses,” and practices that, in the future, “will determine their way of being and desiring”. Martha was sublime in producing what Luce Giard called the arts of domestic work (Certeau, Giard, 1990), managing and caring for where the “romance of family life and social life” took place. She was an exemplary sovereign who educated her children

while managing the home and the employees. Anton W. Freud, in turn, testifies that “Martha was from a tougher, more disciplined school. Everything had to be just right. Jobs were to be done properly and punctually. There was no place for unruly or slovenly behavior in the Freud household” (Behling, 2006). Martha played the role of “competent hostess, with a kindness that knows how to keep her distance, showing a conscious ignorance of everything that is not banal and bourgeois life. Cultivating the long-established stereotype of having been the wife of the genius, and now his widow. A magnificent housewife and exemplary mother of his children, the woman he chose as his lifelong companion, he loved and venerated until his death, grateful for freeing him from all domestic problems, allowing Sigmund, in the division of labor: “to dedicate himself body and soul to his work” (Gersão, 2024).

The household administration is subject to a strict economic regime since the head of the family has a limited source of income in his practice and copyrights. Sigmund, writing to Fliess: “October 4th. The children have arrived. The good weather is over. Even the stack of ten-guilder notes that I saw in my dream as Martha’s weekly household expenses.” (Freud, 1985) Sigmund is appreciative of the presence of Martha, an efficient foreman and beloved soul mate, worn out by the ocean of existence, eroding the flame of youthful love.

“My children are splendid now; only Mathilde worries me a little. My wife is in good spirits and spirited, but I am not pleased with her appearance. The trouble is that we are about to grow old, prematurely for little ones.”

Sigmund acknowledges the debt he owes to his wife: “My poor Martha leads a life full of troubles. Of course, Anna is doing wonderfully, and Mathilde has suffered so little from her illness that today we are sending her and my sister Dolfi to the Sulz Valley; on the other hand, Martin took to bed today, and now it is likely that the illness will run its full course. Let us hope it will be mild” (Freud, 1985).

On the other hand, the pleasure that a large family gives Sigmund is undeniable, his love for it overflows when he describes it to Fliess, “Martha has arranged things so splendidly again that I have not lost a single hour of consulting time. At the moment there is a commotion going on up there. The second generation is very gratifying” (Freud, 1985).

8. The Hidden and Revealed Beauty of Martha Bernays

Sigmund, evaluating the beauty of his beloved’s face in a photograph, states, in an ambiguous, complimentary, and simultaneously critical manner: “As if nature wanted to protect you from being merely pretty, your nose and mouth are more characteristic than beautiful; they have an almost masculine expressiveness, much less that of a young woman.” Moreover, he compares Martha’s eyes to “two soup plates” (Gersão, 2024).

When faced with the photograph of her sister-in-law, Minna threatens Martha that she will not escape “the punishment of a sermon,” perhaps for some disparaging comment regarding her sister’s features. Sigmund defends his sister-in-law, whose portrait, “I expected at least horrible, after what you said, and

behold, it is charming, magnificently achieved, incomparably superior to yours, the whole is perfect, while in your portrait, despite all the sharpness, the features have no expression whatsoever” (Gersão, 2024).

Martha, hurt in her self-esteem, annoyed and hurt, regretted not having responded more to “two other things that I felt, (such as): ‘If Minna is so superior to me, why don’t you stay with her then?’” (Gersão, 2024)

8.1 Marriage: A Romantic Act Facing the World

Martha was a strong and determined woman. As befitted a German woman, she came from a Jewish family equipped with Prussian decency, reliability, high morals, and perfectionism. As Anna Freud pointed out, her mother did not follow rules; she made them. Martha has secure authority over her family and home.

She knew how to defend her home, risking her life, when SS soldiers invaded her home and began to search it. She ordered that the search of the family’s belongings cease immediately. (Appignanesi, Forrester, 1992). It was not the admirer of the heroic Semite, Hannibal, the Terror of Rome, who expelled them. However, Ashera, the German housewife, reminds these police officers of the values of German culture, not religious values, Christian or Jewish religion. Nevertheless, their homes’ respectability values were governed by their mothers’ decency.

In the Autobiography, Martha records the presence of other women in the couple’s life, particularly her sister, Minna, a great interlocutor of Sigmund. Some analysts, such as Rivera, are convinced that they were lovers (Balbuena Rivera, 2022), while Katja Behling does not believe in sexual relations, since Freud was a man averse to erotic adventures, he was a determined and clairvoyant scientist. Peter Gay believes that Sigmund had a close connection with his sister-in-law, as “in Freud’s domestic arrangements was his sister-in-law Minna. During his engagement to Martha Bernays, he had written Minna intimate and affectionate letters, signed himself “Your Brother Sigmund,” and called her “My Treasure” (Gay, 1998).

9. Anna Freud, Daughter, Disciple, Nurse, Guardian

Sigmund showed his fondness for Anna from an early age, recognizing in her the qualities of a fighter: “During my confinement with Anna (two and a half years younger), it was discovered that she was a thief, and all the shiny new Kreuzers and Zehners and all the toys that had been given to you were found in her possession” (Freud, 1985).

Martha, without further condescension, in her old age saw her daughter as a rival, a conqueror, like Hannibal: “It was Anna’s turn to be his third wife, although she had tried to be independent and leave home, and she hesitated a lot whether to leave or not. However, from 1923 onwards, and after Sigi was diagnosed with mouth cancer, Anna had no doubts and offered him her life unconditionally.” (Gersão 2024) As in Benatar’s song, the lovers are no longer young, and the dreams have lost their sweetness. Sigmund no longer needs Martha to support and protect him. He has a young, brilliant, beautiful, and

desirable woman by his side, Anna:

Love is a battlefield.

We're losing control

Will you turn me away

Or touch me deep inside?

And before this gets old

Will it still feel the same? (Benatar, 1983)

In a letter to his friend Ferenczi, Sigmund announced the change in domestic leadership: "Now Anna dominates the house more and more". To his brother, Alexander, he confirmed: "Anna is increasingly indispensable to me, [...] without her I would feel completely lost."

In her *Autobiography*, Martha defines her daughter as a researcher and follower of her father's work and his heir, "Anna is also not at home, she lives devoted to her psychoanalytic work, travels frequently to conferences and lectures, outside London or England, and since her father's death, she spends all the time she can with her friend Dorothy Burlingham, in the country house they both bought in Walberdwick". Associated with her husband's work, Martha received "from time to time, visitors, admirers of Sigi and his followers; Anna hates it when this happens, she does not trust me, she is afraid that, unintentionally, I might talk too much, and she cancels all visits on the dates she is not there." (Gersão, 2024) Martha defines her daughter as a competitor and usurper, taken by Hubris. "Analyzed-used and abused-twice by him; Anna is also his disciple, image, mirror, custodian of his works and estate, representative, defender, propagator, companion at all times, caregiver, nurse, the daughter who becomes a necessarily only child, the impossible perfect mother: "Because he wanted her all to himself, he drove men away from her and stole her love, motherhood, femininity and joy" (Gersão, 2024).

9.1 Cancer, Cigars, Cunnilingus

Smoking cigars certainly "increases the risk of cancer, however this increase depends on both the amount of daily consumption and the duration of use, being a dose-dependent effect" (Leite et al., 2021) The issue of oral cancer would currently find a new bias for discussion: oral sex, bearing in mind that two people relatively close to the Freuds died of cancer, Lou Andreas-Salomé and her husband.

The worsening of the cancer running down his throat and his necrotic face transformed the end of the Viennese master's life into a hell of suffering. The fetid decomposition of the wound, generating atrocious pain, was endured by Anna, "she was immune to the feeling of disgust and did not back down" in the face of the destruction wrought in Sigmund's mouth. The outcome will be two lethal doses of morphine, provided by Dr. Schur, administered by the nurse on Anna's orders, and "everything will be done in secret, as she would have liked, secrecy has always had a central place in her life." (Gersão, 2024)

Death will be the relief from suffering, with Freud leaving his earthly existence to enter the story in which he loved and was so involved. "Until the end," Martha continues, "blind, from which he will

always try in vain to escape by identifying himself with the great figures of mythology and history.” Like Baudelaire’s Hercules, Freud, in Martha’s words, is “Sigi-Oedipus leaving the scene supported by Antigone, who, because she loves him so much, brings him death, so that he can finally rest, undone by the demons of his misfortune, among them cocaine,” causing the destruction of part of his mouth, preventing him from speaking or eating properly and using a painful prosthesis “that his daughter took half an hour to try to put in his mouth.” (Gersão, 2024) In a letter to Fliess, Sigmund recalls a family solution adopted when his father became seriously ill. A single daughter dedicated herself to caring for the elderly man until the end of his days: “I do not wish him a prolonged illness, nor do I wish it for my single sister who is caring for him and suffering from this process”. Anna plays the role of this sister, a single woman determined to care for her sick father.

10. Sigmund Freud: Between Magic and the Occult

His brilliant intelligence and consolidated work in Psychoanalysis distanced Sigmund from intellectually weak interlocutors. In her *Autobiography*, Martha confirms the feeling of being “surrounded by people he despised, because they neither esteemed nor understood him, and he felt so isolated that he needed a presence, even from a distance. That is why he would have so many correspondents throughout his life” (Gersão, 2024). In her *Autobiography*, Martha reveals that Sigmund Freud had a high opinion of himself, making it difficult for her to “live with an excessive and contradictory man who, on the one hand, prided himself on his unusual capacity for logical reasoning, and on the other hand, easily gave in to an irrational side that he could not control” (Gersão, 2024). Jung himself observed with some astonishment the fear of occultism by Freud. (Browman, 2009) In her account, Martha highlights Sigmund’s belief in the power of superstition and magic. Perhaps he was a dandy magician in his way, since Marcel Mauss defined the magician as possessing “powers over himself, powers that are his main strength. His will makes him perform movements that others are incapable of. He is believed to escape the laws of weight and can rise into the air and transport himself wherever he wants in an instant. He has the gift of ubiquity” (Mauss, 2019). By quoting Peter J Sowles, Browman points out that a Sigmund client’s children call him *Der Zauberer*, the magician. (Browman, 2009) Attesting to this curious belief, Martha suggests that, for Freud, people like her could, through magical powers, act on others: “a word that immediately jumps out at me: imprisoned, the young woman who imprisoned me.” Sigmund obtained a room of his own in his father’s home, an indication of family privilege, as well as a secret place, full of mysteries hidden from profane eyes.

“To feel safer, he would close the bedroom door so that no one would surprise him; he would possess me with his eyes and imagination, and he found in this a form of pleasure, clandestine and risk-free.” Sigmund feared the feminine power contained in Martha, endowed with uncontrollable magic (Gersão, 2024). If Sigmund forbade his wife from practicing the metaphysical abstractions of the official religion, magic was uncontrollable precisely because it was concrete. (Mauss, 2019).

In her letters, aware of having such powers, she reports: “In reality, I continued to be beautiful and

seductive as if I had cast a spell on her. She could not help but love me because she had experienced Martha's magic. 'I felt Martha's charm,' she repeated. She reassured herself, concluding, 'I was not a nymph, but human'" (Gersão, 2024).

This "superstitious side, which surfaced at the slightest pretext" and surprised her, revealed itself unexpectedly, as in the letter in which Sigmund asked if, at any time during the day, "I loved him less, or did not love him at all, and, if so, at what time it happened. He wanted to ensure that this was not the cause of a small damage to the ring, from which the pearl had fallen. Due to a sudden and involuntary gesture: "What would I be doing at that exact moment?" Foreseeing the weaknesses of this powerful and brilliant fiancé, Martha decided to make fun of him: "The answer that now seems funny was 'Eating a piece of cake' with the feeling of calming a frightened child" (Gersão, 2024).

She was surprised he was "strongly attracted to inexplicable phenomena such as telepathy." The domain of the occult also interested him, even in cases where he presented himself with a malevolent aura. "There are things that should not be mentioned, not even as a joke, so that they do not happen." He would write to Fliess years later (Gersão, 2024). Mauss demonstrates the magician's conduct through "sudden gestures, cutting words, oratorical or poetic gifts that magicians also have. All these signs ordinarily denote a certain nervousness that magicians cultivate in many societies and exacerbated during ceremonies" (Mauss, 2019). In his clinic, Freud used liturgies and material elements that in ancient societies protected the magician "against the powers that he will evoke." And so, the desire for its action follows the act, the "minimum representation that a magical act involves is the representation of its effect" (Mauss, 2019).

10.1 Sigmund and Martha Love on a Domestic Battlefield

She discovered some ambiguities in the relationship, such as in her fiancé's love letters. He praises her: "Dear Martha, how you have changed my life", but prefers to name me as if Martha were another person (which will be repeated over the years). I am not writing to a stranger, but to the young woman who –, for the past few days, but after an endless stream of thoughts – I consider my dearest friend (in the masculine, as if true friendship required someone of the same gender and at one's level) (Gersão, 2024).

Other strangenesses of language arose when Sigmund declared to Martha that "hatred was sometimes the beginning of love, and that any of them could easily become the other." If for Sigmund this was possible for her, the "simultaneous existence of both never made any sense to me." He magnified what she calls salvific love; however, "he forced me to make sacrifices and obligations, and to give him constant proof that I loved him, he devoured me like a lion, his prey" to have her inside him and "assimilated to him" (Gersão, 2024).

To reconcile with her, after a quarrel, he sent: "an armful of roses with a brief message. 'To the dearest young lady, as a tribute for the lost day of yesterday, as a request that this gift not overload the fragile childish hands with work'" (Gersão, 2024). Despite being gifted with "childish hands", she changed Sigmund's life, who "prefers to name me as if Martha were someone else (which will be repeated over

the years)” by exorcising, through words and gestures, Martha’s ability to dominate or possess him without his knowledge or consent (Gersão, 2024). Or as in the song:

But if we get much closer.

I could lose control.

And if your heart surrenders

You’ll need me to hold

We are Young. (Benatar, 1983)

10.2 Sigmund Freud, Dandy and Flaneur

Reading Charles Baudelaire, one is certain that Sigmund Freud was both a dandy and a flaneur. A dandy can be a hidden character who, by disguising his origin, acquires another, grandiose, and powerful one. On the other hand, Freud, a brilliant and inventive intellectual, was never bored. As a flaneur of souls, a hidden, passionate, and effective observer, living in the crowd of clients made him the center of the world.

I will return to the relationship problem between Baudelaire and Freudian theory, considering that the clinic and Freudian theory are an artistic operation. Listening to the patient recover from the oscillating mists, memories, events, words, gestures, and drives, Freud metamorphoses them on his artistic support: paper. Alternatively, as Baudelaire wrote, “The phantasmagoria is extracted from nature. All materials, cluttered in memory, are classified, ordered, harmonized, and undergo this forced idealization that is only the result of a childish perception, that is, of a sharp and magical perception and by dint of being naive” (Baudelaire, 1943). Clinical Freud, as is required of a dandy, is cold and impersonal in front of patients, avoiding getting emotional. (Baudelaire, 1923).

10.3 Freud, Martha and Judaism

There has been much debate about Sigmund Freud’s relative distance from Judaism. During the wedding ceremony, he reluctantly followed the Jewish ritual. It is fair to argue that the growing anti-Semitism in the last decades of the century led Freud to return, at least partially, to his origins. For example, his association in 1881 with the Jewish organization B’nai B’rith is well-known.

Numerous authors, among whom Peter Gay illustrates, insist on the importance of religion for Martha, a woman who came from a “strictly observant Orthodox Jewish family and accepted its pieties, while Freud was not just an indifferent unbeliever but a principled atheist determined to win his bride away from all that superstitious nonsense” (Gay, 1998).

Did she reconfigure her love for religion into affection for her husband and her status as a wife? We know that Martha submitted to her husband’s wishes after marrying him, unless otherwise indicated in the unpublished letters. Moreover, as Homer’s Cyclops said, if no one complains, there is no harm. The repression becomes evident when, after Sigmund’s death, Martha suspended the *Kristallnacht* decree by her husband, which had lasted more than half a century.

Her gestures recover a gestural, discursive memory materialized in objects of worship. Listed below: she lit the Sabbath candles, restored her presence as Queen of the House, circled her hands three times

to maintain the heat of the flames and the votive spirit. She covered her eyes and recited the prayer and blessing: Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu be-mitzvoֹtov ve-tzivoni, le'hadlik ner shel Shabbat (Merkin, 2024).

Appignanesi and Forrester confirm the return to the Mosaic faith after Sigmund's death, transcribing the testimony of Martha's nephew. (Appignanesi, Forrester, 1992). The words of the philosopher, Isaiah Berlin, in Merkin's book, suggest that, at some point, Martha expressed her annoyance: "observed that husband and wife were still arguing the issue of lighting candles, however playfully, as late as 1938: 'Martha joked at Freud's monstrous stubbornness which prevented her from performing the ritual, while he firmly maintained the practice was foolish and superstitious'" (Merkin, 2024). In this sense, by figuratively writing her Autobiography and recovering her Jewish origins, Martha celebrated a second Purim, inserted in the medieval Jewish tradition of the poet and statesman from the city of Granada, Spain, Samuel ibn Nagrela, and that of Narbonne, in 1236, or that of Alcácer-Quibir, as Yerushalmi explains, "remembering the most bitter occasions when there was no freedom" (Yerushalmi, 1982).

11. Conclusion

The originality of the author's new book grants a voice to Martha Bernays, the wife of the famous Sigmund Freud, a woman silenced by circumstances and history. Using as its central source part of the correspondence between the two, friends, associates, and relatives, the narrative contextualizes the background of a couple and a family. Theirs was that of imperialism, of the vertiginous growth of a modern culture between 1880 and 1940, mother of the totalitarianisms of the 20th century.

Teolinda's work, revealing sadness and misunderstandings, recalls the words of Hannah Arendt, who wrote in her work, *The Human Condition*: "All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about it" (Arendt, 2004). Teolinda glimpsed the background of Martha's social and family life in Charles Dickens's "Hard Times", a century that, according to Hobsbawm, went on too long. In modern German industrial society, women were responsible for the domiciliary care, the family, and domestic dignity. Martha's performance was impeccable, bearing children, keeping her husband's psychoanalytic workshop running smoothly, and allowing him to produce his brilliant work. The apartment at Berggasse 19 was the theater of operations where the family's daily life and the children's growth took place for more than forty-five years. As there is no Adam who does not have his Eve, according to the popular saying, in the pages of the *Unwritten Autobiography*, a brilliant dandy emerges, alongside a fearless woman, stopping in her sacrosanct home the heartless hand of the Holocaust machine that victimized six million Jews. As Weber wrote, Martha "outlived her husband for twelve years, dying at the age of ninety, taking the mystery of who she was with her" (Weber, 2024). Finally, as in Pat Benatar's song, their love was a battlefield. Martha and Sigmund Freud would recite together, in German, their mystery of love in a harmonious duet:

"Liebe ist ein Schlachtfeld

Wir sind stark

Niemand kann uns sagen, dass wir Unrecht haben
Wir haben so lange in unseren Herzen gesucht
Wir wissen es beide.” (Benatar)

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