

## FROM “ANNA O.” TO BERTHA PAPPENHEIM: Transforming Private Pain Into Public Action

Meredith M. Kimball  
Simon Fraser University

Bertha Pappenheim (“Anna O.”) was treated for hysteria by Josef Breuer when she was a young adult. As a mature adult she became a leading social worker, writer, and feminist activist in the German Jewish community. This article examines her therapy with Breuer, her own struggle for recovery, and some links between her earlier and later life, in particular the lack of intimate relationships in her life and her work against the victimization of women. Throughout the article psychoanalytic interpretations, social history, and feminist analyses are integrated to provide a contextualized examination of Pappenheim’s life.

I want to say that a living organization can only exist against the background of a spiritual or ethical goal. Observation of all details, collection of all experiences, which may accomplish the end, uncompromising determination, not to lose the ethical background from view, and most of all: a blessed phantasy—which will keep the creation (you call it organization) alive in outlook. I go so far as to say that it is impossible to organize without phantasy. (Bertha Pappenheim, quoted in Edinger, 1968, p. 69)

There are people of spirit and there are people of passion, both less common than one might think. Much rarer are the people of spirit and passion. But the rarest is passion of the spirit. Bertha Pappenheim was a woman of passion of the spirit. . . . Hand on this image. Hand on her memory. Be witnesses that it still exists. We have a pledge. (Martin Buber, quoted in Edinger, 1968, Foreword)

Bertha Pappenheim was born into a wealthy orthodox Jewish Viennese family on February 27, 1859. Of the four children born to Siegmund Pappenheim and Recha Goldschmidt Pappenheim only two—Bertha and her brother Wilhelm, who was 18 months younger than Bertha—survived to adulthood. Flora died of cholera at the age of 2, 4 years before Bertha was born, and Henriette died of tuberculosis at the age of 17, when Bertha was 8 and Wilhelm 6 years old (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 98–101; Pollock, 1972, p. 478; Rosenbaum, 1984, p. 1). Bertha’s relationship with Wilhelm was one of rivalry and distance. As the only son in an orthodox Jewish family, he would have been favored, and certainly he had opportunities for education and involvement in the world that were denied to all women in Germany at the time. In 1882 Bertha’s cousin, Fritz Homburger, described Wilhelm’s behavior toward her: “He thinks all the time that he has the right to dominate her, and has often provoked her by his inconsiderate behaviour” (Hirschmüller, 1989,

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Meredith M. Kimball, Department of Psychology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada V5A 1S6. Electronic mail may be sent to kimball@sfu.ca.

p. 299). Although she never severed her relationship with Wilhelm, she remained distant throughout her life, visiting him rarely even though he had one of the greatest libraries of central Europe in the areas of social sciences and social work (Kaplan, 1984, p. 102). As an adult Bertha Pappenheim referred to a tapestry of two fighting roosters in her home as "a portrait of Willy and me" (Pollock, 1972, p. 481).

Pappenheim's education consisted of both religious and secular training. As a daughter in an orthodox family she received basic religious training. She knew both Hebrew and Yiddish, prayers and rituals of the Jewish calendar, rules for keeping an orthodox Jewish kitchen, laws relating to the preparation of food, and ritual menstrual hygiene. However, as a woman she did not receive any formal religious education in Jewish laws and traditions. Consistent with the expectations for young women of social standing, both Jewish and gentile, she received 10 years of formal education in a private Catholic school. Here she learned modern languages, music, and needlework. On leaving school at 16 she was fluent in English, French, and Italian. There were, however, no further educational opportunities open to her or indeed to any woman in Vienna at this time. She stayed at home living the life of a *höhere Tochter* (middle-class daughter of marriageable age), which consisted of riding, walks, tea parties, theater, concerts, sewing and needlework for one's trousseau, and precious little intellectual stimulation. The life of the *höhere Tochter* was denounced by Pappenheim and other German feminists as a waste of time and energy. Helene Lange, Hedwig Dohm, Hedwig Wachenheim, and Alice Salomon all spoke out about the mind-numbing and soul-destroying aspects of this time of their lives (Edinger, 1968, p. 45; Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 98–101; Kaplan, 1984, pp. 104–105). In words that resonate with Pappenheim's experiences of these years, Dohm described the oppression of this time of her life:

When, in the place of the knowledge and truth for which I was reaching out, they put into my hand the really over-estimated cooking spoon,—they drove a human soul, which was created perhaps to live splendidly and fruitfully, into a desert of wild fantasies and sterile dreams, from which it first awakened as this mode of life came to an end. (Anthony, 1915, p. 242)

Under the restrictions of bourgeois Viennese society and the pressures of nursing her father, who fell ill in the summer of 1880, Pappenheim was driven into her own "desert of wild fantasies" and developed a severe mental illness. Even though a number of her symptoms developed over the summer and fall, her family did not seek help for her until she developed a severe cough late in the fall of 1880. At this point the family doctor, Josef Breuer, was called in to treat her. He quickly diagnosed her problems as mental and began what was to be an 18-month treatment. She had many disabling symptoms, and from December 11, 1880, to April 1, 1881, she was confined to her bed. Her symptoms included, among others, paralysis of her right side, upper left side, and neck; visual problems; temporary deafness; and considerable linguistic disturbances, including mutism, incomprehensible speech, and the loss of her ability to speak or understand German. She alternated between a waking state in which she was melancholy and anxious but normal and an alternate state of consciousness—which she called "time missing"—in which she hallucinated, misbehaved, threw cushions, and accused people of doing things to her and leaving her in a muddle.

After her father died on April 5, 1881, Pappenheim's mental state deteriorated. Her suicide attempts led Breuer to transfer her, against her will, to a villa near the sanatorium at Inzersdorf on June 7, 1881. Here she was prescribed high doses of chloral hydrate as a sedative and morphine for recurring facial pain. She returned to Vienna in the fall to live with her mother in a new house her mother had moved to after the death of Bertha's father. During the Chanukah holidays of December 1881 she became particularly disturbed and began to live each day in two different time frames, one the present day, and the other the same day of the previous year. Breuer continued to see her daily. During the spring of 1882 Pappenheim led Breuer to the discovery of what he called the *cathartic method*, which involved tracing all occurrences of a symptom back through time to its first appearance, at which point it would disappear.<sup>1</sup> When the therapy ended in June 1882, she was still suffering from symptoms and pain, and in July she entered the Bellevue Sanatorium at Kreuzlingen on Breuer's recommendation. She remained there until October 1882, after which she visited with relatives and returned to Vienna in January 1883. Very little is known about her life from 1883 to 1888, when she moved with her mother to Frankfurt. She was admitted to Inzersdorf three more times during this period, in 1883 for 6 months, in 1885 for 4 months, and in 1887 for 2 weeks (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 112–116).

Although Breuer did not treat Pappenheim after June 1882, he remained fascinated by what he had learned in working with her. He shared his ideas with a younger colleague, Sigmund Freud, who was at that time just beginning his medical practice. Several years later Freud began to use Breuer's cathartic method with some of his own patients. The therapeutic results were promising, and in 1895 he and Breuer published *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955), which included the case history of "Anna O.,"<sup>2</sup> written by Breuer and based on his treatment of Pappenheim. By this time Pappenheim had recovered from her illness and had begun an active career as a social worker, writer, and political activist in Frankfurt, which continued until her death in 1936. She never revealed her identity as "Anna O.," and her desire for secrecy was respected by the few family members who were familiar with her past. It was not until 1953, when Ernst Jones published an unauthorized disclosure of her identity in his biography of Freud, that the identity of "Anna O." as Pappenheim was publicly known (Jones, 1953, pp. 223–226).

In this article I first examine Pappenheim's struggle for recovery, a process that Daniel Boyarin (1997, p. 340) perceptively labeled *self-reconstruction*. I then turn to an analysis of how she transformed the private struggles of her early life into the many public accomplishments of her maturity.

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<sup>1</sup> There are two primary sources describing Pappenheim's illness written by Breuer. The best known is the case study from *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955, pp. 21–47). A recently discovered case history written by Breuer in 1882 is included in Albrecht Hirschmüller's (1989, pp. 276–292) biography of Breuer. Although there is considerable overlap in the two case histories, much more information about the interactions of Pappenheim and her family around the time of her father's death is included in the 1882 case study, and the last 6 months of treatment, from December 1881 to June 1882, are discussed in the 1895 case study only.

<sup>2</sup> Pappenheim was concerned that as few people as possible know she was "Anna O." After the publication of *Studies on Hysteria* in 1895 by Freud and Breuer, her identity as "Anna O.," although widely known in the upper-class Viennese Jewish community, was known to only a few relatives and close colleagues in Frankfurt. Because for her "Anna O." was an unwelcome public identity, I have chosen to use quotation marks to set it off in this article.

## Pappenheim's Self-Reconstruction

### *Therapy With Breuer*

Pappenheim's journey of self-reconstruction began in the therapeutic relationship with Breuer. For both people this relationship created powerful emotional ties. Pappenheim was an attractive young woman who, according to her friend and Freud's fiancée, Martha Bernays, could "turn the head of the most sensible of men," a quality that Bernays described as a misfortune (Appignanesi & Forrester, 1992, p. 82). Her attractiveness was probably not lost on Breuer. He may also have been influenced by the loss of his own mother, also named Bertha, who had died giving birth to his younger brother when he was between 2 and 3 years old. At the time of her death, Bertha Breuer was 26 years old, only a few years older than Pappenheim was at the time of her illness. Breuer named his oldest daughter Bertha after his mother. By the age of 32, only 6 years before his therapeutic relationship with Pappenheim began, he had lost all the members of his family of origin. This may have heightened his identification with Pappenheim, who was grieving the loss of her father (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 9–11; Pollock, 1968).

During the therapy, Breuer must have developed a fascination for the richness and complexity of Pappenheim's inner world. Her life "became known to me to an extent to which one person's life is seldom known to another" (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955, pp. 21–22). He was privileged to be present at the solving of an intellectual puzzle worthy of the attention of the best scientist. As her telling of stories brought emotional and physical relief, and later as her own formulation of working backward to the origin of a symptom led to the disappearance of the symptom, he must have felt the excitement of discovery. Although house calls were common, and doctors and patients often socialized in upper class Jewish Vienna, Breuer spent an extraordinary amount of time with Pappenheim, which can be interpreted partly as a reflection of his emotional attachment. Over a period of 18 months, when they were both in Vienna, he saw her once a day and, toward the end of the treatment, twice a day. Individual visits sometimes lasted for several hours. Even when she was in the country and he was in Vienna he came to see her at least once every 3 days. After his holiday in the summer of 1881, when he returned to find her much worse, he took her to Vienna for a week so that she could tell him three to five stories each evening, working off the emotional tension that had built up during his 5-week absence (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955, pp. 31–32, 35–36).

Breuer gave Pappenheim two gifts that bound her very strongly to him in an emotionally dependent relationship and provided the basis from which she began to struggle for her own recovery. First, he listened to her, took her intellect seriously, and validated her internal fantasy world as important and interesting. This was undoubtedly the first time this had happened in her life. He listened for hour after hour as she communicated the fantasies of her "private theatre" and through this process found relief. He encouraged her to explore her symptoms and was patient with the time it took her to go through each occurrence in exact reverse order until she arrived at the original instance. Of the ones he recorded, the number of occurrences of a single symptom ranged from 12 to 108. Furthermore, if she made a mistake in the sequence she either corrected herself or came to a standstill (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955, pp. 36–37).

Second, he did not lie to her or deceive her. This was particularly important in the context of her mother's and brother's many lies and deceptions. Breuer was careful not to lie to her even when it would have been convenient to do so. Two examples of this are particularly striking. First, when her father died, she had not been permitted to see him for 2 months, and when he was very near death "people told her nothing but lies" (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 284). For 2 days after he died her mother and brother still did not acknowledge his death to her in spite of her repeated requests that they do so. This denial took place in the presence of orthodox Jewish mourning rituals being carried out in the home. Finally, in response to a plea to him in Italian to tell her the truth, Breuer replied that she already knew it, to which she replied that yes, she felt as if she had known it for a long time (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 284). Although Breuer did not mention it directly, I would assume that he had to negotiate between the obvious need for her to know and her family's desire that she not know for fear it would upset her. He did this in a way that honored what she already knew and did not violate the wishes of her family that she not be directly told. Second, later that spring, when she was suicidal and he judged she needed to be taken to a sanatorium, "this was accomplished without deception, but not without force" (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 286). One assumes that she opposed this move strongly and that it would have been tempting to trick her into it, but he did not.

This lengthy and emotionally charged exchange created a strong emotional dependence in both of them. This was, from a modern perspective, a very difficult transference-countertransference situation. Both Breuer and Pappenheim may have transferred preoedipal, prelinguistic, emotional longings onto the other. For him, the loss of his mother when he was a toddler could have contributed to his blurring of emotional boundaries. Furthermore, Pappenheim's preoedipal identification with Breuer may have created a narcissistic countertransference in which he confused her feelings with his own (Bram, 1965; Hunter, 1983; Spotnitz, 1984). Although this possibility must remain speculation, it is one that is consistent with: (a) Breuer's refusal to remain her doctor after June 1882 even though she clearly was not well, (b) his never again using the cathartic treatment that he had discovered with her, and (c) the fact that 25 years later he wrote he had learned

that it was impossible for a 'general practitioner' to treat a case of that kind without bringing his activities and mode of life completely to an end. I vowed at the time that I would *not* go through such an ordeal again. (Cranefield, 1958, p. 319)

However difficult the experience of emotional dependency was for Breuer, Pappenheim's emotional dependency was much more serious and difficult because of the lack of power and options in her life at the time. Breuer was a successful physician, he had a wife and five children, and he was a respected adult in his community. In contrast, Pappenheim was dependent financially on her parents, had no occupation or prospect of one, and had no one she could depend on emotionally within or outside of her family. As a consequence, the signs of her emotional dependency were much clearer during the therapeutic relationship. Each time Breuer left her, from a few days to a few weeks, she was much worse when he returned. Although she would sometimes take drugs and food from other doctors, she would engage in the "talking cure" only with Breuer. Many of the things he did as a doctor, although standard practice at the time, heightened her dependency—

for example, massages, holding her hand, feeding her, and perhaps engaging in social interactions outside the therapy situation.<sup>3</sup> However, as stated above, I believe the main sources of Pappenheim's dependency were the gifts Breuer gave her—listening to her and telling her the truth.

Whatever the nature of their emotional relationship, when the therapy ended on June 7, 1882, Pappenheim was far from well. For the next 5 years she was in and out of sanatoria four times, she was seriously addicted to both chloral hydrate and morphine for at least part of that time, and as late as 1887 she was still having some problems with hallucinations. In January and May of 1887 Martha Freud (formerly Bernays) wrote to her mother that she had seen Pappenheim, who was fine during the day but still had problems with hallucinations in the evening (Jones, 1953, pp. 225, 412). What Breuer gave her, in terms of validating her experience, was the place from which she could begin her self-reconstruction. However, the most crucial work she did on her own. I see five important steps in her self-reconstruction occurring over the 13 years between 1882 and 1895: (a) choosing the date to end the relationship with Breuer, (b) withdrawing from drugs, (c) writing and publishing her own work, (d) moving to Frankfurt, and (e) taking her first full-time job. I will discuss each of these in some detail.

### *Ending the Therapy With Breuer*

By the spring of 1882, encouraged by the success of the cathartic method in removing symptoms, both Breuer and Pappenheim agreed that the therapy should end. In an attempt to assert control, Pappenheim "formed a strong determination" that the treatment should end on June 7, 1882, the 1-year anniversary of her being taken against her will to Inzersdorf (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955, p. 40). On June 7, 1881, she had been not only forcibly moved but also separated from Breuer in a way that she could not control. A year later she reclaimed control by deciding to end the relationship with him, separate herself from him, strike out on her own, and claim her independence. However, because she was still ill and had very few avenues open to her, this decision was an ambivalent one. It must have both empowered and frightened her. And thus, as the Freud-Jones story goes, Breuer was called back later that day to find her with severe abdominal cramps and in the middle of a fantasy childbirth with his child. He was so unprepared for this that he quickly hypnotized her and fled, never to see her again and never to treat a hysterical patient again. He immediately took a vacation with his wife, who had been quite jealous, and on this trip his youngest daughter, Dora, was conceived (Jones, 1953, 223–226).

There is considerable debate about the historical accuracy of the Freud-Jones

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<sup>3</sup> The only example of this I can find is Lucy Freeman's (1972/1994) description of a carriage ride. In May 1881, Breuer took his daughter, Bertha (then 10 or 11 years old) and Pappenheim for a ride in the Prater to see the spring flowers. Pappenheim was so depressed that she saw only the flower in his buttonhole, not any of the other flowers, and afterward mentioned suicide (p. 26). I assume this is a fictional incident, as it is mentioned nowhere in Breuer's case studies or in other sources except those who cite Freeman. In spite of most likely being fictional, it captures aspects of the emotional dependence I am talking about. Although it would not have been unheard of at the time in a doctor-patient relationship, it represented Breuer's desire to bring his Berthas together and may have encouraged a fantasy in Pappenheim that she was his wife or his daughter (p. 222). Furthermore, it is the kind of interaction that would have encouraged her dependence on him, especially as she hardly went out at all during her illness.

story. One group of scholars, mostly historians (Ellenberger, 1970, pp. 483–484; Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 126–132), have argued that the story is basically a myth. Another group, mostly psychoanalysts (Rosenbaum & Muroff, 1984), have accepted the story as reality. Different evidence has been offered to support each view.

Two main lines of evidence are proposed that question the reality of the story. First, there are historical inaccuracies in the Freud–Jones story. Dora Breuer was born on March 11, 1882—before Breuer’s treatment of Pappenheim ended—and thus could not have been conceived afterward. Breuer did see Pappenheim, probably several times, after the treatment ended, and he continued to treat hysterical clients, although never with the cathartic method. Second, there is a lack of contemporary evidence that attests to the story. Breuer never wrote of the event and, for many years, neither did Freud, although he alluded to it several times. The earliest was in an exchange of letters with Martha Bernays in late 1883 in which they referred indirectly to some event that had led to the end of Breuer’s treatment of Pappenheim and to Mathilde Breuer’s jealousy over her husband’s attentions to his patient (Appignanesi & Forrester, 1992, pp. 81–82). In his autobiographical essays, written in 1914 and 1925, Freud (1914/1957) referred to an “untoward event” (p. 12) and to transference love that was so upsetting to Breuer that he “retired in dismay” (Freud, 1925/1959, p. 26), but he did not specifically refer to a birth fantasy. In conversations with Marie Bonaparte in the mid-1920s, Freud alluded to Pappenheim’s hysterical pregnancy and to a suicide attempt by Breuer’s wife (Jackowitz, 1984, pp. 257, 263).

Finally, on June 2, 1932, almost 50 years after the event, Freud presented the first specific reconstruction of a childbirth fantasy in a letter to Stefan Zweig. Here Freud said that on the evening of the day on which all Pappenheim’s symptoms had disappeared, Breuer was called back, found her confused and writhing with pain and, when he asked what was wrong, she replied: “Now Dr. B.’s child is coming!” Freud also said he was so convinced of the accuracy of his reconstruction that he published it, and that Dora Breuer showed it to her father, who confirmed it shortly before his death (Freud, 1960, pp. 412–413). Certainly Dora Breuer could not have discussed the 1932 letter with her father, because Josef Breuer died in 1925. What she probably read to her father was Freud’s 1925 reconstruction, which in the published version mentioned transference love but not a fantasy childbirth (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 127, 377).

On the other hand, several lines of evidence support the reality of the childbirth fantasy. First, Freud described it in vivid and specific terms. Although he did so many years after the event, it was a striking event that he might well have remembered accurately. He even may have chosen to refrain from public reference to the actual childbirth fantasy until after Breuer’s death out of respect for Breuer’s privacy. Second, the fantasy was consistent with the dynamics of the case as recorded at the time, in particular the strong and unrecognized transference and countertransference that all scholars agree occurred. Third, it is consistent with Breuer’s behavior. Although he did see Pappenheim after June 1882, he was never her doctor again; he refused a request in 1883 from Bertha’s mother, Recha, to resume his treatment (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 144–145, 303–304), and 25 years later he described working with Pappenheim as an “ordeal” (Cranefield, 1958, p. 319). Finally, although Dora Breuer’s conception did not fit chronologically with

the end of Pappenheim's treatment in June 1882, dynamically, it might have been related. Pappenheim had been reliving the spring of 1881 in her alternate state of consciousness for the 6 months prior to June 1882. Dora Breuer would have been conceived in June 1881. It is possible that Pappenheim realized this, either from the date of the baby's birth, which she was likely told, or from some intuitive perceptions of his feelings the previous year. On June 7, 1882, she used this information and matched her fantasy childbirth to Dora Breuer's conception in the process of reliving June 7, 1881 (Appignanesi & Forrester, 1992, pp. 83-84; Spotnitz, 1984).

Whether the birth fantasy reflects historical reality, myth, or some mix of the two, I argue that the fantasy is a useful metaphor for the beginning of Pappenheim's self-reconstruction. In contrast to Freud and most other psychoanalysts who have emphasized the sexual aspects of the birth fantasy, I argue instead for an interpretation of it as a fantasy of procreation. In comparison to genital pregnancy fantasies, procreation fantasies are more basic and inclusive, arise in both girls and boys prior to knowledge of sexual differences, are not tied up with sexual family dynamics, and reflect a basic human urge to prolong life and avert death through creativity (Macalpine & Hunter, 1953; Reichard, 1956). The metaphor of childbirth as reflective of Pappenheim's life is more consistent with a procreation fantasy than with a genital pregnancy fantasy in three ways.

First, the birth fantasy can be read as being tied up with issues of independence and dependence in Pappenheim's life at this time. She had just ended the most interesting and most supportive relationship in her life. She knew she had to do this, that it was important to break the emotional dependency that tied her to Breuer. At the same time she must have been frightened at what she had done. The birth fantasy can be read as her attempt to break with him, to put the relationship outside herself and into the world, and to give birth to herself as an independent person who could survive on her own. In contrast, a genital pregnancy fantasy would represent the desire to keep the relationship inside oneself.<sup>4</sup> A child is both a separate person and a vulnerable, dependent one. As much as she sought independence, Pappenheim must also have felt vulnerable and dependent in her break with Breuer, and so the fantasy can also be read as an expression of her ambivalent desire both to re-engage his interest and to make the break with him irrevocable. For 18 months her fantasies and stories had fascinated him and kept him coming back. This fantasy might have been expected to bring Breuer back as a particularly compelling and interesting production of her inner world; at the same time, a fantasy that involved him as the father of her child might well be expected to drive him away.<sup>5</sup>

Second, I read the childbirth fantasy as representing the centrality of creativity throughout Pappenheim's life. In her stifling life as an adolescent she had invented her own "private theater" to entertain herself. Her creativity was powerful enough not only to keep the attention of Breuer for 18 months but also to provide the

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<sup>4</sup> I thank Elinor Ames for the idea of how different childbirth and pregnancy are as representations of expelling a relationship outside of oneself versus holding a relationship inside oneself.

<sup>5</sup> I thank Gail Campbell for suggesting that the childbirth fantasy reflected Pappenheim's desire to break with Breuer in addition to my original idea that it reflected her desire to re-engage his interest.



imaginative stimulus for the creation of psychoanalysis. As a part of her self-reconstruction the birth fantasy can be read as Pappenheim's metaphor for giving birth to a new self or, more specifically, the hope that with a fresh start she could create a more productive and healthy life for herself. After she recovered, creativity remained an important part of her identity. She wrote and published stories and plays. She made and collected fine laces and other art objects, which gave her great pleasure. She had a deep love of beauty in music and the theater. For her an organization was an artistic creation, and she reacted to any interference with or destruction of it the way a painter or sculptor would feel on seeing his or her creation destroyed (Edinger, 1968, p. 69). Dianne Hunter (1983) described this reading of the birth fantasy as "a wish to bring a new identity and perhaps a new reality into the world" (p. 475).

Third, the birth fantasy is consistent with the importance of motherhood in Pappenheim's life. Although she never had biological children, she was involved in the lives of hundreds of children in her work at the orphanage (1895–1906) and in her own institution at Isenburg (1907–1936). She identified closely with the ideology of spiritual motherhood that was central to German maternal feminisms (Allen, 1991; Edinger, 1968, pp. 60–61; Kaplan, 1979, pp. 69–80). A story that Pappenheim wrote sometime in the 1880s and published anonymously can be read as a reworking of her birth fantasy. Kamilla, abandoned by her fiancé, devotes herself to the care of neighborhood children. When the stork mother dies, there is great confusion as babies are matched with the wrong families. To bring order to the land of the storks again, Kamilla is hired as head nurse in charge of distributing children, who grow on trees when they are ready to be born into their families. In this work Kamilla is very happy because her greatest desire has been realized and she has as many little children as she desires (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 122).

### *Overcoming Addictions*

The second important step of Pappenheim's self-reconstruction was withdrawing from the drugs to which she had become addicted during her treatment. Exactly when she began to take both morphine for the pain of facial neuralgia, and chloral hydrate as a sedative, is unclear. When she was transferred to Inzersdorf in June 1881, she began to receive chloral hydrate on a regular basis, and Breuer stated that he had given it to her three or four times before this, needing up to 5 g to induce sleep (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955, p. 28; Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 286–287). It is clear that when she entered Kreuzlingen in July 1882 she had been regularly taking chloral hydrate in doses up to 5 g for a year and that when on one occasion she had not been given it for four nights, she had a severe withdrawal reaction, including delirium tremens. The dosage of 4–5 g was high even at that time, when the recommended dosage was 3 g. Ten g is a lethal dose, and current usage is 0.25 g for a sedative dose and 0.5–1 g for hypnosis (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 221, 292–293; Orr-Andrewes, 1987, p. 398). It also is not clear when she started receiving morphine, but she was addicted by the time she entered Kreuzlingen, and a major goal of her treatment there was to wean her from the morphine addiction. An attempt at too quick a withdrawal brought about convulsions on one occasion (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 290–291). Comments at the time from Bertha; her mother, Recha; and her cousin, Fritz Homburger indicated that the concern to

reduce her consumption of morphine was seen as an important part of her recovery (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 298–306).

It is impossible to determine exactly how Pappenheim stopped taking the drugs. Breuer, in a letter written in mid-June 1882, predicted that she would apply her strong will to the project of withdrawal but that he had prevented her from doing so until she arrived at Kreuzlingen (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 294). In support of his prediction, a doctor's report when Pappenheim left Kreuzlingen in October 1882 stated that she had given up chloral hydrate altogether (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 290). Withdrawal from morphine took longer. She was never able to withdraw completely at Kreuzlingen, and she was still taking injections when she left there. It is not known when she was able to successfully leave morphine behind. Perhaps one of the purposes of her three stays in Inzersdorf between 1883 and 1887 was to support her withdrawal. Whatever contributions the drugs made to her illness—and two writers have drawn attention to this possibility (Orr-Andrewes, 1987; Pollock, 1973)—it was critical to her recovery that she stopped taking them, and doing so involved acts of considerable will and determination on her part.

### Writing

The third important step in Pappenheim's self-reconstruction was writing and publishing. Herndl (1988) argued that Pappenheim found a voice for her dissatisfaction through language that she used to effect changes and to sustain her subjectivity. She was "fully recovered" in 1890 when she published her first book of short stories. I agree with the basis of Herndl's argument, and I would like to extend it further. I see the contributions of Pappenheim's writing to her recovery as extending over a wider range of time and progressing in a series of steps. The earliest reference to her writing appears in Breuer's case studies. In the spring of 1881, after her father died, Breuer and Pappenheim developed a rhythm of therapy in which each evening, while in a state of hypnosis (she called this state "clouds"), she would narrate hallucinations and tell stories. Breuer found her stories sad, charming, and similar in style to those of Hans Christian Andersen's *A Picture Book Without Pictures* (1847). After the hypnosis, she would wake up calm, rational, and able to write and draw most of the night (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955, pp. 27–29; Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 285). At least part of her writing was probably a recording of the stories she told Breuer in the evening.

The earliest example of Pappenheim's writing is an account of what it was like to lose her native tongue, which she wrote while in Kreuzlingen at the request of the doctors. Although for more than a year of her illness she had been unable to understand or speak German, by the time she wrote this account, at least 2 months after she arrived at Kreuzlingen in July 1882, she lost her ability to speak and understand German only after she went to bed at night. She wrote a careful account in English of her observations of this phenomenon. The loss of German made her anxious, nervous, and disposed to cry when she feared that she might again lose it altogether. She described her state as one where "I daily [sic] must learn anew to find myself in the sad, bitter fact" (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 297). She wanted her German back; she needed it for her writing.

After Pappenheim left Kreuzlingen in October 1882, she visited with her aunt and cousins in Karlsruhe. Here her cousin, Anna Ettlinger, heard her read some of her stories and encouraged her to become an author. Sometime in the 1880s she

published anonymously a series of five stories, *Kleine Geschichte für Kinder* (*Little Stories for Children*). One of these stories is about a water sprite who cannot leave her pond, which is guarded by a grinning stone head. When she hears dance music she leaves the pond without being seen, finds a handsome dancer whose description resembles Breuer, and dances the evening away. However, her secret is discovered when he looks at her green eyes, and he leaves her after the dance is over. She returns to the pond, now frozen over, and lies down by the edge of it. The snow covers her, and in the spring she has turned into a snowdrop (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 117, 122–123). It is a sad story, but also one in which lost love is transformed into a beautiful object, the first flower of spring. I would read this story as being not only about loss but also about hope. Her life seemed empty with the losses she had suffered, and yet she remained hopeful that from her loss beauty could be born.

Pappenheim continued writing and in 1890 published *In der Trödelbude: Geschichten* (*In the Second Hand [Junk] Shop*), not anonymously, but with the pen name P. (Paul) Berthold.<sup>6</sup> These stories reflected concerns about poverty, children, loss, and recovery (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 123–124; Kaplan, 1979, p. 40). She had moved from the private stories she told Breuer as part of her “talking cure” to published stories for the world to read. For 10 years she continued to publish under her pen name. In 1900 she published a pamphlet using her pen name with her own name in parentheses underneath it. Here for the first time she fully claimed her voice as an author and at the same time took credit for her previous publications. Writing remained an important activity for her throughout her life (Kaplan, 1979, pp. 40–51). Probably very few days passed that she did not write something. She continued to publish her writings for the rest of her life. In 1934, 2 years before her death, she wrote in a prayer of thanks “for the hour/In which I found words/For what moves me, so that I could/Move others by them” (Jensen, 1970, p. 288). Writing was an important part of her self-reconstruction, because through it she was able to make connections between her internal worlds of fantasy and the external worlds of other people’s realities, to act on the world, to make change, and to inspire others to act in accordance with her visions.

### *Moving to Frankfurt*

The fourth step in Pappenheim’s self-reconstruction was her move to Frankfurt in 1888. Although nothing is known of how she and her mother made this decision, it is probable that it was primarily her mother’s decision to return to live where she had grown up. Whatever the reasons, this move gave Pappenheim a new start at a time when she was well enough to take advantage of it. It also gave her a whole new community that was not aware of her past and a reasonable possibility that people would not find out. Certainly some members of her family there knew; however, the larger Jewish community in Frankfurt remained quite unaware of her connection with “Anna O.,” which would have been an

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<sup>6</sup> It is unclear whether the pen name Pappenheim used was *P. Berthold*, *Paul Berthold*, or a mix of both forms. Marion Kaplan (1979, pp. 54–55) cited three publications from the 1890s, all under the pen name of *Paul Berthold*. Lucy Freeman (1972/1994, pp. 68, 75) claimed that Pappenheim used *Paul Berthold* in 1890 but had switched to *P. Berthold* by 1899. Albrecht Hirschmüller (1989, pp. 375–376) claimed that she never used the masculine form *Paul* but only the gender-neutral *P. Berthold*.

impossibility had she remained in Vienna (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 152–153, 385). In addition to the anonymity that Frankfurt offered her, it also provided a very different culture for a Jewish woman. Whereas in Vienna Pappenheim had been limited by the lack of activity and ambition prescribed for both Jewish and gentile bourgeois women, in Frankfurt she found a Jewish community with a rich tradition of charity work ripe for a transformation into modern social work, a project to which she devoted a great deal of her energy for the rest of her life (Boyarin, 1997, pp. 338–340). She was 30 years old when she moved to Frankfurt, beyond the age at which she might expect to marry (Kaplan, 1984). Although living alone was not common, an acceptable role for a single adult daughter was to live with and care for a parent. Thus, moving and living with her mother provided her with an acceptable, even honorable, lifestyle and a base from which she could move into the world, at first as a part-time volunteer and later as a full-time professional.

### *Taking Employment*

The fifth and final step to self-reconstruction came when Pappenheim accepted a temporary job as head of a Jewish girls' orphanage in 1895, a position that became permanent in 1897. Taking this job was a significantly greater commitment than doing part-time volunteer work. Although there was a long tradition of upper-class Jews supporting charity projects, this was usually limited to financial aid or serving on boards and committees. Pappenheim went significantly beyond this in taking on this position. Here she had full and final responsibility for the girls and young women in her care. She also needed to move into the public world as the representative of the orphanage, to negotiate supplies and services, and to work with both the staff and the board of directors. Employees were at first suspicious of the rich newcomer, but she convinced them of her seriousness and built good relations with them and with the board (Edinger, 1968, p. 16; Freeman, 1972/1994, pp. 67–71, 178; Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 117–119).

In summary, between 1882 and 1895 Pappenheim actively struggled to reconstruct herself and moved successfully from her world of private fantasies into a world of political and social change. This was a difficult struggle. In 1906 she described herself as living "a life I had to conquer" (Edinger, 1968, p. 25). The ultimate success of her struggle was reflected in the many accomplishments of her life.

### Transforming Private Pain Into Public Action

Pappenheim went on to become a leader in the Jewish community in Frankfurt. Her energy and determination as an organizer were unsurpassed. In 1902 she founded Care by Women (Weibliche Fürsorge) to apply the goals of the feminist movement to Jewish social work. In 1904 she and other Jewish feminists founded the League of Jewish Women (Jüdischer Frauenbund [JFB]), which became an umbrella organization of Jewish feminist groups. By 1905 the JFB had 72 affiliates; by 1913, 32,000 women belonged; and in the 1920s there were more than 400 affiliates and 50,000 members representing 20% of Jewish women in Germany. Pappenheim was the president of JFB for 20 years and on its board until her death. After her mother died in 1905, she began work on the dream of her own institution for unmarried Jewish mothers and their children. In 1907, with her own money and donations from relatives, she established the home at Neu-Isenburg

with several houses where the women lived in family units, celebrated Jewish holidays, and brought up their children. Pappenheim served for 29 years as the organizer, fundraiser, and housemother. Before destruction by the Nazis in 1938, 1,500 women and children from Germany and eastern Europe had lived there (Edinger, 1968, pp. 13–21; Kaplan, 1979, pp. 40–51, 89–93, 134–137).

The contrast between Pappenheim's early illness and the achievements of her later life is striking. My goal is to explore this remarkable transition without (a) reducing her later achievements to symptoms or sublimations of her earlier illness or (b) assuming a discontinuity between the illness of her youth and the achievements of her mature years. In the rest of this article I focus on her transformation of private pain into public action. In exploring this transformation I examine (a) aspects of her later life, connecting but not reducing them to her earlier illness and (b) the resources that supported her resilience and made possible her transformation.

It is important to emphasize the tremendous differences between struggling with a private fantasy world and taking action in the public world.<sup>7</sup> Compared to her later life, during her illness Pappenheim had almost no independence, her ideas were not listened to or taken seriously by anyone other than Breuer, and her effect on others was for the most part to drive them away. Those who could not leave, in particular her mother and brother, deceived her in ways that contributed to her illness. The distance between these experiences and those of an independent woman who traveled widely, ran national organizations, published her writings, and had a full and active social life is immense. It took a journey of courage and a long time for Pappenheim to find her way, but find it she did.

### *Integrating Fantasy and Duty*

Much of the psychoanalytic literature that has examined Pappenheim's later life has done so in terms of the dynamics of her earlier illness (e.g., Karpe, 1961; Meissner, 1979; Rosenbaum & Muroff, 1984). In contrast to these analyses, which assume her later work to be a continuation of her earlier illness through defense mechanisms, reaction formations, or, less reductively, sublimations, my main thesis is that Pappenheim did a great deal more than repress or successfully control her earlier conflicts and fantasy life. She integrated duty and fantasy to create a passionate commitment to the world. Duty was important to her as "a very good and necessary equivalent to my fantasy which goes on at a galloping pace as if there were no duties" (Edinger, 1968, p. 44). She learned to use duty to control the

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<sup>7</sup> Many feminist theorists have discussed hysteria or, more generally, mental illness, as an expression of 19th-century women's revolt against the oppressive situations in which they found themselves. In support of this argument, some women, such as Pappenheim, managed to transform emotional suffering in their youth into feminist action in their mature years, for example, Jane Addams, Josephine Butler, Hedwig Dohm, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Olive Schreiner, Alice Solomon, and Edith Wharton (Herndl, 1988; Kaplan, 1984, pp. 104–105; Showalter, 1993, pp. 292, 299). There was, however, no necessary connection between mental distress and feminism. For some women who constructed active public lives against considerable odds, mental suffering remained a recurring experience (Oppenheim, 1991, pp. 215–225). For the vast majority of women who were diagnosed with some form of mental illness, the outcome was neither feminism nor any other form of public activity, but pain, disability, increased passivity, dependence, and a "cure" that involved a return to and acceptance of traditional gender roles (Smith-Rosenberg, 1972; Tomes, 1990)—and, of course, there were feminist activists who never suffered from mental illness.

excesses of fantasy, and she used fantasy to inspire her sense of duty, to take it beyond mere social conformity or personal repression. Her integration of duty and fantasy made of her life something much greater than either alone. She transformed the frightening fantasies of her illness into the "blessed phantasy" that was so critical to her vision of organization and her work for social change.

To even begin to understand this transformation a great deal more is required than an analysis of Pappenheim's later work in terms of personal motivations and life experiences, particularly her illness. Women's work is often personalized, whereas equally repressed male theorists' work is taken seriously in and of itself. Although not independent of their lives, feminists' theories and political actions cannot be explained by their lives (Shapiro, 1992, pp. 3-5, 41-42). For Pappenheim, as for all historical figures, one must consider both the social contexts that limited her choices and provided her with opportunities and her personal motivations and experiences. In addition, for Pappenheim it is important to acknowledge a spiritual dimension to her work and her sense of mission, one that provided for many others "a way," "prophetic vistas," and "a sharp plow" that opened up the earth to prepare it for new seed (Freeman, 1972/1994, pp. 176-178). Because she accomplished so much and took on so many causes, I will limit my focus here to aspects of her personality and work that have been most frequently reduced to signs of ongoing pathology. These include the lack of sexual and intimate relationships in her life, and her fight against victimization, in particular her work against "white slavery."<sup>8</sup> In the final section of this article I turn to an examination of the personal (her family's wealth and her will) and cultural (orthodox Judaism and feminism) resources that facilitated her transformation of private pain into public action.

*Intimacy.* One of the most noted aspects of Pappenheim's later life is that she did not marry and did not have intimate sexual or emotional relationships with either men or women who were her equal in age or professional experience. The most intimate relationships of Pappenheim's life were with children or women who were much younger and less experienced. Her lack of marriage was interpreted by Freud (1917/1963) as avoiding the "normal course of a woman's life" (p. 274) and often was assumed to be a result of her conflicts about sexuality (Meissner, 1979, p. 37). Whatever the psychological factors that kept her from

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<sup>8</sup> "White slavery" was a term used by feminists and other reformers of the late 19th century to refer to the international traffic in women that resulted from widespread male migrations, poverty, and social unrest of that period. Pappenheim and the JFB were particularly concerned with the movement of Jewish prostitutes by Jewish traffickers from eastern Europe through Germany into the markets of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and South Africa (Bristow, 1983, p. 301; Kaplan, 1979, pp. 103-145). In two important ways the use of the label "white slave" was inaccurate, reflecting more European panic about racial purity than the reality of the worldwide migration of prostitutes. First, the label *white* was a misnomer as the largest numbers of prostitutes were Japanese and Chinese women, not White women, Jew or gentile (Bristow, 1982, p. 2). Second, only a few of these women were truly enslaved by fake offers of employment or falsified ritual marriage contracts (*ketubot*). The majority of Jewish women were involved as prostitutes before they left eastern Europe. Many of these women had very few options, and most were financially exploited by their pimps (Bristow, 1983, p. 306). However, they were not slaves in the sense Africans were, and the use of the term served to obscure differences in the degree of voluntariness involved in the two situations. Thus I have chosen either to use quotation marks to distance myself from this inaccurate and dangerous social construction (Kaplan, 1998, p. 14) or to use a different and more accurate label, such as *traffic in women* or *international prostitution*.

marrying, the social factors were at least as critical, if not more so. She became ill at 21 years of age and remained ill until her late 20s. As an upper-class Jewish woman she could expect to marry between the ages of 22 and 24. By 25 she would have been considered old, although, with a large dowry, which she would have had, she might still have married. By 28 she was an old maid. The timing of her illness overlapped exactly with the years she could have married. Thus, her illness either prevented her from, or allowed her to escape, marriage. As the daughter of an upper-class orthodox Jewish family, she would have had an arranged marriage with a man from a similar background, which would have meant a very narrow range of possible mates (Kaplan, 1984, p. 108; 1991a, pp. 86–99). Indeed, one rumor claimed that she wanted to marry a violinist but her mother forbade it because it was beneath her station (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 119). Her class position also made it financially possible for her not to marry. For most women marriage was the only possible “life insurance,” and to remain unmarried meant a life of poverty. The Pappenheim family wealth both restricted her possible set of partners and protected her from the financial consequences of not marrying (Kaplan, 1991a). As a strong-minded woman, the subordinate marriage relationship would not have been to her liking. As a feminist activist and a professional woman, she was not unusual in remaining single. Many women of her generation chose, or were forced to choose, between marriage and a career (Kaplan, 1984, p. 108).

In her letters, Pappenheim spoke directly of the loneliness she experienced (Edinger, 1968, pp. 47, 60, 95), and sometime around 1911 she wrote a poem titled “Love Did Not Come to Me” (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 308). She also said “Longing is stronger than fulfillment” (Edinger, 1968, p. 95) and realized that having a sense that she was necessary “for nothing and to no one” (p. 47) left her free to travel and to do whatever work she chose. Because she made very high demands on the people with whom she worked, she commented that it was lucky for them that they were not dependent on her or she on them (pp. 46–47). If she had married, she might well have been at least as lonely, because for many women marriage was not a protection from loneliness and illness (Oppenheim, 1991, pp. 227–229). Furthermore, she would have lost the opportunities to travel and organize that gave purpose and meaning to her life.

What Pappenheim did not have, and what would have made her life less lonely, was emotionally intimate relationships with equals, but even these might have tied her down more than she wished. She was the most warm and tender with young children and had close and enduring bonds with several women whom she had known as children in her care and who as adults had become social workers. These younger women she called “children” or “daughters.” She visited them often in her travels, wrote to them, hired them to work on some of her projects, and mentored them in their careers (Edinger, 1968, p. 35; Freeman, 1972/1994, pp. 139–140, 178–179; Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 120; Karpe, 1961, p. 21). She may have modeled these relationships with her social daughters on what she had known with her own mother. The only complete surviving set of her letters was written over a period of 20 years to one of these women, Sophie Mamelok Rosenthal (Edinger, 1968, pp. 25–35). In these letters she advised Sophie in all sorts of matters, often with a tone that resembled that of Recha Pappenheim’s when she wrote to the doctor at a sanatorium where Bertha was staying: “In my letter to my daughter I adopted a tone which expressed a desire but which did not fall far short of a

command" (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 101, 304). Although these relationships with younger women did not provide the emotional intimacy relationships with equals might have, they did provide warmth, contact, and the safety that came with being in control.

I suggest five reasons that may have accounted for Pappenheim's choices. First, although she never regretted not marrying, she did regret not having children. By forming close relationships with the children in her care and following their lives as they grew and became adults, she realized a very concrete form of spiritual motherhood. Second, these relationships provided contact yet left her free to pursue her goals in the world without guilt or hesitation. Third, avoiding close relationships may have been important in protecting the secret of her past. She was careful to hide her past as "Anna O." from her colleagues and friends in Frankfurt. At some point, probably on a visit to Vienna in 1935, she destroyed all of her own papers for the period up to 1890. This secrecy was so important to her that Jones's disclosure of her identity almost 20 years after her death was protested by her executor (Edinger, 1968, p. 15). Fourth, her relationship with Breuer was marked by an inequality of age and power in which she was decidedly in the less powerful position. Her experience of emotional dependency in this relationship may have prompted her in maturity to choose close relationships in which she had the greater experience and authority. Fifth, the trauma of being lied to about her father's state of health, as well as his death, by both her mother and brother (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 283–285) may have made it hard to trust and feel safe in any close emotional or sexual relationship.

The life of Pappenheim, and of many other women who were the first generation to take up a public life as political activists and professional women, did not include marriage and children (Kaplan, 1984, p. 108). These women were seen as sacrificing reproductive powers in order to exercise their intelligence and creativity. In its most negative form gains in brain power were equated with losses in reproductive power. A more positive metaphor is that these women resembled double flowers, both beautiful and sterile. This could be interpreted as an illness or as being ahead of one's time (Showalter, 1993, pp. 291–292). Breuer described adolescents who were prone to hysteria as particularly intelligent, lively, and gifted with an overflowing productivity of mind. This description led him to repeat what a friend had suggested, "that hysterics are the flower of mankind, as sterile, no doubt, but as beautiful as double flowers." (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955, p. 240). Pappenheim turned twice to the image of a flower to describe the single woman. In the story of the water sprite, which she wrote in the 1880s, the sprite who danced with her lover, but was forbidden to have him, turned into a snowdrop (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 122–123). In 1934, near the end of her life, she returned to the image in an essay titled "The Jewish Girl." She likened "the unmarried, mature, independent woman . . . who in her entire being can be, and is, fully responsible for shaping her life, shaping her fate, in a sexual way fully responsible only to herself and completely free in the world" to "a chrysanthemum born unique and without a future" (Edinger, 1968, p. 88). The metaphor of the beautiful but sterile double flower captures both Pappenheim's sense of loss in not having biological children and her view that this loss could, with the help of a "blessed phantasy" and sense of duty, be transformed into an object of beauty.



*Victimization.* The role of victimization in Pappenheim's life has been much commented on and analyzed. She spent much of her life working against the sexual victimization of women. This is often interpreted as reflecting anti-sexuality, anti-men, and specifically anti-Freud attitudes. Males were villains and irresponsible seducers, and women innocent victims (Freeman, 1972/1994, pp. 231–247; Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 125; Hollender, 1980; Karpe, 1961, pp. 14–15, 22–23; Meissner, 1979, p. 37; Stewart, 1984, p. 49). An early and particularly virulent form of this attitude is reflected in a letter Freud wrote to Marie Bonaparte in 1925: “[Bertha Pappenheim] never married. And she has found great joy in life. Can you guess how? What she does? She is active in societies for the protection of white women. Against prostitution! She speaks out against everything sexual” (Jackowitz, 1984, p. 269).

Feminists, on the other hand, have pointed out that Pappenheim was quite sympathetic with young women who became pregnant outside of marriage and dedicated much of her life to helping them and their children. It was the double standard of sexuality that angered her, not sexuality. She saw the double standard as a major cause of Jewish prostitution, along with poverty, limited opportunities to earn a decent living, and antisemitism. The solution was to return to an earlier Jewish unitary standard of sexual purity ensuring premarital virginity and marital fidelity in both sexes (Kaplan, 1976; 1979, p. 113). Her attitude toward sexuality was not liberal, but neither was it puritanical. She condemned not the girls but rather society (Kaplan, 1984, p. 107). She showed compassion to unmarried mothers, including establishing and running for almost 30 years the Neu-Isenberg home for “young prostitutes, girls who are pregnant or who have been delivered in prison, naturally including their babies” and mentally retarded young women who were in danger of “falling into the habit of vice.” She felt that it was important that the women working with these young women be fully experienced sexually so they would be “neither too strict nor too lenient” and therefore preferred married women as staff (Karpe, 1961, p. 17).

Psychodynamic analyses in isolation not only do a disservice to Pappenheim's and other feminists' intelligence and moral outrage (Rosenbaum, 1984, p. 17) but also ignore important social and political contexts that inspired and permitted their work against sexual victimization of girls and women. International Jewish and feminist organizations were politically active in the “white slavery” movement for several decades before Pappenheim joined them (Bristow, 1983; Kaplan, 1979, pp. 103–145). She first became involved in the cause when she attended the Second International Conference for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children in 1902, where she met other Jewish feminists who were interested in organizing themselves around this issue (Kaplan, 1979, p. 111). She formed a sophisticated social analysis of the causes of traffic in women that went far beyond blaming men as individuals. She made it clear that the grinding poverty of Jews in eastern Europe and Russia, and women's lack of education, were responsible for much prostitution (Kaplan, 1979, pp. 117–125). She also criticized specific Jewish laws concerning marriage and divorce as factors that promoted the prostitution of young Jewish women. The *ketubah*, or marriage contract, made it easy to fake marriages. A man could take a wife with only two witnesses. In this way some women were tricked into marrying a trafficker who could not be arrested because he could prove he was the husband. Compounding this problem was the problem of the abandoned

wife, or *agunah*. A Jewish woman was not free to remarry unless she could prove her husband had died or had granted her a religious divorce. Even when she could file for a civil divorce, Jewish law did not allow her to divorce her husband, although he could divorce her. Thus a woman whose husband left her for whatever reason was not free to remarry, was thrown into poverty, and became an easy victim for traffickers promising jobs in western Europe or North or South America (Kaplan, 1979, pp. 115–117).

In 1899 Pappenheim published a three-act play, *Women's Rights (Frauenrechte)*, under her pen name, P. (Paul) Berthold (Kaplan, 1979, p. 41). This play has often been cited as evidence of her own working through of Breuer's abandonment of her and her identification as a sexual victim (Freeman, 1972/1994, pp. 232–233; Hollender, 1980, pp. 799–800; Karpe, 1961, pp. 15–16; Stewart, 1984, pp. 47–49). As the play opens, a poor single mother and other women are organizing. This meeting is broken up, and the mother is arrested. In Act 2 the scene is the home of a wealthy lawyer. His wife asks for money to support the poor mother who has been arrested. He refuses, even though it is her money, which she brought into the marriage. Finally she persuades him to go visit the poor woman so that he can see that her request is justified. In the third act, the wife and husband visit the poor mother, now returned from jail and fatally ill. The dying woman recognizes the husband as the father of her child, and the shocked wife declares as the play ends that she will not leave him because of their children but will also refuse marital relations as her "woman's right." Whatever personal motivations were reflected in the play, it was also clearly an attack on the German laws that oppressed women. It was not until 1908 that the *Vereinsgesetz*, which banned women's participation in any political organizing, was repealed. This was why the single mother was arrested for having a meeting of women in her home. Also at this time, married women had no property rights in marriage, even to the money they brought into the marriage, which was why the wife could not help the single mother without her husband's consent (Kaplan, 1991b, p. 205). Pappenheim was protesting these legal oppressions at least as much as individual men's sexual oppression of women.

Working for victims, even identifying with them, does not in and of itself make one a victim. Pappenheim experienced both personal and social oppressions. In both areas she resisted victimization however she could. When she was young and relatively powerless, her resistance first took the form of illness and then of active attempts to control what happened during her treatment. Later in her life, as she gained both independence and power, her resistance took the form of political action. Her transformation was one not from victim to actor but rather from an active attempt to define her own life in circumstances that made this nearly impossible to an active life as a mature independent woman.

### *Resources for Resilience*

In making the transition from private pain to public action, Pappenheim was strengthened and supported by many resources. Some people in some circumstances have both personal and cultural resources and the abilities to use them to grow beyond trauma. Pappenheim was such a person. The personal resources that contributed to her resilience were her family's wealth and her own will. Cultural resources that supported her resilience were orthodox Judaism and feminism.

*Wealth.* Pappenheim's family was wealthy. Her paternal grandfather, Wolf Pappenheim, was born of poor parents in the Pressburg ghetto. Through his wife, Catharina Calman, he inherited considerable wealth that made him a millionaire overnight. His younger son, Siegmund, took over the family business and continued the family's commitment to orthodox Jewish traditions. In 1848 Siegmund married Recha Goldschmidt, the daughter of an established and wealthy Jewish family from Frankfurt, in an arranged marriage (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 98–101). Her mother's and father's wealth was an important resource for Bertha. It allowed her to remain single and self-supporting. She could travel where and when she saw a need. She was able to partly finance many of her social work projects, including the building and running of the houses at Isenburg. She even paid the salaries of some of the workers. Furthermore, because many of her relatives were also wealthy, she could count on their contributions to her projects. Her wealth alone does not account for her resilience or explain her transformation of private pain into public action. Many in her family and community also had access to substantial funds but did not accomplish what she did. However, it did support her unconventional life and her many projects.

*Will.* Pappenheim's will was legendary. Breuer described her at the age of 21 as having "a sharp and critical common sense" and, as a consequence, being "*completely unsuggestible* . . . Her will power was energetic, tenacious and persistent; sometimes it reached the pitch of an obstinacy which only gave way out of kindness and regard for other people" (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955, p. 21). Those who knew her later agreed with this assessment. She was uncompromising, even dictatorial, when she believed she was just or right, and although many were attracted by her leadership some chose to remain apart because of the strength of her influence. She threatened to resign four times from the JFB executive, and did so twice, over policy disagreements (Edinger, 1968, p. 16; Kaplan, 1984, pp. 106–107). A colleague of hers, Dora Edinger, commented aptly: "She did not suffer fools at all, much less gladly" (Freeman, 1972/1994, p. 209). Of herself she said: "Usually people don't notice me, but if by chance we begin to talk . . . very soon they take me seriously" (Edinger, 1968, p. 41).

Pappenheim's will was supported by and reflected in her anger and dedication to the truth. Her anger could be fierce, as could her joy. Given her dedication to change and the resistance she faced, more people probably saw her anger. Cora Berliner, a colleague on the JFB board, likened her anger to a volcano. Battle was central to her life and an expression of her strength, but it was the goal, not the battle, that was the purpose. Battle was to be used for larger, holy purposes, not for small or personal reasons (Freeman, 1972/1994, pp. 174–176). Pappenheim saw resistance as both a trial and a strength in the lives of individuals and of groups and stated that "contact with adversaries gives more strength and energy than contact with congenial people" (Edinger, 1968, p. 95). Her anger was directed to women as well as men who opposed her. Her view of the weaknesses in both sexes was remarkably even handed and critical:

Men have been so vain, and spoiled for generations without criticism, that any criticism by a woman . . . will be felt by him to be just "animosity toward men" in general.

On the other hand, women are so unsure of themselves that they feel "the

man" is always a helper, an assistant, a saviour, even if as a person he is obviously inferior, and incompetent at a given job. (Edinger, 1968, p. 93)

The dedication to the truth that marked Pappenheim's life was another part of her strong will and contributed to her resilience. Breuer noted that she was "absolutely truthful" and that "nothing is so contemptible to her mind as lying" (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 277). During her worst hallucinations and most frightening fantasies, a part of herself, an "observer brain," watched these symptoms and told her not to be silly. This accuracy of observation even led her at times to believe she was fabricating symptoms (Breuer & Freud, 1895/1955, p. 24; Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 283, 295). The lies she was told during her father's illness and after his death contributed to her lack of contact with reality and the derealization she experienced after her father's death. These experiences may have contributed to a need for absolute truthfulness. However, it came also from her prophetic sense of purpose and certainty that she was right in what she believed. Not to speak the truth in the presence of evil was a sin.

*Orthodox Judaism.* Judaism and feminism were cultural resources that gave Pappenheim ideologies and institutional structures within which she could act with passion and commitment. Here she found like-minded women with whom she could share her vision and in whose company she found a welcome. She most likely had a crisis of faith as a young woman during her illness. In 1882 Breuer described her as not at all religious, and "wholly without faith" (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 293). Although she continued to carry out all rituals meticulously, for the sake of her father, Breuer commented that "religion serves only as an object of silent struggles and silent opposition" (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 277). There is no information about how she returned to the orthodox Judaism of her upbringing in her later life, but she clearly did, as it became one of the central tenets of her life. Identification with a loved one who has died is one way of resolving pathological mourning, and thus she may have come back to her religion as an way of reclaiming her father (Pollock, 1972). It may also be that she came back to orthodox Judaism when she moved to Frankfurt with her mother and was drawn into the tightly knit religious community of her mother's family. Her involvement in public service within the Jewish community may have also been important in her return to faith. Certainly by 1910 when she published her translation of the memoirs of Glükel of Hameln, a 17th-century German Jewish woman and an ancestor of Pappenheim (Abrahams, 1963), she had developed a strong identity as an orthodox Jewish feminist. Although she was critical of the discrimination against women within the Jewish community, she argued that equality for women would strengthen Judaism by bringing women back to, or keeping them within, the Jewish faith (Boyarin, 1997, pp. 180–185; Kaplan, 1979, pp. 46–47).

One correlate of Pappenheim's recovery of her faith was her forgiveness of her parents, particularly her mother.<sup>9</sup> Even before she was ill, her gaiety displeased her mother. Her mother's refusal to tell her the truth about her father's death further disturbed their relationship, and the spring after her father's death Bertha

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<sup>9</sup> There is no evidence that she ever included her brother in the forgiveness she gave her parents. Because there is no record of how and when she returned to the orthodox Jewish faith of her youth, it is impossible to know whether she reconciled with her mother and the memory of her father before or after she recovered her faith. Certainly each supported the other.

Pappenheim described her mother as a “stove” because when she approached there was a stream of unpleasant heat (Hirschmüller, 1989, pp. 278, 283–285). When she was in the sanatorium at Kreuzlingen in the summer and fall of 1882, Fritz Homburger, her cousin, wrote to the doctor that it would be best if her mother’s visits could be delayed as long as possible. He described Bertha as “deeply attached to her mother, and loves her very much, however for the present—and for some time now—only at a distance” because she was aware of the “inadequacy of her upbringing” (Hirschmüller, 1989, p. 299). By 1911 she spoke of her parents and governess with fondness. A religious service reminded her of the music in her father’s *Schiff-Schul* in Vienna, and she reflected: “Now the daughter is not ‘happy’ [i.e., married] as our old guest at the *Seder* used to say, but busy with pursuits for which my parents did not even know the words” (Edinger, 1968, p. 39). In 1930 and 1933 she wrote prayers for her mother. At the age of 71 she wrote with kindness and respect:

As time goes on, at seemingly quite unimportant actions and words, I think of you ever so often, and of Father: your common outlook, your dignity, loyalty, and bearing, as the husband and wife to whom I owe my life. Mother, I remember your kindness, your wisdom without harshness, your industry, your ability, your tact, your modesty. You lived as a link in a chain of worthy generations. The flickering candle calls and revives the shadows of the past. Mother, your memory is blessed. (Edinger, 1968, p. 97)

Her religion gave her not only her parents, but also community, history, ritual, and a spiritual tradition to which she could match her vision of a passionate higher calling. In her strictness with herself and others, her willingness to speak uncomfortable truths, and her certainty of the truths she spoke, she followed in the tradition of biblical prophets who stood against pleasures and temptations and for sacrifice and conscience (Karpe, 1961, p. 20). Her fight was not for victory but for a better world and the improvement of people and the conditions in which they lived. In this fight “her soul could not be bribed” (Freeman, 1972/1994, p. 177).

*Feminism.* Feminism was also a cultural resource that contributed to Pappenheim’s resilience. Although she was not in the right time and place to take advantage of the opening of educational institutions to women, she was in the right time and place to make use of feminism for creating meaning and purpose in her life. The German women’s movement began in the revolution of 1848 when Louise Otto declared that women had not only the right but also the duty to be educated and productive citizens. In 1894 the Federation of German Women’s Associations (Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine [BDF]) was founded. Helene Lange, whose work Pappenheim read and admired, was the main theoretician of the BDF. Like most German feminists she emphasized maternal feminisms, which argued that women’s domestic duties taken into the public world would balance the masculine focus of politics and create a better world. The focus on women’s mothering and duty both appealed to Bertha Pappenheim and to the Jewish women she organized into the JFB in 1904 (Kaplan, 1979, pp. 59–69). The JFB was Pappenheim’s political home, and she controlled its focus and policies for many years. Although primarily concerned with Jewish women’s problems, the JFB was a member of the BDF and joined with other feminist groups in some political efforts, particularly to work against traffic in women (Kaplan, 1979, pp. 113–125).

The importance of the JFB to all that Pappenheim did was revealed in the

humorous obituaries she wrote for herself in 1934. There were five of these, and each ended in "What a pity!" In the first four, the "What a pity!" referred to some perceived failing on her part. This changed for the JFB *Blätter*: "In 1904 she founded the Jewish Women's Federation—its importance is not yet fully understood. The Jews of the entire world—men and women—owe her thanks for this social achievement. But they withhold it. What a pity!" (Edinger, 1968, p. 99). The failure was the world's, not hers. She never doubted the truth of her feminism, never wavered in her vision of a better world for women.

At the age of 69 Pappenheim asked the question "Is it a tragedy or a grace to be old and to get old?" Her answer was: Both, it was a tragedy because of things that are still wanted, duties that will remain unfulfilled, business that will remain unfinished because strength will fail one. However, it was also a "grace to remember what one, as an old Jewish saying goes, has done, with good results; grace if one feels that one has created something, that one has not passed by great things without taking an interest" (Edinger, 1968, p. 70). Pappenheim was intensely involved in the great things that came into her life and her world. Without her intelligent and perceptive exploration of her fantasy world, psychoanalysis would have had a very different beginning or, arguably, might not have existed at all (Appignanesi & Forrester, 1992, pp. 72–86; Ellenberger, 1961/1993). She was a central actor in the feminisms of her day, and she was a major figure in 20th century Judaism before the Holocaust. She was able to engage life to the fullest. She transformed her own private pain into historic public action through an integration of her "blessed phantasy" with a strong sense of public duty. What was her weakness became a part of her strength, making weakness and strength less opposites than parts of the same whole. In a prayer written in 1928 she expressed this dialectic, so difficult to explain yet so crucial to her life:

Strongly and quickly beats  
My heart up to my very lips.  
It seems strength  
Yet is weakness.  
And when weakness wins  
Let it yet have been strong.  
(Jensen, 1970, pp. 290–291)

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