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In the last few decades of the nineteenth century, the Salpêtrière was what it had always been: a kind of feminine inferno, a *citta dolorosa* confining four thousand incurable or mad women. It was a nightmare in the midst of Paris's *Belle Époque*.

This is where Charcot rediscovered hysteria. I attempt to retrace how he did so, amidst all the various clinical and experimental procedures, through hypnosis and the spectacular presentations of patients having hysterical attacks in the amphitheater where he held his famous Tuesday Lectures. With Charcot we discover the capacity of the hysterical body, which is, in fact, prodigious. It is prodigious; it surpasses the imagination, surpasses "all hopes," as they say.

Whose imagination? Whose hopes? There's the rub. What the hysterics of the Salpêtrière could exhibit with their bodies betokens an extraordinary complicity between patients and doctors, a relationship of desires, gazes, and knowledge. This relationship is interrogated here.

What still remains with us is the series of images of the *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière*. It contains everything: poses, attacks, cries, "attitudes passionnelles," "crucifixions," "ecstasy," and all the postures of delirium. If everything seems to be in these images, it is because photography was in the ideal position to crystallize the link between the fantasy of hysteria and the fantasy of knowledge. A reciprocity of charm was instituted between physicians, with their insatiable desire for images of Hysteria, and hysterics, who willingly participated and actually raised the stakes through their increasingly theatricalized bodies. In this way, hysteria in the clinic became the spectacle, the *invention of hysteria*. Indeed, hysteria was covertly identified with something like an art, close to theater or painting.

But the constant escalation of these charms produced a paradoxical situation: the more the hysteric delighted in reinventing and imaging herself to a greater extent, the more a kind of ill was exacerbated. At a

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certain moment the charm was broken, and consent turned to hatred. This turning point is interrogated here.

Freud was the disoriented witness of the immensity of hysteria *in camera* and the manufacturing of images. His disorientation was not without bearing on the beginnings of psychoanalysis.