

PART II

PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

25 Sept. 95.

The first part of this project included what could, as it were, be inferred *a priori* from its basic hypothesis, moulded and corrected in accordance with a few factual experiences. This second part seeks by an analysis of pathological processes to determine further features of the system founded on the basic hypothesis. A third part, based on the two earlier ones, will endeavour to construct the characteristics of the course of normal psychological events.

THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF HYSTERIA

[1] *Hysterical Compulsion*

I shall start with some things which are to be found in hysteria but are not necessarily peculiar to it.

Every observer of hysteria is at once struck by the fact that hysterical patients are subject to a *compulsion*, which is operated by means of *excessively intense ideas*. An idea may emerge into consciousness with special frequency, without the course of events justifying it; or it may be that the arousing of this neurone is accompanied by psychical consequences which are unintelligible. The emergence of the excessively intense idea has results which, on the one hand, cannot be suppressed and, on the other hand, cannot be understood: releases of affect, motor innervations, inhibitions. The subject is by no means without insight into the strangeness of the situation.

Excessively intense ideas also occur normally. They are what lends an ego its peculiar character. We are not surprised at them, if we know their genetic development (education, experiences) and their motives. We are in the habit of regarding these excessively intense ideas as the product of powerful and reasonable motives. In *hysterics*, on the contrary, excessively intense ideas strike us by their oddity. They are ideas which produce no effects in other people and whose importance we cannot appreciate. They appear to us as intruders and usurpers and accordingly as ridiculous.

Thus hysterical compulsion is (1) incomprehensible; (2) incapable

of being cleared up by any process of thought, and (3) incongruous in its structure.

There is a simple neurotic compulsion which may be contrasted with the hysterical kind. For instance, suppose a man runs into danger by being thrown out of a carriage and that afterwards driving in a carriage becomes impossible for him. Such a compulsion is (1) comprehensible, since we know its origin; and (3) not incongruous, since the association with danger makes it justifiable to link driving in a carriage with fear. It, too, however, is incapable of being cleared up by any process of thought. This last characteristic cannot be described as entirely pathological; our *normal* excessively intense ideas as well are often incapable of being cleared up. One would be inclined to regard neurotic compulsions as completely non-pathological, if it were not that experience shows that a compulsion of this kind in a normal person only persists for a short time after its occasion, and then disintegrates by degrees. Thus the persistence of a compulsion is pathological and points to a *simple neurosis*.

Now our analyses show that a hysterical compulsion is cleared up at once if it is explained—that is, made comprehensible. Thus these two characteristics are essentially one and the same. In an analysis we also learn the process by which the appearance of absurdity and incongruity comes about. The result of analysis is, in general terms, as follows.

Before the analysis, *A* is an excessively intense idea, which forces its way into consciousness too often, and each time it does so leads to tears. The subject does not know why *A* makes him weep and regards it as absurd; but he cannot prevent it.

After the analysis, it has been discovered that there is an idea *B* which rightly leads to tears and which rightly recurs often until a certain complicated piece of psychical work directed against it has been completed by the subject. The effect of *B* is not absurd, is comprehensible to the subject and can even be fought against by him.

B stands in a particular relation to *A*. For there has been an event which consisted of $B+A$. *A* was a subsidiary circumstance, while *B* was well calculated to produce a lasting effect. The production of this event in memory now occurs as though *A* had taken *B*'s place. *A* has

become a substitute, a "symbol", for *B*.¹ Hence the incongruity; for *A* is accompanied by consequences which it does not seem to deserve, which are not appropriate to it.

Symbols are formed in this way normally as well. A soldier will sacrifice himself for a piece of coloured cloth on a pole, because it has become the symbol of his native country; and no one considers this neurotic. But a hysterical symbol behaves differently. The knight who fights for a lady's glove *knows*, in the first place, that the glove owes its importance to the lady; and, secondly, his worship of the glove does not in the least prevent him from thinking of the lady and serving her in other ways. But the hysteric who is reduced to tears by *A* is unaware that this is because of the association $A-B$, and *B* itself plays no part whatever in his mental life. In this case the symbol has taken the place of the thing completely.

This assertion is true in the strictest sense. One can convince oneself that whenever a stimulus from outside or an association ought properly to cathect *B*, *A* emerges into consciousness instead. Indeed, one can infer the nature of *B* from the occasions which bring about the emergence of *A* in such a remarkable fashion.

We can sum the matter up by saying that *A* is compulsive and *B* repressed (at least from consciousness).

Analysis has revealed the surprising fact that for every compulsion there is a corresponding repression, that for every excessive irruption into consciousness there is a corresponding amnesia.

The term "excessively intense" points to *quantitative* characteristics. It is plausible to suppose that repression has the quantitative sense of being denuded of quantity, and that the sum of the two [*i.e.*, of the compulsion *plus* the repression] is equal to the normal. If so, only the *distribution* of quantity has been altered. Something has been added to *A* that has been subtracted from *B*. The pathological process is one of *displacement*, such as we have come to know in dreams, and is hence a primary process.

[2] *The Genesis of Hysterical Compulsion*

Several significant questions now arise. Under what conditions

¹ After *Studies on Hysteria* Freud only rarely used the word "symbol" in this sense.

does a pathological formation of a symbol such as this occur (or, conversely, a repression)? What is the operating force concerned? What is the state of the neurones of an excessively intense or of a repressed idea?

Nothing could be discovered about this and nothing further could be inferred from it, if it were not that clinical experience teaches us two facts. Repression is exclusively brought to bear on ideas that, firstly, arouse a distressing affect (unpleasure) in the ego, and that, secondly, relate to sexual life.

We may at once suspect that it is this unpleasurable affect which brings about repression. Indeed, we have already assumed the existence of a "primary defence", which consists in a reversal of the current of thought as soon as it comes up against a neurone the cathecting of which releases unpleasure [pp. 383 and 392].

The justification for this assumption lay in two observations: (1) that a neuronic cathexis of this latter kind is certainly not what is being sought for when the original purpose of the thought-process was to establish a Ψ -situation of satisfaction, and (2) that when an experience of pain is brought to an end in a reflex manner the hostile perception is replaced by another [p. 383].

We can, however, convince ourselves in a more direct manner of the part played by defensive affects. If we investigate the condition of the repressed [idea] *B*, we find that this idea can easily be found and brought into consciousness. This is surprising, for we might well have supposed that *B* was really forgotten and that no trace of it remained in Ψ . But no; *B* is a memory-image like any other. It is not extinguished; but if, as is usually the case, *B* is a complex of cathexes, then an uncommonly strong *resistance*, and one that cannot easily be eliminated, opposes any activity of thought in relation to *B*. This resistance to *B* can at once be recognized as a measure of the *compulsion* exercised by *A*, and we can conclude that the force which originally repressed *B* is at work once more in the resistance. And at the same time we learn something else. We had only known so far that *B* could not become *conscious*; we knew nothing of *B*'s behaviour in regard to thought-cathexis. But we now find that the resistance is directed against any occupation of one's thoughts with *B*, even though it has already been made partly conscious. So that

instead of "excluded from consciousness", we can say "excluded from thought-processes".

Thus it is a defensive process emanating from the *cathected ego* that results in hysterical repression and at the same time in hysterical compulsion. To this extent the process seems to be differentiated from the primary Ψ -processes.

[3] Pathological Defence

Nevertheless we are far from having found a solution. As we have seen, the outcome of hysterical repression differs very widely from that of normal defence, about which we have very accurate knowledge. It is a general fact that we avoid thinking about things that only cause us unpleasure, and that we achieve this by directing our thoughts to something else. But even though we contrive that the intolerable *B* idea shall rarely emerge in our consciousness, we never succeed in forgetting *B* to such an extent that we can never be reminded of it by some fresh perception. Nor can a re-awakening of the idea in this manner be precluded even in hysteria. The difference lies only in the fact that in hysteria what becomes conscious (*i.e.*, what is cathected) is always *A* instead of *B*. Thus it is this immovable symbolization which constitutes the function that is so far in excess of normal defence.

The most obvious explanation of this excessive function would be to attribute it to a greater intensity of the defensive affect. Experience shows, however, that the most distressing memories, which must necessarily arouse the greatest unpleasure (memories of remorse over bad actions), cannot be repressed and replaced by symbols. The existence [p. 408] of a second necessary precondition of pathological defence—sexuality—suggests that the explanation must be looked for elsewhere.

It is out of the question to suppose that disagreeable sexual affects so greatly exceed all other unpleasurable affects in intensity. There must be some other attribute of sexual ideas to explain why they alone are subject to repression.

One further remark must here be made. Hysterical repression clearly takes place by the help of symbolization—of *displacement* on

to other neurones. It might be supposed that the riddle lies in this displacement and that the repression itself requires no explanation. But we shall find when we come to analyse (for instance) obsessional neurosis that there repression occurs *without* symbolization, and, indeed, that repression and substitution are there separated in time. Accordingly, the process of repression remains the core of the riddle.

[4] *The Hysterical Πρώτον Ψεύδος [First Lie]*

As we have seen, hysterical compulsion originates from a peculiar kind of quantitative movement (symbolization), which is probably a primary process since it can easily be seen at work in dreams.¹ The motive force in this process is defence on the part of the ego, which, however, is here performing nothing in excess of a normal function. What we need to explain is how an ego-process can be accompanied by consequences which we are accustomed to meet with only in primary processes. We must expect to find special psychical conditions in operation. Clinical observation tells us that all this happens only in the sexual sphere. Perhaps, then, the special psychical conditions are to be explained by the natural characteristics of sexuality.

As it happens, a special psychical concatenation is to be found in the sphere of sexuality which might serve our purpose. It is known to us empirically, and I will illustrate it by an example.²

Emma is at the present time under a compulsion not to go into shops *alone*. She explained this by a memory dating from the age of twelve (shortly before her puberty). She went into a shop to buy something, saw the two shop-assistants (one of whom she remembers) laughing together, and rushed out in some kind of *fright*. In this connection it was possible to elicit the idea that the two men had been laughing at her clothes and that one of them had attracted her sexually.

Both the relation of these fragments to one another and the effect of the experience are incomprehensible. If she felt unpleasure at her

¹ For the primary process see p. 386 ff.

² This example is not used in Freud's published writings.

clothes being laughed at, this should have been corrected long ago—ever since she began to dress as a lady. Nor does it make any difference to her clothes whether she goes into a shop alone or in company. It is not simply a question of being protected, as is shown by the fact that (as happens in cases of agoraphobia) the company of a small child is enough to make her feel safe. Then there is the totally disconnected fact that one of the men attracted her. Here again nothing would be changed if she had someone with her. Thus the memories aroused explain neither the compulsion nor the determination of the symptom.

Further investigation brought to light a second memory, which she denies having had in mind at the moment of Scene I. Nor is there any evidence to support its presence there. On two occasions, when she was a child of eight, she had gone into a shop to buy some sweets and the shopkeeper had grabbed at her genitals through her clothes. In spite of the first experience she had gone to the shop a second time, after which she had stopped away. Afterwards she reproached herself for having gone the second time, as though she had wanted to provoke the assault. And in fact a "bad conscience" by which she was oppressed could be traced back to this experience.

We can now understand Scene I (with the shop-assistants) if we take it in conjunction with Scene II (with the shopkeeper). All we need is an associative link between them. She herself remarked that a link of this kind was provided by the *laughter*. The shop-assistants' laughter had reminded her of the grin with which the shopkeeper had accompanied his assault. The whole process can now be reconstructed thus. The two shop-assistants *laughed* in the shop, and this laughter (unconsciously) aroused the memory of the shopkeeper. The second situation had the further point of similarity with the first that she was once again in a shop alone. The shopkeeper's grabbing through her clothes was remembered; but since then she had reached puberty. The recollection aroused (what the event when it occurred could certainly not have done) a sexual release, which turned into anxiety. In her anxiety she was afraid the shop-assistants might repeat the assault, and ran away.

It is quite certain that here we have a series of Ψ -processes of two sorts, and that the recollection of Scene II (with the shopkeeper)

took place in a different state from the first one. The course of events can be represented as follows [Fig. 5]:—

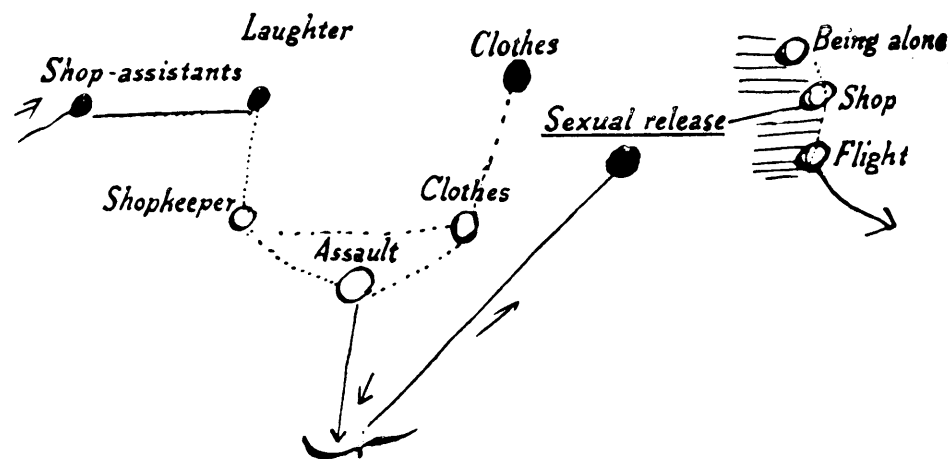


Fig. 16

Here the ideas represented by black dots are perceptions which were recollected. The fact that the sexual release entered consciousness is proved by the otherwise incomprehensible idea that she was attracted by the laughing shop-assistant. Her final conclusion not to remain in the shop because of the danger of being assaulted was quite logically constructed having regard to all the elements of the process of association. But none of the process represented above entered consciousness except the element "clothes"; and the consciously functioning thoughts made two false connections in the material concerned (shop-assistants, laughter, clothes and sexual feeling)—namely, that she had been laughed at on account of her clothes and that she had been sexually excited by one of the shop-assistants.

The whole complex (indicated by broken lines) was represented in consciousness by the one idea "clothes"—obviously its most innocent element. At this point a repression accompanied by symbolization had occurred. The fact that the final conclusion—the symptom—was quite logically constructed, so that the symbol played no part in it, was a special peculiarity of the case.

It may be said to be quite usual for an association to pass through a number of unconscious intermediate links before arriving at a conscious one, as happened in this case. The element that enters consciousness is probably the one that arouses special interest. But in our example the remarkable thing is that what entered consciousness was not the element that aroused interest (the assault) but another which symbolized it (the clothes). If we ask what the cause of this interpolated pathological process may have been, we can only point to a single one—the sexual release, of which there was also evidence in consciousness. This was linked to the memory of the assault; but it is a highly noteworthy fact that it was not linked to the assault when it was actually experienced. Here we have an instance of a memory exciting an affect which it had not excited as an experience, because in the meantime the changes produced by puberty had made possible a new understanding of what was remembered.

Now this case is typical of repression in hysteria. We invariably find that a memory is repressed which has only become a trauma *after the event*. The reason for this state of things is the retardation of puberty as compared with the remainder of the individual's development.¹

[5] *The Determinants of the Πρῶτον Ψεύδους ἵστ.* [First Hysterical Lie]

Although it is unusual in mental life for a memory to arouse an affect which the actual experience has not produced, this is nevertheless what quite ordinarily happens in the case of sexual ideas, precisely because the retardation of puberty is a general characteristic of the organization. Every adolescent carries memory-traces which can only be understood after his own sexual feelings have appeared; every adolescent, accordingly, must carry within him the germ of hysteria. Other, concurrent factors must, of course, also be present, if this general tendency is to be restricted to the small number of people who actually become hysterics.

Now analysis shows that what is disturbing in a sexual trauma is

¹ Freud's later discovery of the importance of infantile sexuality has not completely invalidated this view; it points to the regressive cathexis of infantile material at puberty.

clearly the release of affect; and experience teaches us that hysterics are persons of whom we know in some cases that they have become precociously excitable sexually through mechanical and emotional stimulation (by masturbation) and of whom we can assume in some cases that they have a predisposition to precocious sexual release. A precocious *onset* of sexual release and a precociously *intense* sexual release are obviously equivalent. This factor is reduced to a quantitative one.

What, then, is the significance of this precocity of sexual release? All the stress must be laid on the precocity, since it cannot be maintained that sexual release in general gives rise to repression. For this would once more make repression into a process of normal frequency.

[6] *The Disturbance of Thought by Affects*

We have been unable to avoid the conclusion that disturbance of the normal psychical process depends on two conditions: (1) on the sexual release being attached to a memory instead of to an experience; and (2) on the sexual release occurring precociously.

If these two conditions are present, it seems, a disturbance will be produced which exceeds the normal amount though it is foreshadowed in normal cases.

We know from everyday experiences that the generation of affect inhibits the normal course of thought, and that it does so in various ways. In the first place, many trains of thought may be forgotten which would otherwise be taken into account—as occurs, that is, in dreams [p. 402]. For instance, it has happened to me that in the agitation caused by a great anxiety I have forgotten to make use of the telephone, which had been introduced into my house a short time before. The recently established path succumbed to the state of affect. The facilitation—that is to say, what was old-established—won the day. Such forgetting involves the loss of the power of selection, of efficiency and of logic, just as happens in dreams. In the second place, without forgetting, paths may be followed which would otherwise be avoided: in particular, paths leading to discharge—actions, for instance, performed under the influence of the affect.

In a word, the affective process approximates to the uninhibited primary process.

Several things follow from this: first, that, when affect is released, the releasing idea itself becomes intensified, and secondly, that the chief function of the cathected ego lies in avoiding fresh affective processes and in reducing the old affective facilitations. The position can only be pictured as follows. Originally a perceptual cathexis, being the heir to an experience of pain, released unpleasure; the cathexis became intensified by the quantity ($Q\dot{\eta}$) thus released and proceeded towards discharge along paths which were already in part pre-facilitated. After the formation of a cathected ego, the function of “attention” to fresh perceptual cathexes developed in the manner we know [p. 399], and this attention now follows with lateral cathexes the course taken by the quantity from W .¹ In this way the release of unpleasure is restricted in quantity, and its start acts as a signal to the ego to set normal defence in operation. Thus the generation of fresh experiences of pain, with their facilitations, is made more difficult. But the more intense the release of unpleasure the harder becomes the ego’s task; for it is only up to a certain limit that it is able, by means of its lateral cathexes, to provide a counterweight to the quantities ($Q\dot{\eta}$) concerned, and accordingly it cannot wholly prevent the occurrence of a primary process.

Furthermore, the greater the quantity that is endeavouring to pass through, the more difficult does the ego find thought-activity, which, as everything goes to show, consists in an experimental displacing of small quantities ($Q\dot{\eta}$) [p. 396]. “Reflection” is an activity of the ego which demands time, and it becomes impossible when the affective level involves large quantities. Hence it is that where there is affect there is hastiness and a choice of methods similar to that made in the primary process.

Thus it is the business of the ego to permit no release of affect, since this would at the same time permit a primary process. Its best instrument for this purpose is the mechanism of attention. If a cathexis which releases unpleasure were able to escape attention, the ego’s intervention would come too late. And this is precisely what

¹ [This process is described at much greater length in Part III, e.g., p. 419 ff.]

happens in the case of the hysterical *proton pseudos* [first lie]. Attention is focused on perceptions, which are the normal occasions for the release of unpleasure. But here it is not a perception but a memory-trace which unexpectedly releases unpleasure, and the ego discovers this too late. It has permitted a primary process, because it did not expect one.

There are, however, other occasions on which memories release unpleasure; and in the case of recent memories this is quite normally so. If a trauma (an experience of pain) occurs for the first time when there is already an ego in existence—the very first traumas of all escape the ego entirely—there is a release of unpleasure; but the ego is simultaneously at work creating lateral cathexes. If there is afterwards a cathexis of the *memory-trace*, the unpleasure is repeated; but the ego-facilitations are already present, and experience shows that the second release of unpleasure is less—until, after further repetition, it is reduced to no more than a signal of an intensity acceptable to the ego.¹ Thus the essential thing is that there should be an inhibition by the ego on the occasion of the *first* release of unpleasure, so that the process does not occur as a “posthumous” primary affective experience. But this is precisely what *does* occur when, as in the case of the hysterical *proton pseudos*, the release of unpleasure is occasioned by a *memory*.

This confirms the importance of one of the preconditions that were indicated by clinical experience: *the retardation of puberty makes possible the occurrence of posthumous primary processes.*

¹ [Discussed in greater detail in Part III, p. 437 ff.]