

AN UNKNOWN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENT  
BY FREUD

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I.

Freud's paper on Screen-memories (Ueber Deckerinnerungen, 1899), (9) contains a delightful and remarkable dialogue between Freud and "a man of thirty-eight, with academic training," who had overcome "a slight phobia through psychoanalysis." This former patient has a rare way of telling his story in a straightforward, concrete way, full of color, yet never detouring from and never obscuring the essentials. His grasp of psychoanalytic values is so strong and clear; his knowledge of psychoanalysis is so great and his presentation so similar to Freud's that one would think one is reading a monologue were it not for the typography. But such a flash of some vague suspicion vanishes immediately into oblivion. The content of the memories of the man of thirty-eight and the interpretation which Freud gives with masterly ease so fully attract the reader's attention that distracting thoughts cannot grow above the threshold. Anyhow, the trained student of case histories feels obliged to suppress curious questions about the identity of a former patient.

I suggest that we relax this commendable habit in this case for the benefit of historical research and face the suppressed questions. Who, in 1899, had such vivid and profound understanding of psychoanalysis? Who wrote such clear, simple, distinguished and animated German in the nineties? Who is this interesting and promising man and what became of him? His personality seems familiar and one remembers to have read several of his memories somewhere else. Only after some deliberation one recalls the places and becomes convinced that the man of thirty-eight is no other than Freud himself, slightly disguised. If that be true then this case history contains the first information about an important period of Freud's life—otherwise completely unknown.

Before I present the evidence for this identification I will use this opportunity to present in English the relevant part of Freud's paper on Screen-memories which has never before been translated. This translation does not aspire to catch the high stylistic qualities of the German original. I shall be content if it is readable and reliable. It will greatly facilitate the task of this study. Furthermore I hope that any reader, not convinced by my arguments or not interested in Freud's adolescence will at least welcome acquaintance with the most complete sample of Freud's early technique in interpretation.

## II.\*

A man of thirty-eight, with academic training, who had maintained an interest in psychological problems in spite of his entirely different profession, called my attention to his childhood memories after I had been able to relieve him of a slight phobia through psychoanalysis. These memories (by the way) had already played a certain part in his analysis. After becoming acquainted with the research of V. and C. Henri, he gave me the following summarized report: "I have retained a fairly large number of early childhood memories, which, furthermore, I can date with absolute certainty. When I was three years old, I left the small town of my birth and moved to a large city. All my memories occur in the town in which I was born. In other words, they fall within my second and third year. They are mostly short scenes, but they are very well preserved and possess clear details of all the senses, quite in contrast to the memory pictures of my mature years which completely lack the visual element. After my third year the recollections are fewer and less distinct. There are gaps which must encompass more than a year. I think only from my sixth or seventh year on does the stream of memories show continuity. I divide then the recollections that occurred prior to leaving my birth-place into three groups. The first group contains those scenes about which my parents told me repeatedly, later on. With these I do not feel sure whether I possess the memory pictures from the beginning or whether I have created them only after hearing the stories. I note that there also are incidents which, despite frequent

\*Freud, Ueber Deckerinnerungen. Ges. Schr., vol. 1, pp. 472-484.

description by my parents. I cannot remember at all. I place more value on the second group. These are scenes about which—as far as I know—no one has told me; of some nobody could have told me because I never again saw the participants—my nurse and my playmates. Of the third group I shall talk later.

"Concerning the content of these scenes and why just they successfully claim a place in my memory I contend that I am not wholly at a loss for an explanation. I cannot say that the retained memories correspond to the most important events of that period; anyway not what I would consider the most important ones today. I recall nothing of the birth of a sister two-and-a-half years younger than I. The departure, the sight of the train, the long ride in a carriage to the station—all these left no trace in my memory. Yet I have retained two minor incidents which occurred on the train. You remember that they came up during the analysis of my phobia. The deepest impression should have been made by an injury to my face. I lost much blood and a surgeon had to sew me up. I can still feel the scar, the evidence of this accident, but I know of no memory which would point directly or indirectly to this experience. By the way, perhaps I was not even two years old at the time.

"I am not astonished at the pictures and events of these two memory groups. It is true, they are displaced memories in which the essential point is mostly omitted; but in some few it is at least indicated. In others it is easy for me—making use of certain clues—to restore it. Proceeding in this manner a satisfactory connection between the various scraps of memory emerges and I can clearly see exactly which childish interests entrusted the events to my memory. It is different however with the contents of the third group, the discussion of which I have delayed up to now. Here I come upon material—a longish scene and several smaller pictures—which leaves me helpless. The scene appears to me rather unimportant—its preservation mysterious. Let me describe it to you. I see a thickly covered, green meadow, rectangular and gently sloping. In the green are many yellow flowers, evidently the common dandelion. Above the meadow stands a farmhouse. Two women are busily talking before the door. One is a peasant with a kerchief on her head, the other a nurse. Three children

play on the meadow. I am one of the three—between two and three years old. The others are my cousin, a year older than I, and his sister who is almost exactly my age. We are picking the yellow flowers and each of us already holds a bunch of them. The little girl has the prettiest bouquet; but suddenly, as if by agreement, we boys fall upon her and tear the flowers out of her hand. She runs up the meadow crying, and to comfort her, the peasant woman gives her a large piece of dark bread. As soon as we see that we throw the flowers away, hurry to the house and demand bread. We get it too. The peasant woman cuts the loaf with a long knife. I remember how delicious the flavor of this bread was. And that is the end of the scene.

"What is there in this experience that justifies the memory-effort which it has caused me? I have puzzled over it in vain. Is the emphasis on our discourtesy towards the little girl? Should the yellow of the dandelion, which today of course I consider not at all beautiful, have pleased my eyes so much at that time? Or is it possible that after the running around on the meadow the bread tasted so much better than usual that it has given me a lasting impression? I cannot even discover any relation of this scene to the interest (easily guessed at) which holds together my other childhood scenes. In fact, I have the impression that there is something not quite right with this scene; the yellow of the flowers stands out in the ensemble too glaringly and the fine flavor of the bread seems almost like a hallucination. It calls to my mind pictures which I once saw at a parody exhibition. Certain details, instead of being painted, were applied plastically—naturally always the most inappropriate ones—the derrieres of the painted ladies, for instance. Now can you show me a way which leads to the clarification or interpretation of this superfluous childhood memory?"

I thought it wise to ask since when this childhood scene occupied him, whether he thought that it recurred periodically in his memory ever since his childhood, or whether it had arisen at some later date, at a remembered occasion. This question was all I had to contribute towards the solution of the problem; the rest, my partner who was not exactly a novice at such work, discovered by himself.

He replied: "I had not thought of that. But now that you have asked this question I feel almost certain that this childhood memory did not occupy me at all in my earlier years. Yet I can also imagine the occasion which released the emergence of this and numerous other recollections of my earliest childhood. As a seventeen-year old high school student I returned to my home town for a vacation as guest of a family with whom we had been friendly in the past. I know quite well what floods of emotion took hold of me then. But I see that I must now tell you a large part of my life history: it belongs and you have evoked it with your question. All right then. I am the son of formerly well-to-do people, who—I think—lived pretty comfortably in that small country town. When I was about three years old, a crisis befell the industry with which my father was connected. He lost his capital and we were forced to leave the town and move to a large city. Long years of deprivation followed. They were not worthy to be remembered. I never felt quite at home in the city. Now I believe that the yearning for the wonderful forests of my early home has never really left me. A memory of that period relates that in these woods I used to toddle away from my father, almost before I could walk. That vacation, when I was seventeen, was my first one in the country, and as I have mentioned, I was the guest of friends who had become wealthy since our move to the city. I had the opportunity to compare the comfort in which they lived with the mode of life in our city home. Well, I see there is no use in further evasion. I must admit that something else excited me greatly. I was seventeen, and in the hospitable family was a fifteen-year old daughter, with whom I fell promptly in love. It was my first passion, and it was sufficiently passionate, yet I kept it strictly secret. After a few days the girl returned to her boarding school from which she had been home on vacation, and the separation following such short acquaintance even more enflamed my longing. Often, and for long hours, I went on lonely walks through the regained, wonderful forests, my mind occupied with building castles in the air which, strange to say, were not directed towards the future but instead attempted to improve the past. If only that crisis had not struck long ago; if, instead, I had remained in the country; if I had grown up there

and had become as husky as the young men of the family; and then if I only had followed my father in his business and finally had married the girl who surely through all these years would have begun to love me! Of course I never doubted for a moment that I would have loved her as strongly under the circumstances created by my imagination as I then actually did. Strange, but today when I see her occasionally—she happened to marry someone in this vicinity—she leaves me utterly indifferent. And yet I can remember precisely that for many years the yellow in the dress she wore at our first meeting affected me whenever I saw the same shade somewhere again."

"That sounds quite similar to your parenthetical remark that today you no longer like the common dandelion. Don't you suspect a connection between the yellow of the girl's dress and the unduly over-emphasized yellow in the flowers of your childhood memory?"

"Possibly, yet it wasn't the same yellow. The dress was more of a yellowish brown, rather like that in a wallflower. However I can offer you an intermediary idea which can serve your purpose. I noticed later on in the Alps, that some flowers which are light colored in the lowlands grow in darker shades at high altitudes. If I am not entirely mistaken a flower resembling the dandelion is frequently found in the mountains. However, its color is a dark yellow which would then correspond to the color in the dress of my beloved. But I am not done yet. I am coming to a second incident, taking place close to that period which aroused the childhood impressions in me. When I was seventeen I saw my hometown again. Three years later I spent my vacation with my uncle and consequently again met the children who had been my earliest playmates—the same boy cousin, one year older than I, and the same girl cousin of my own age, who appear in the childhood scene of the dandelion-dotted meadow. This family had left my birthplace at the same time we did and had regained its wealth in the distant city."

"And did you again fall in love—this time with your cousin—and create new fantasies?"

"No, this time things were different. I was already at the university and was completely immersed in my books. On my

cousin I wasted no thought. As far as I know I did not create any fantasies then. But I suspect my father and uncle had agreed to a plan to make me exchange my abstruse studies for something more practical and then—after the completion of my courses—have me settle down in my uncle's town and marry my cousin. When it became apparent how set my intentions were, the plan was dropped. But I am sure that I surmised it correctly. Only later, when, as a young scientist, I was confronted with the harshness of life and had to wait a long time until I could attain any sort of position in this city, did I perhaps reflect occasionally that my father had really meant well in trying, with this projected marriage, to make amends for the loss caused by the early collapse of the family fortune."

"I would place the appearance of the childhood scene in this period of your hard struggle for your daily bread, if you can verify my impression that in those same years you first began to know and love the Alps."

"That is correct. Hiking in the mountains was the only pleasure I permitted myself at that time. But I don't quite understand you yet."

"Just a minute. In your childhood scene the wonderful taste of the country bread is elevated as the most outstanding element. Don't you see that this idea, perceived with almost hallucinatory intensity, corresponds to the basic thought of your fantasy? If you had remained in your birthplace, married that girl, how pleasant your life would have been! Symbolically expressed, how good your bread, for which you had to fight so hard in those later times, would have tasted! And the yellow of the flowers points to the same girl. By the way, you have elements in the childhood scene which can only refer to the second fantasy: if you would have married your cousin. Throwing away the flowers and exchanging them for bread, seems not a bad disguise for your father's intentions with you. You were to disclaim your impractical ideals and take up a 'bread and butter' profession, weren't you?"

"That is, I fused the two chains of fantasies suggesting how I might have molded my life more agreeably: selecting the 'yellow' and the 'country bread' from one; the persons and the throwing away of the flowers from the other."

"That's right. The two fantasies were projected upon one another, and a single childhood memory was made out of them. The touch about the Alpine flowers is then an indication of the period of this fabrication. I can assure you that one very often does such things unconsciously, as if dreamed up."

"But then it would not be a childhood memory. Rather it would be a fantasy transferred back into childhood. Yet I have a feeling that the scene is genuine. How can that be reconciled?"

"For the validity of the stories which our memory tells us there is no guarantee whatsoever. However I will concede you that the scene is genuine. In that case you selected it from many other similar or even different ones, because thanks to its content—in itself of no importance—it was able to represent the two fantasies which were of such great significance to you. I would call a Screen-memory one whose value consists in representing in one's mind the impressions and thoughts of a later period which are bound to an earlier recollection through symbolic and other connections. At any rate you will cease to wonder at the frequent reappearance of this scene in your memory. One can no longer call it innocuous if—as we have discovered—it is designated to illustrate the most important turning points in your life's history—the influence of the two most important mainsprings, those of hunger and those of love."

"Yes, the representation of hunger is well done but where is the representation of love?"

"In the yellow of the flowers, I think. I can't deny, however, that the representation of love in this childhood scene of yours seems very weak in comparison with my usual experience."

"No, by no means. In fact the representation of love is the main point in it. Now at last I understand! Think. To take a flower from a girl means to deflower her. What contrast between the impudence of this fantasy and my bashfulness on the first opportunity: my indifference on the second!"

"I can assure you that such bold fantasies form the regular complement to juvenile bashfulness."

"In that case it would not be a conscious fantasy which I recall, but rather an unconscious one which has been transformed into these childhood memories?"



"Unconscious thoughts which continue the conscious ones. You imagine: if I had married this girl or that one, and from that follows the desire to conjure up all that is implied in marrying."

"Now I can continue with it myself. To the young good-for-nothing, the most tempting motif in the whole theme is the idea of the wedding night. Little does he know of what follows later on. This image, however, does not dare to approach the open. The prevailing atmosphere of modesty and of respect for girls keeps it suppressed. Therefore it remains unconscious . . . and evades into a childhood memory."

"You are right. The crassly sensual element in the fantasy is exactly the reason why it does not develop into a conscious fantasy, but must be content instead with being accepted as a disguised allusion in a childhood scene."

"Why, I would like to know, just in a childhood scene?"

"Perhaps just because of its innocuousness. Can you imagine a stronger contrast to such outrageous sexual aggressive intentions than child play? Besides, even more basic reasons are decisive in the evasion of suppressed thoughts and desires into childhood memories. You can regularly find this behaviour among hysterical persons. It also seems that usually the recollection of what is long since past is facilitated by a pleasure motif. *Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit*. (Perchance even these things it will thereafter be delightful to remember.)"

"If that is the case, I have completely lost confidence in the genuineness of the dandelion scene. I can see that on account of the two aforementioned occasions—which were supported by very tangible and actual motives—the thought arises: 'Your life would have become much more pleasant if you had married this girl or that one. I can see that the sensual undercurrent within me reiterates the thought of the conditional clause in images which could offer satisfaction; that this second version of the same thought remains unconscious because of its incompatibility with prevailing sexual standards, but as a consequence therefore, is able to continue existence in my mental life, after the conscious version has long been displaced by the changing reality; that the unconscious clause strives, as you say, in conformity with a valid law, to change itself into a childhood scene, which, because of its

innocuousness is allowed to become conscious; that to this end it must undergo a new transformation—or rather two—one, which takes the offensive from the principal proposition by expressing it pictorially, and a second which molds the dependent clause into a form that can be visually represented, for which the intermediary concept bread—bread-and-butter profession—is employed. I understand that in the production of such a fantasy I achieved a fulfillment of the two suppressed wishes—that of deflowering and that of material comfort. But after giving myself such a complete account of the motives which led to the dandelion fantasy, I am forced to assume that in this discussion we talk about something that has never happened at all, but was rather illegally smuggled into my childhood memories."

"Now I must act as defender of reality. You go too far. You have let me tell you that all such suppressed fantasies tend to evade into a childhood scene. Now let's add that this does not occur unless there is such a memory trace present whose content offers points of contact with the content of the fantasy—meeting it half way as it were. If only one such point of contact is found—in our case it is the defloration, the taking of the flower—then the remaining content of the fantasy will be reshaped through the use of all admissible intermediate images (remember the bread) until new contact points with the childhood scene are established. It is very possible that during this process the childhood scene itself undergoes changes. I consider it certain that in such manner memory falsifications are produced. In your case, the childhood scene seems to have been only slightly touched up. Think of the intensified prominence of the yellow and of the exaggeratedly fine-tasting bread. Yet the raw material was usable. If this would not have been so this particular memory could not have lifted itself out of all the rest into the consciousness. You would not have acquired such a scene as a childhood memory, or perhaps it would have been another. For you know how easy it is for our mind to build bridges from anywhere to everywhere. In addition, by the way, to your feeling, which I do not like to underestimate, something else speaks for the genuineness of your dandelion recollection. It contains traces that cannot be explained through your statements and that also do not fit in with the interpretations

arising from your fantasy, for instance the one where your cousin helps you to rob the little girl of the flowers. Does such assistance to defloration make any sense to you? Or what about the peasant-woman and the nurse up in front of the house?"

"I don't believe so."

"In other words, the fantasy does not entirely match the childhood scene. The two merely meet at some points. That speaks for the genuineness of the childhood memory."

"Do you believe that such an interpretation of apparently innocuous childhood memories is frequently appropriate?"

"On the basis of my experience—very frequently."

### III.

The "man of thirty-eight" whom for short we may call Mr. Y, gives a great number of specific data concerning the first phase of his life and reports two episodes of his adolescent years. In order to establish the identity in question we have to compare this material with Freud's life history.

It so happens that we are particularly well informed on the first three years of Freud's life; all the available facts being assembled in a paper in the *Menninger Bulletin*, (2) to which I refer for details. Here I wish to give a brief recapitulation of the findings as far as they are essential for our present task.

Freud was born in a little country town (Freiberg in Moravia). His parents were rather well to do, but due to an economic crisis they had to move away to "a large city" (to Leipzig and then to Vienna), and were hard-pressed from then on. This migration occurred when Freud was three years of age. In his home town and when he was two and a half years old, a sister was born. At the age of two he suffered an accident, of which he bore a life-long scar on his jaw. In Freiberg, the half-brother of Freud—twenty years his senior—lived with his family. The children of this half-brother, a nephew—one year his elder—and a niece about his own age, were his principal playmates. There was a nurse who supervised the children. The family of this half-brother left Freiberg, simultaneously with Freud, but for "a distant city" (Manchester, England), where they soon regained their former financial ease.

This brief story of Freud's life in his home town corresponds fully with Mr. Y's story except for one detail. Mr. Y describes his playmates as his cousins, the children of an uncle, while the relationship between Freud and his early friends was less trivial and simple. (We discuss this slight discrepancy later).

Mr. Y mentions only a few, exactly three childhood incidents, which do not occur in Freud's biography. For my purpose it is a crucial question whether or not they could have happened to Freud in Freiberg:

1. As a very small child Mr. Y took walks with his father in the beautiful forest adjoining his home town. Such forests existed half a mile from Freiberg.

2. Mr. Y's Screen-memory, which is the central topic of the analysis, has a rural setting—a sloping meadow, a farmhouse and a peasant woman wearing a kerchief. Exactly such rural scenery was to be found in Freiberg and the Slovak peasants there did wear kerchiefs.

3. Mr. Y describes the journey from his home town to the large city as consisting of two phases: first, they used a horse-drawn carriage and then a railway, which the boy saw for the first time in his life. Since Freiberg had no railway station at that time the family Freud had to use some kind of horse-drawn vehicle in order to get to the fairly distant railway station.

Of course the sparse characteristics of his home town as given by Mr. Y do not permit of its identification. It was just one of any number of small towns surrounded by forests and hills, off the railroad tracks, as was Freiberg. And this is just what proves our point. Thus all the incidents learned from Mr. Y's early childhood are either known of Freud's childhood also or could have happened in Freud's home town.

#### IV.

Of his adolescence Mr. Y mentions two incidents: first, at the age of seventeen he re-visited his birthplace; and secondly, three years later while on a vacation in the "distant city" he saw again his uncle and cousins. In both episodes we find a perfect parallel in Freud's life. Freud says that he re-visited Freiberg while on vacation, as a high-school student of sixteen (3). Since Freud

was born in May, his exact age at the time of the summer vacation was from sixteen years and two months to sixteen years and four months. This is fairly close to the seventeen years mentioned by Mr. Y, though not close enough. However I feel that this difference has little weight in the light of the following striking coincidence. Mr. Y—as one remembers—re-visited his birthplace “as the guest of a family with whom we had been friendly in the past.” Freud says that he visited Freiberg “as the guest of the family Fluss” (3). From other sources I learn that father Fluss and his children were close friends of the family Freud. They had remained in Freiberg and at the time of Freud’s vacation visit were very prosperous again. (15) The same had happened to the vacation host of Mr. Y.<sup>1</sup>

“At the age of nineteen I was for the first time in England,” says Freud. (5) Three years have passed since his visit to his home town. The same interval between the two journeys occurs in Mr. Y’s story. At nineteen Freud was a medical student, submerged in books, feeling his way through disorganized efforts in chemistry and zoology like Mr. Y, who, at that time, was devoted to books and “abstruse” studies. Freud’s half-brother, like Mr. Y’s uncle, was prosperous again at the time of the visit.<sup>2</sup>

Of his adult life Mr. Y. mentions the fact that he had to fight hard for a position in his chosen profession. He speaks also of his love of the Alps and the Alpine flora. It is well known that Freud struggled in the same way and that he shared Mr. Y’s love of mountains and high meadows. In the “Dream Interpretation”, Freud’s fondness for mountain hiking is frequently mentioned and in many other places he refers to this relaxation, as, for instance, in the famous analysis of Katharina in his “Studies on Hysteria”. In this connection a little episode—which hap-

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<sup>1</sup>Just in order to be exact I want to note here that Mr. Y refers to his trip to his home town as his first vacation in the country while Freud remarks that he had spent, during his high-school days, several vacations at a spa in Moravia (6). But staying at a spa with one’s own family is hardly a “vacation in the country”.

<sup>2</sup>Wittels (14) and Anna Bernays (1) both say that Freud made the journey to England “on leaving school” at the age of eighteen. Wittels quotes no authority for his statement and Anna Bernays’ memory is not too reliable in some details, as various remarks in her paper would tend to prove. Thus until new evidence appears, I rely on Freud’s precise statement.

pened well over sixty years after Mr. Y. was so impressed by a certain dark yellow Alpine flower—might be worth recording.

"On the occasion of Freud's eightieth birthday the teacher's seminar of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute pondered how to honor Freud. Finally the suggestion was made that a bunch of wild Alpine flowers would be very much appreciated by him and it would be different from the ordinary gift. It happened that a friend of ours was going to the high mountains at this time and was entrusted with finding the flowers. He came back with a lovely bunch of *Primula Auricula*. The youngest one in our group, a seventeen-year old girl, went out to deliver the flowers. To her great surprise Freud called her in and thanked her personally. He emphasized how much these flowers meant to him". (17)

#### V.

The life histories correspond so perfectly in all major points, and disagree in so few and in such small matters that the preceding comparison almost defeats its purpose. If Mr. Y is Freud in disguise, the lack of any disguising features seems rather amazing and puzzling. However, in 1899, Freud could well afford to be candid and frank. Except for his birthday and birthplace, his life history was completely unknown and not yet an object of curiosity to the public. He could feel safe in making few and very slight changes in Mr. Y's story since he used the strongest devices in the paragraph which introduces Mr. Y. Here Freud resorts to outright lies. He disguises his identity radically by means of contrast, assuring us that Mr. Y's profession "is far distant from psychology."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Mr. Y was relieved of a slight phobia by psychoanalysis. This, of course, functions as one more of the drastic devices of disguise but it might still be some sort of a confession. Freud analyzed himself between 1896 and 1899 and he undoubtedly benefited considerably by it. Whether he had had and had lost any "symptoms" and whether they were of a phobic nature, I do not know. The clinical observations on himself which Freud published in his studies on Coca (1884) (8); in the book on Aphasia (1891) (11); and in a note on Bernhardt's Paresis (1895) (10); do not indicate phobic symptoms but by no means do they exclude them either. Wilhelm Fliess who was Freud's closest friend during the period in question made the statement that Freud had freed himself of a phobia by self analysis (16). Hanns Sachs reports Freud's habitual anxiety in missing a train (13) which could well be the residue of a railroad phobia. There are indications that Mr. Y's phobia, too, was concerned with travelling on railroads.

By the way, Freud used this same technique in the other case in which he disguised his identity in "The Moses of Michelangelo." (4) Further he alters the age of Mr. Y. Freud was forty-three when he wrote the paper. He makes Mr. Y younger, as Freud, who resented aging, naturally would have done. He chooses a round figure of five years which makes Mr. Y thirty-eight years of age.<sup>4</sup>

With these safeguards he can tell his own story frankly by substituting broad generalizations for names such as "a small country town" for Freiberg and "the distant city" for Manchester.<sup>5</sup>

Considering the possibility of a reader amongst his closest friends he might have wished to blur the one conspicuous fact of his childhood—which to such a part of his audience might have characterized him individually. Thus he turns his nephew, one year his senior, and the latter's sister, into trivial cousins. This explains the one distortion which occurs in the narrative.

In his "Interpretation of Dreams" which appeared one year after the paper on "Screen-memories" was published, Freud started to reveal many details about himself and his past. And he continued to do so in later publications. From then on the method of slight disguise used on Mr. Y would not have worked any more. Is this the reason for the strange fate which befell this paper? In 1906 Freud assembled all of his scattered studies on psychoanalysis in one volume, "Sammlung kleiner Schriften zur Neurosenlehre" (7) but the paper on "Screen-memories" is not among them although it introduces and explains one of the basic concepts of psychoanalysis.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>This "round figure" expresses—as Hanns Sachs points out in a letter to me—a direct and explicit wish of Freud who writes in his "Interpretation of Dreams" before 1899: "What are five years . . . that is no time at all for me." (Ges. Schr., vol. II, p. 366). This remark refers to the long five years of the engagement period which he had to endure because he had not chosen a "bread-and-butter" profession.

<sup>5</sup>The interview of Mr. Y is said to have occurred in 1898 at which time Freud was forty-two years old. At this age Freud turned his attention to his own childhood memories as did Mr. Y.

<sup>6</sup>Vol. I of the "Collected Papers" is based on the "Sammlung"; therefore the paper "Ueber Deckerinnerungen" is omitted. A note in vol. IV, p. 476, says "a paper on 'Screen-memories' forming part of the Psychopathology of Everyday Life, 1904".

It is true that at that time the main content of this paper was easily accessible in the chapter on "Kindheits-Erinnerungen"<sup>7</sup> of the "Psychopathologie des Alltagsleben."<sup>12</sup> But so were the ideas of some other articles which were republished in the "Sammlung."

## VI.

Since the comparison of all the known data shows a perfect correspondence between Mr. Y and Freud and since the occurring discrepancies or the lack of them seem to be explained plausibly enough, I feel it is safe to assume that in the case history of the man of thirty-eight, Freud presented himself. This identification puts some new material at the disposal of the students of Freud's life and personality. In this paper I do not intend to discuss this material or to evaluate the changes it might enforce in some aspects of our current picture of Freud.

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<sup>7</sup>This chapter summarizes the findings of the paper on Screen-memories and illustrates them by means of two cases. One is taken from the original paper. The second—a substitution for the case of Mr. Y—is openly autobiographical and brings the famous childhood memory of the chest and the half-brother.



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15. Information from Dr. E. Windholz, documented by a letter from Mr. Fluss, Jr.
16. Information from Dr. Ernst Simmel.