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4. 12. 96.  
IX. Berggasse 19.

My dear Wilhelm,

. . . I am working at full pressure, with every half-hour occupied. . . I am busy thinking out something which would cement our work together and put my column on your base, but I have a feeling that I ought not to write about it. A fragment, naturally for your eyes only, will be ready in a few days. I am curious to hear what you will say about it. . . .

Apart from that the world is full of the most amazing things, as well as stupid ones—human beings are generally responsible for the latter. The first thing I shall disclose to you about my works are the introductory quotations. My psychology of hysteria will be preceded by the proud words: *Introite et hic dii sunt;*

the chapter on summation by:

*Sie treiben's toll, ich fürcht' es breche,  
Nicht jeden Wochenschluss macht Gott die Zeche;*<sup>1</sup>

the symptom-formation by:

*Flectere si nequeo superos Acheronta movebo;*<sup>2</sup>

and resistance by:

*Mach es kurz!*

*Am jüngsten Tag ist' nur ein . . .*<sup>3</sup>

I send my heartiest greetings to you and your little family and look forward to *res novae* about them and your work.

Your

Sigm.

<sup>1</sup> ["They are exceeding all bounds, I fear a breakdown; God does not present the reckoning at the end of every week".]

<sup>2</sup> A line from the *Aeneid* quoted on the title-page of *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

<sup>3</sup> ["Cut it short! On doomsday it won't be worth a . . . !"] From Goethe's *Zahme Xenien*. Freud used it in 1914 to introduce Chapter III of *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement*, which deals with schismatic movements.

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6. 12. 96.

My dear Wilhelm,

As I am dead tired and mentally fresh after completing the day's labour and earning the recompense that I need for my well-being (ten hours and 100 florins), I shall try to summarize the latest bit of speculation for you.

As you know, I am working on the assumption that our psychical mechanism has come about by a process of stratification: the material present in the shape of memory-traces is from time to time subjected to a rearrangement in accordance with fresh circumstances—is, as it were, transcribed.<sup>1</sup> Thus what is essentially new in my theory is the thesis that memory is present not once but several times over, that it is registered in various species of "signs". (I postulated a similar rearrangement some time ago, in my study of aphasia, for the paths leading from the periphery.<sup>2</sup>) I cannot say how many of these registrations

<sup>1</sup> The following passage forms a half-way house between the assumptions about the mental apparatus put forward in the "Project" and Freud's ideas as stated in Chapter VII, of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Freud later returned to them in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and in the paper "A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'" (1925 a) he stated them in a form that combined the early and the later theories.

"All the forms of auxiliary apparatus which we have invented for the improvement or intensification of our sensory functions are built on the same modes as the sense organs themselves or portions of them; for instance, spectacles, photographic cameras, ear trumpets. Measured by this standard, devices to aid our memory seem particularly imperfect, since our mental apparatus accomplishes precisely what they cannot: it has an unlimited receptive capacity for new perceptions and nevertheless lays down permanent—even though not unalterable—memory-traces of them. As long ago as in 1900 I gave expression in *The Interpretation of Dreams* to a suspicion that this unusual capacity was to be divided between two different systems (or organs of the mental apparatus). According to this view, we possess a system Pcpt.-Cs. which receives perceptions but retains no permanent trace of them, so that it can react like a clean sheet to every new perception: while the permanent traces of the excitations which have been received are preserved in "mnemonic systems" lying behind the perceptual system. Later, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920g) I added a remark to the effect that the inexplicable phenomenon of consciousness arises in the perceptual system *instead* of the permanent traces."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> One of the rare passages in which Freud himself draws attention to the resemblance between his *Zur Auffassung der Aphasien* (1891 b) and his later works.

there may be: at least three and probably more. I have illustrated this in the following schematic picture (Fig. 7), which assumes that the different transcripts are also separated (though not necessarily in topography) in respect to the neurones which are their vehicles. This assumption may not be an essential one, but it is the simplest and is provisionally admissible.

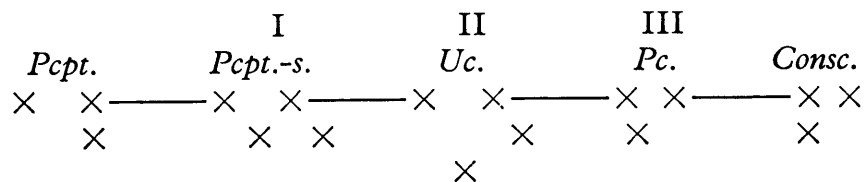


Fig. 7<sup>1</sup>

*Pcpt.* are neurones in which perceptions appear and to which consciousness is attached but which in themselves retain no trace of what happens. For *consciousness and memory are mutually exclusive*. [Cf. the "Project", p. 363].

*Pcpt.-s.* is the first registration of the perceptions; it is quite incapable of being conscious and is arranged according to associations of simultaneity.

*Uc.* (unconsciousness) is a second registration, or transcription, arranged according to other associations—perhaps according to causal relations. *Uc.* traces may correspond to conceptual memories; they too are inaccessible to consciousness.

*Pc.* (preconsciousness) is the third transcription, attached to verbal images and corresponding to the official ego. The cathexes proceeding from this *Pc.* become conscious in accordance with certain rules. This secondary "thought-consciousness" is subsequent in time and probably connected with the

<sup>1</sup> ["*Pcpt.*" = perception; "*Pcpt.-s.*" = perceptual signs; "*Uc.*" = unconscious (signs); "*Pc.*" = preconscious (signs); "*Consc.*" = consciousness. These abbreviations are the precursors of the familiar "Ucs." etc., which were first used in the letter to Fliess of May 31, 1897 (No. 64) and were introduced into Freud's published writings in Section B of the seventh chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900 a).]

hallucinatory activation of verbal images; so that the neurones of consciousness would once again be perceptual neurones and in themselves devoid of memory.

If I could give a complete account of the psychological characteristics of perception and of the three transcriptions, I should have enunciated a new psychology. Some material for this is at my disposal, but that is not my present purpose.

I must emphasize the fact that the successive transcripts represent the psychical achievement of successive epochs of life.<sup>1</sup> At the frontier between any two such epochs a translation of the psychical material must take place. I explain the peculiarities of the psychoneuroses by supposing that the translation of some of the material has not occurred—which involves certain consequences. For I hold firmly to the tendency towards quantitative equalization. Each later transcription inhibits its predecessor and takes over the excitatory process from it. If the later transcription is lacking, the excitation will be disposed of according to the psychological laws governing the earlier psychical epoch and along the paths which were then accessible. Thus an anachronism remains: in a particular province *fueros*<sup>2</sup> are still in force. Relics of the past still survive.

A failure of translation is what we know clinically as "repression". The motive for it is always a release of unpleasure which would result from a translation; it is as though this unpleasure provokes a disturbance of thought which forbids the process of translation.

Within one and the same psychical phase and among transcriptions of one and the same species there can appear a *normal*

<sup>1</sup> Freud did not carry on directly in his published writings with the idea of finding a genetic basis for the understanding of the manner of functioning of the mental apparatus, though in "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911 b) he represented that point of view indirectly. Even in recent years Freud's initiative in this direction has not been satisfactorily followed up. But the problem he had in mind in as early as 1896 can now be more exactly stated. It is a matter of connecting the history of individual ego-functions with the development of the mental apparatus. On this problem see Hartmann (1940) and Hartmann, Kris and Löwenstein (1947).

<sup>2</sup> [A *fuero* was an ancient Spanish law, holding good in some particular city or province and guaranteeing that region's immemorial privileges.]

kind of defence against the generation of unpleasure. *Pathological* defence is directed only against memory traces from an *earlier* phase which have not yet been translated.

It cannot depend on the *magnitude* of the release of unpleasure whether the defence succeeds in bringing about repression.<sup>1</sup> We often struggle in vain precisely against memories involving the greatest unpleasure. So we arrive at the following account. If event A, when it was a current one, aroused a certain amount of unpleasure, then the mnemonic transcript of it, AI or AII, possesses the means of inhibiting the release of unpleasure when the memory is re-awakened. The more often the memory recurs, the more inhibited does the release ultimately become. But there is *one* case in which the inhibition fails. If A, when it was a current event, released a certain amount of unpleasure and if, when it is awakened, it releases fresh unpleasure, then this cannot be inhibited. The memory behaves as though it were some current event. This case can only occur where the events are sexual; because the magnitude of the excitations which these release increases of itself as time passes (*i.e.*, as sexual development takes place).

Thus a sexual event in one phase acts in the next phase as though it were a current one and is at the same time uninhibitable. The determining condition of pathological defence (*i.e.*, of repression) is therefore *that the event should be of a sexual nature and should have occurred during an earlier phase*.

Not all sexual experiences release unpleasure; most of them release pleasure. Thus the reproduction of most of them is accompanied by uninhibitable pleasure. Uninhibitable pleasure of this kind constitutes a *compulsion*. We are therefore led to the

<sup>1</sup> The economic ideas which in the previous year (see "Project") were still stated in the language of the physiology of the nervous system, are here replaced by general assumptions about cathectic intensities. The account of the mental apparatus has accordingly become a good deal more "independent", and can be more easily brought into harmony with clinical observations; the ontogenetic viewpoint is simultaneously introduced.

The next section connects Freud's assumptions about the functioning of the mental apparatus with his assumptions about the special position of repression as a defence against sexual traumas. These assumptions are still based on the foundation of the "seduction" hypothesis. (See Introduction, p. 28 *sqq.*)

following conclusions. When a sexual experience is remembered in a different phase, then, if there is a release of pleasure, the result is compulsion, but, if there is a release of unpleasure, the result is repression. In both cases the translation into the signs of the new phase seems to be inhibited.(?)<sup>1</sup>

Clinical experience makes us acquainted with three groups of sexual psychoneuroses—hysteria, obsessional neurosis and paranoia; and it teaches us that the repressed memories relate to what was actively current in the case of hysteria between the ages of 1½ and 4,<sup>2</sup> of obsessional neurosis between 4 and 8, and of paranoia between 8 and 14. But before the age of 4 there is no repression; so that the psychical periods and sexual phases do not coincide.<sup>3</sup> [Fig. 8].

	1½	4	8	14-15
Psych.	Ia	Ib	II	III
Sex.		I	II	III

Fig. 8

Another consequence of premature sexual experiences may be perversion, the determining condition of which seems to be that defence either did not occur before the completion of the psychical apparatus or did not occur at all.<sup>4</sup>

(The following diagrammatic sketch overleaf illustrates this [Fig. 9].)

<sup>1</sup> [In the MS.]

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Freud's earlier view in Letter 46.

<sup>3</sup> Freud here distinguishes only two "sexual" phases before puberty, separated from each other by the second dentition.

<sup>4</sup> This is Freud's first mention of perversion. [There is a bare allusion to it on p. 147.]

	Pcpt.-s.	Pcpt.-s. + Uc.	Pcpt.-s. + Uc. + Pc.	Ditto.
	up to 4	up to 8	up to 14-15	
Hysteria	current	compulsion	repressed in Pcpt.-s.	
Obs. Neur.		current	repressed in Uc. signs	
Paranoia			current	repressed in Pc. signs
Perversion	current	current	compulsion (current)	repression im-possible or not attempted

Fig. 9

So much for the superstructure. Now for an attempt to set it on organic foundations. What has to be explained is why sexual experiences which, when they were current, generated pleasure should, if they are remembered during a later phase, generate unpleasure in some people and persist as compulsion in others. In the former case they must evidently release unpleasure at a later time which was not released earlier.

We have also to trace the origin of the different epochs, both psychological and sexual. You have explained the latter to me as special instances of multiples of the 28-day female period. . . .<sup>1</sup>

In order to explain why the outcome is sometimes perversion and sometimes neurosis, I avail myself of the universal bisexuality of human beings. In a purely male being there would be a surplus of masculine release at the two sexual boundaries [p.38], consequently pleasure would be generated and at the same time perversion; in a purely female being there would be a surplus of *unpleasurable* substance at these two points of time. During the first phases the releases would run parallel (*i.e.*, there would be a normal surplus of pleasure). This explains the preference of true females for the defensive neuroses.

In this way the intellectual nature of males would be confirmed on the basis of your theory.

Finally, I cannot suppress a suspicion that the distinction between neurasthenia and anxiety neurosis, which I detected clinically, is related to the existence of the two 23-day and 28-day substances.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the two whose existence I here suspect, there may be several others of each kind.

It seems to me more and more that the essential point of

<sup>1</sup> In a passage not reproduced here Freud makes an attempt to regard the phases in which the seduction experiences of each group of neurotic illness took effect as multiples of Fliess's periods. The next passage, which is reproduced here, deals with the idea that bisexuality provides the foundation for neurosis, an idea which Fliess later made completely his own. See Introduction, p. 39 *sqq.* In this first formulation, however, Freud's views are already much more far-reaching. He recognizes the significance of the erotogenic zones, and at any rate one sentence points to the importance that processes of maturation possess in this connection.

<sup>2</sup> An assumption from which Freud soon freed himself. It represented the climax of his efforts to connect Fliess's views with his own.

hysteria is that it is a result of perversion on the part of the seducer; and that heredity is seduction by the father. Thus a change occurs between the generations:—

1st generation: Perversion.

2nd generation: Hysteria, and consequent sterility. Incidentally there is a metamorphosis within the individual: he is perverse during the age of his strength, and then, after a period of anxiety, becomes hysterical. Thus hysteria is in fact not repudiated *sexuality* but rather repudiated *perversion*.

Behind this lies the notion of abandoned *erotogenic zones*. That is to say, during childhood sexual release would seem to be obtainable from very many parts of the body; but at a later time they are only able to release the 28-day anxiety substance and none other. This differentiation and limitation would thus underlie advances in culture and the development of morality, both social and individual.

A hysterical attack is not a discharge but an *action*; and it retains the original character of every action—of being a means to reproducing pleasure. (That, at least, is what it is at root; it puts forward all kinds of reasons to the preconscious.)

Thus those patients who had something sexual done to them in their sleep suffer from attacks of sleep. They go to sleep again in order to repeat the same experience; and they often bring on hysterical fainting fits as well.

Attacks of giddiness and fits of weeping—all these are aimed at *some other person*—but most of all at the prehistoric, unforgettable other person who is never equalled by anyone later. Even the chronic symptom of lying in bed has this same explanation. One of my patients still whimpers in his sleep as he did long ago in order to be taken into his mother's bed, who died when he was 22 months old. Attacks never seem to occur as an "intensified expression of emotion".<sup>1</sup>

. . . I am working at full pressure ten or eleven hours a day and feel well accordingly, but rather hoarse. Is that strain on the

<sup>1</sup> In "The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence" (1894 a), Freud still accepted Oppenheim's belief that hysteria was "an intensified expression of emotion".

vocal cords or anxiety neurosis? The question does not need answering. The best thing is to take Candide's advice—*travailler sans raisonner*. . . .

I have now adorned my room with plaster casts of the Florentine statues.<sup>1</sup> It was the source of extraordinary refreshment to me. I am thinking of getting rich, to be able to repeat these journeys. Think of a congress on Italian soil! (Naples, Pompeii.)

Cordial greetings to you all,

Your

Sigm.

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Vienna, 17. 12. 96.

My dear Wilhelm,

. . .<sup>2</sup> Now, without any proper connection with the above, for some psychoneurotic matters. I am very glad you accept the explanation of anxiety as the key-point. Perhaps I have not yet told you the analysis of several phobias. "Fear of throwing oneself out of the window" is a misconstruction by the conscious, or rather the preconscious, and relates to an unconscious content in which window appears and can be dissected as follows:

Anxiety + . . . . . window . . . . .;

explained thus:

Unconscious idea: going to the window to beckon to a man as prostitutes do: sexual release arising from this idea;

Preconsciousness: rejection, hence anxiety arising from the release of sexuality.

The only conscious element in this content is *window*, as this fragment of it can be used as a compromise-formation because of the idea of "falling out of the window", which is consistent with anxiety. So what they are consciously aware of is *fear of the window*, which they interpret in the sense of *falling* out of it;

<sup>1</sup> The room was Freud's newly occupied consulting room on the ground floor of 19, Berggasse.

<sup>2</sup> The beginning of this letter, not reproduced here, contains a further attempt to connect Fliess's period theory with Freud's own theories of the neuroses.