

twelve to fourteen days, and he may be well for several weeks. Better periods, even of months' duration, have occurred. He insists that things have been like this for the past twenty-five years. As so often, one has to start by constructing the clinical picture, for he keeps on monotonously repeating his complaints and declares that he has paid no attention to other events. Thus the indeterminate outline of the attacks forms part of the picture, as does their complete irregularity in time. He naturally puts the blame for his state on his digestion. Benedikt wrote down the diagnosis: *cephalea cum digestionem tarda*.¹

Organically sound; no serious worries or mood swings. As regards sexuality: masturbated between the ages of 12 and 16; then very regular relations with women; he was not enormously attracted; married for fourteen years, only two children, the last ten years ago; in the interval and since then, only a condom and no other technique. Potency decidedly diminished in the last few years. Coitus every twelve to fourteen days or so; often, too, with long intervals. Admits that he feels weak and wretched after coitus with a condom; but not immediately afterward, only two days later — or, as he puts it, he has noticed that two days later he gets digestive trouble. Why does he use a condom? One should not have too many children! ([He has] two.)

Discussion

A mild but very characteristic case of *periodic depression*, melancholia. Symptoms: apathy, inhibition, intracranial pressure, dyspepsia, insomnia — the picture is complete.

There is an unmistakable similarity to neurasthenia, and the etiology is the same. I have some quite analogous cases: they are masturbators (Mr. A.) and also have a hereditary taint. The von F.'s from Budapest are well known to be psychopathic.² Thus the case is one of neurasthenic melancholia; there must be a point of contact here with the theory of neurasthenia.

It is quite possible that the starting point of a minor melancholia like this may always be an act of coitus; an exaggeration of the [importance] of the physiological factor leads to the saying, *Omne animal post coitum triste*.³ The time intervals would fit. The man is improved by every course of treatment, every absence from home — that is, by every period of relief from coitus. Of course, as he says, he is faithful to his wife. The use of a condom is evidence of weak potency; being something analogous to masturbation, it is a continuous causation of his melancholia.

1. Chronic headaches with slow digestion.

2. Freud is undoubtedly using the word "psychopathic" in the more general sense of suffering from neurosis. Even Pschyrembel's 1964 *Klinisches Wörterbuch* (although not the latest edition) defines psychopaths as "those suffering from a chronic congenital abnormal state of psychic life who themselves suffer from their abnormality or cause others to suffer as a result of it."

3. This is a frequently quoted paraphrase from Aristotle, *De generatione animalium* 1, 18 (725 b). See also Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. James Aiken Work (New York: Odyssey Press, 1840), vol. 5, chap. 36; and *Engravings by Hogarth: 101 Prints*, ed. Sean Shesgreen (New York: Dover, 1973), no. 37.

Reichenau, August 29, 1894

Dearest friend,

Now this is really too much; are you going to dissolve completely into pus on us? The devil with having surgery again and again; just be done with it once and for all. So that old woman! who did not like your headaches years ago, and who wrote that peculiar letter to me, was actually quite right! But what should I do about it? I wish I were a "doctor," as people say, a physician and a great healer so that I could understand such matters and would not have to leave you in strange hands in such circumstances. Unfortunately I am not a doctor, as you know. I must rely on you in this as in everything else; I must hope that you also know how to treat *yourself* and that you can be as successful in *your own* case as in those of others (myself included).

It is not nice either that as a result of this our meeting will fall through. A temporary hope leaves me with an unfulfilled claim.

I am not at all eager to go to Lovrano, but Martha, who otherwise so rarely desires anything, this time insists on the trip and on undertaking it in this way. It also spoiled her pleasure *very* much that Lovrano and our meeting are thus falling to pieces. Besides, I think that if I can be of any service to you, you should test me and see whether I can find the way from Lovrano to Munich. My conscience is searching for some such offer to pacify itself, while I am now anticipating pleasure.

So we shall leave on September 1, Saturday evening, and hope to be in Lovrano, Pension Pankaus,² on Sunday morning. Now, however, I must again assume that you are quite fit and rid myself of the accumulation of scientific matters.

I have collected only a few cases this Monday:

No. 3

Dr. Z., a physician, age 34. Has suffered for many years from organic sensitivity of the eyes: phosphenes [flashes], dazzle, scotomas, and the rest. This has increased enormously, to the point of preventing his working, in the last four months (since the time of his marriage).

Background: A masturbator since the age of 14, apparently continued up to recent years. Did not deflower his wife, potency much reduced; incidentally, divorce proceedings begun.

Clear typical case of *organ hypochondriasis* in a masturbator at periods of sexual excitation. Interesting that medical education reaches such a shallow depth.

No. 4

Mr. D., nephew of Mrs. A., who died a hysteric. A highly neurotic family. Age 28. Has suffered for some weeks from lassitude, intracranial pressure, shaky knees, reduced potency, premature ejaculation, the beginnings of perversion: very young girls excite him more than mature ones.

Alleges that his potency has always been capricious; admits masturbation, but not too prolonged; has a period of abstinence behind him now. Before that, anxiety states in the evening.

Has he made a full confession?

A monograph, *Neurologische Beiträge*, by Möbius came out; a collection of older, small essays, very nice, quite important for hysteria.³ He is the best mind among the neurologists, fortunately not on the track of sexuality.

Actually I notice that I have nothing to say! When I get back to Vienna, my editor will certainly press me for articles. Should I then subject Möbius's paper on "Migraine" to a critique?⁴ You would have to give me some of your observations for it. Surely you will get the stomach-menstruation business⁵ off your back as soon as you feel better? The profession is waiting for this kind of thing.

Cordial greetings and please let me hear from you during this time — at least a postcard every three days.

My wife wishes you and your dear wife, whom I believe, she envies a little (governess and housekeeper, doctor with his assistants), the best and the quickest possible passing of these weeks. The same from your faithful

Sigm.

1. Reference unknown.

2. Reading uncertain.

3. Freud is referring to Paul J. Möbius (1854–1902) and his *Neurologische Beiträge*

1 Heft: *Über den Begriff der Hysterie und andere Vorwürfe vorwiegend psychologischer Art* (Leipzig: Ambr. Abel, 1894). In a chapter written in 1893 or 1894, "Weitere Erörterungen über den Begriff der Hysterie," Janet is praised and there is a long footnote on p. 29 summarizing the Breuer and Freud 1893 paper. Curiously, Möbius does not mention sexuality at all. He has high praise for Charcot: "We were all blind formerly and have learned to see with the help of the works of Charcot" (p. 49). The phrase *pour revenir à nos moutons*, which Freud uses in his letters to Fliess, also occurs (p. 51).

Möbius in this book defends his psychological point of view over that of Meynert and his school. He defends vigorously the reality of the injuries suffered by individuals who had what were then called traumatic neuroses. This important passage clearly impressed Freud: "One should use an admission of simulation only with caution. Not only the feeling of injured honor can cause one to make desperate statements, but the diseased psyche itself. One should not forget that many witches freely confessed their association with the devil and thereby had themselves brought to the stake" (p. 42).

Möbius also reviewed briefly, in *Schmidt's Jahrbuch*, the 1893 paper of Breuer and Freud, "On the Psychological Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena," and Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*.

4. Freud actually did so. The review, hitherto unnoticed, was published in the *Wiener klinische Rundschau* in 1895.

5. Undoubtedly a reference to Fliess's article "Magenschmerz und Dysmenorrhöe in einem neuen Zusammenhang," where he writes: "Stomach pain, very common in the case of girls and women, as a result of masturbation. Here, too, as I learned in a case I unfortunately cannot disclose, the path goes through the stomach spot in the nose" (p. 22). This relates to Fliess's view that there are particular spots in the nose that correspond to other organs in the body — an abdominal spot, a genital spot, and so on.

Lovrano, September 13, 1894

Dear friend,

I have been waiting for news for such a long time, but am unwilling to draw any conclusion about what this kind of silence really means. I am very dissatisfied with you, my best friend, but then tell myself that you are certainly doing your best; I could not give you my other advice, and do not have the right to be more impatient than you. I must finally write you to let you know where I am in this world.

We shall leave here on the 15th, Saturday evening, and arrive early on Sunday in Payerbach. Early Monday, the 17th, I shall be in Vienna. There is still a week before the scientific meeting. If you would like to have me for a day in Munich, let me know quickly. Here everything has turned out very well, and all will return again, being much better and more cheerful.¹ Weather, on the average, excellent