

THE ORIGINS OF
PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

Letters to Wilhelm Fliess,

Drafts and Notes:

1887-1902

by

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BASIC BOOKS, INC., PUBLISHERS

59 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 3, N. Y.

than in the laboratory and the ward, and I am curious to see how he will turn out. Incidentally he is half-American. . . .

I had all sorts of other good ideas for you during the last few days, but they have all disappeared again. I must wait for the next drive forward, which will bring them back. In the meantime I should like to hear good and full news of you, Ida and Robert. . . .

My heartiest greetings and good luck in your work,

Your

Sigm.

63

25. 5. 97.

My dear Wilhelm,

I send you herewith *il catalogo delle belle*, etc.¹ The board's decision is still hanging fire; there was fresh opposition and a consequent postponement at the last meeting. Fortunately, my interests lie elsewhere.

The enclosed comes of a surge of guesses, which rouse great hope in me. If anything comes of it I shall make my visit to Berlin. You can count on it that will not happen before next year. . . .

My rabble went off to Aussee yesterday with Minna, and apparently arrived in beautiful weather. Martha is staying here till Whitsun.

Your

Sigm.

Draft M

(25 May 1897)²

NOTES (II)

Architecture of Hysteria

Probably as follows. Some of the scenes are accessible directly, but others only by way of superimposed phantasies. The scenes are

¹ A playful reference [put in approximately the words of Mozart's Leporello] to the "catalogue" of Freud's works, i.e., the bibliography. See previous letter.

² Enclosed with Letter 63.

arranged according to increasing resistance. Those which are more slightly repressed come to light only incompletely to begin with, on account of their association with those which are severely repressed. The path followed by [analytic] work proceeds by a series of downward lines: first down to the scenes or to their neighbourhood, then a step further down from one of the symptoms, and then a step further still.¹ Since most of the scenes converge upon only a few symptoms, our path repeatedly follows a line through the background thoughts of the same symptoms.

Symptoms: our work consists of a series of such stages at deeper and deeper levels. [See Fig. II].

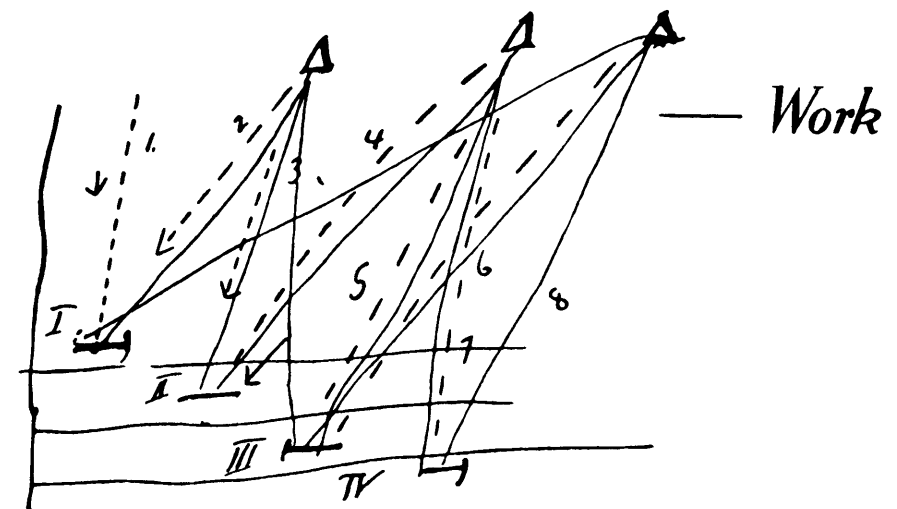


Fig. II

[All the dotted lines, arrows and figures are in red in the original, as well as the word "Work" and the line accompanying it.]

Repression

It is to be suspected that the essential repressed element is always femininity. This is confirmed by the fact that women no less than

¹ The idea that "scenes are arranged according to increasing resistance" and that the work proceeds by a series of downward slants led subsequently to the views of the meaning of resistance stated in Freud's technical writings and thus to the establishment of the psycho-analytic technique.

men admit more easily to experiences with women than with men. What men essentially repress is their pæderastic element.¹

Phantasies

Phantasies arise from an unconscious combination of things experienced and heard, constructed for particular purposes. These purposes aim at making inaccessible the memory from which symptoms have been generated or might be generated. Phantasies are constructed by a process of fusion and distortion analogous to the decomposition of a chemical body which is combined with another one. For the first kind of distortion consists in a falsification of memory by a process of fragmentation, which involves a disregard of chronological considerations. (Chronological corrections seem to depend precisely on the activity of the system of *consciousness*.) A fragment of a visual scene is then joined up to a fragment of an auditory one and made into a phantasy, while the fragment left over is linked up with something else. This makes it impossible to trace their original connection. As a result of the construction of phantasies of this kind (in periods of excitation) the mnemonic symptoms cease. But instead there are now unconscious fictions which have not succumbed to defence. If the intensity of such a phantasy increases to a point at which it would have to force its way into consciousness, it is repressed and a symptom is generated by a backward drive from the phantasy to its constituent memories.

All anxiety symptoms (phobias) are derived in this way from phantasies. Nevertheless this gives a simplified view of symptoms. There may perhaps be a third wave of pressure and a third method of constructing symptoms—originating from *impulses*.²

Types of Displacement resulting in Compromise

Displacement on associative lines: hysteria.

Displacement on lines of (conceptual) similarity: obsessional.

¹ The idea alluded to here is one which occupied Freud throughout his life (cf. Introduction, p. 39). It led to the insight into the general significance of "the tendency to inversion in psychoneurotics" which Freud, according to a footnote in the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905 d) owed to a suggestion of Fliess's; then to an understanding of the general significance of latent homosexuality; and finally, in the last years of Freud's working life, to an understanding of passivity in infantile life.

² [See the discussion of impulses below, p. 207 ff.]

Neurosis. (Characteristic of the place, and perhaps also of the time, at which the defence occurred.)

Displacement on causal lines: paranoia.

Typical Course of Events

There are good grounds for suspecting that the arousing of the repressed material is not left to chance but follows the laws of development. Also, that repression proceeds from recent material backwards and affects the latest events first.

Difference between the Phantasies in Hysteria and Paranoia

In the latter they are systematic and all of them in harmony with one another. In the former they are independent of one another and even contradictory—insulated, that is; they seem to have arisen, as it were, automatically (by a chemical process). This and neglect of the characteristic of time are no doubt essential distinctions between activity in the preconscious and unconscious.

Repression in the Unconscious

It is not enough to take into account the repression between the preconscious and the unconscious; we must also consider the normal repression that occurs within the system of the unconscious itself. This is very important, but still very obscure.¹

One of our brightest hopes is that we may be able to determine the number and species of phantasies as well as we can those of the "scenes". A romance of being a stranger (*e.g.*, in the family) (*cf.* paranoia) is found regularly, and serves as a means of bastardizing the relatives in question.² Agoraphobia seems to depend on a romance of prostitution, which itself goes back to this same family romance. Thus a woman who will not go out by herself is asserting her mother's unfaithfulness.

¹ The progress of the idea hinted at here can be followed in Freud's later thought; in the differentiation between what is instinctual and what is repressed in the id ("The Ego and the Id", 1923 b) and in the idea that the repressed may itself be worked off and made to disappear ("The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" (1924 d).)

² The family romance, which is regarded here and in earlier passages in the letters as a distinguishing mark of paranoia, was later recognized by Freud to be a part of the normal phantasy life, developing under the pressure of the Oedipus complex. His first statement of this was in a passage contributed to Rank's *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (Freud, 1909 c).