

ON TRANSFORMATIONS OF INSTINCT
AS EXEMPLIFIED IN ANAL
EROTISM (1917)

ÜBER TRIEBUMSETZUNGEN, INSBESONDERE DER ANALEROTIK

(a) GERMAN EDITIONS:

- 1917 *Int. Z. Psychoanal.*, 4 (3), 125-30.
1918 *S.K.S.N.*, 4, 139-48 (1922, 2nd. ed.).
1924 *G.S.*, 5, 268-76.
1926 *Psychoanalyse der Neurosen*, 40-9.
1931 *Sexualtheorie und Traumlehre*, 116-24.
1946 *G.W.*, 10, 402-10.

(b) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

- 'On the Transformation of Instincts with Special Reference
to Anal Erotism'
1924 *C.P.*, 2, 164-71. (Tr. E. Glover.)

The present translation, with a modified title, is based on that published in 1924.

Though this paper was not published until 1917, it was probably written considerably earlier—perhaps even in 1915. Long delays in publication were inevitable at this period, owing to the difficulties of war conditions. The gist of it had already been given in a paragraph added to the 1915 edition of Freud's *Three Essays* (1905*d*), *Standard Ed.*, 7, 186. Moreover, many conclusions reached here seem to be derived from the analysis of the 'Wolf Man' (1918*b*), whose case history was mostly written during the autumn of 1914. The later part of Section VII (p. 80 ff.) of that case history exemplifies in some detail the thesis of the present paper.

ON TRANSFORMATIONS OF INSTINCT AS EXEMPLIFIED IN ANAL EROTISM

SOME years ago, observations made during psycho-analysis led me to suspect that the constant co-existence in any one of the three character-traits of *orderliness*, *parsimony* and *obstinacy* indicated an intensification of the anal-erotic components in his sexual constitution, and that these modes of reaction, which were favoured by his ego, had been established during the course of his development through the assimilation of his anal erotism.¹

In that publication my main object was to make known the fact of this established relation; I was little concerned about its theoretical significance. Since then there has been a general consensus of opinion that each one of the three qualities, avarice, pedantry and obstinacy, springs from anal-erotic sources—or, to express it more cautiously and more completely—draws powerful contributions from those sources. The cases in which these defects of character were combined and which in consequence bore a special stamp (the ‘anal character’) were merely extreme instances, which were bound to betray the particular connection that interests us here even to an unobservant eye.

As a result of numerous impressions, and in particular of one specially cogent analytical observation, I came to the conclusion a few years later that in the development of the libido in man the phase of genital primacy must be preceded by a ‘pregenital organization’ in which sadism and anal erotism play the leading parts.²

From that moment we had to face the problem of the later history of the anal-erotic instinctual impulses. What becomes of them when, owing to the establishment of a definitive genital organization, they have lost their importance in sexual life? Do they preserve their original nature, but in a state of repression? Are they sublimated or assimilated by

¹ ‘Character and Anal Erotism’ (1908*b*).

² ‘The Predisposition to Obsessional Neurosis’ (1913*i*).

transformation into character-traits? Or do they find a place within the new organization of sexuality characterized by genital primacy? Or, since none of these vicissitudes of anal erotism is likely to be the only one, to what extent and in what way does each of them share in deciding its fate? For the organic sources of anal erotism cannot of course be buried as a result of the emergence of the genital organization.

One would think that there could be no lack of material from which to provide an answer, since the processes of development and transformation in question must have taken place in everyone undergoing analysis. Yet the material is so obscure, the abundance of ever-recurring impressions so confusing, that even now I am unable to solve the problem fully and can do no more than make some contributions to its solution. In making them I need not refrain from mentioning, where the context allows it, other instinctual transformations besides anal-erotic ones. Finally, it scarcely requires to be emphasized that the developmental events here described—just as the others found in psycho-analysis—have been inferred from the regressions into which they had been forced by neurotic processes.

As a starting-point for this discussion we may take the fact that it appears as if in the products of the unconscious—spontaneous ideas, phantasies and symptoms—the concepts *faeces* (money, gift),¹ *baby* and *penis* are ill-distinguished from one another and are easily interchangeable. We realize, of course, that to express oneself in this way is incorrectly to apply to the sphere of the unconscious terms which belong properly to other regions of mental life, and that we have been led astray by the advantages offered by an analogy. To put the matter in a form less open to objection, these elements in the unconscious are often treated as if they were equivalent and could replace one another freely.

This is most easily seen in the relation between 'baby' and 'penis'. It cannot be without significance that in the symbolic language of dreams, as well as of everyday life, both may be replaced by the same symbol; both baby and penis are called a 'little one', [*das Kleine*].² It is a well-known fact that symbolic

¹ [The relations between *faeces* and money, or gold, are discussed at some length in the paper already referred to (Freud, 1908*b*).]

² [A dream illustrating this will be found in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), *Standard Ed.*, 5, 362*f.*]

speech often ignores difference of sex. The 'little one', which originally meant the male genital organ, may thus have acquired a secondary application to the female genitals.

If we penetrate deeply enough into the neurosis of a woman, we not infrequently meet with the repressed wish to possess a penis like a man. We call this wish 'envy for a penis' and include it in the castration complex. Chance mishaps in the life of such a woman, mishaps which are themselves frequently the result of a very masculine disposition, have re-activated this infantile wish and, through the backward flow of libido, made it the chief vehicle of her neurotic symptoms. In other women we find no evidence of this wish for a penis; it is replaced by the wish for a baby, the frustration of which in real life can lead to the outbreak of a neurosis. It looks as if such women had understood (although this could not possibly have acted as a motive) that nature has given babies to women as a substitute for the penis that has been denied them. With other women, again, we learn that both wishes were present in their childhood and that one replaced the other. At first they had wanted a penis like a man; then at a later, though still childish, stage there appeared instead the wish for a baby. The impression is forced upon us that this variety in our findings is caused by accidental factors during childhood (e.g. the presence or absence of brothers or the birth of a new baby at some favourable time of life), so that the wish for a penis and the wish for a baby would be fundamentally identical.

We can say what the ultimate outcome of the infantile wish for a penis is in women in whom the determinants of a neurosis in later life are absent: it changes into the wish for a *man*, and thus puts up with the man as an appendage to the penis. This transformation, therefore, turns an impulse which is hostile to the female sexual function into one which is favourable to it. Such women are in this way made capable of an erotic life based on the masculine type of object-love, which can exist alongside the feminine one proper, derived from narcissism. We already know ¹ that in other cases it is only a baby that makes the transition from narcissistic self-love to object-love possible. So that in this respect too a baby can be represented by the penis.

¹ [See the later part of Section II of Freud's paper on narcissism (1914c).]

I have had occasional opportunities of being told women's dreams that had occurred after their first experience of intercourse. They revealed an unmistakable wish in the woman to keep for herself the penis which she had felt. Apart from their libidinal origin, then, these dreams indicated a temporary regression from man to penis as the object of her wish. One would certainly be inclined to trace back the wish for a man in a purely rationalistic way to the wish for a baby, since a woman is bound to understand sooner or later that there can be no baby without the co-operation of a man. It is, however, more likely that the wish for a man arises independently of the wish for a baby, and that when it arises—from understandable motives belonging entirely to ego-psychology—the original wish for a penis becomes attached to it as an unconscious libidinal reinforcement. The importance of the process described lies in the fact that a part of the young woman's narcissistic masculinity is thus changed into femininity, and so can no longer operate in a way harmful to the female sexual function.

Along another path, a part of the erotism of the pregenital phase, too, becomes available for use in the phase of genital primacy. The baby is regarded as 'lumpf'¹ (cf. the analysis of 'Little Hans'), as something which becomes detached from the body by passing through the bowel. A certain amount of libidinal cathexis which originally attached to the contents of the bowel can thus be extended to the baby born through it. Linguistic evidence of this identity of baby and faeces is contained in the expression 'to give someone a baby'. For its faeces are the infant's first gift, a part of his body which he will give up only on persuasion by someone he loves, to whom indeed, he will make a spontaneous gift of it as a token of affection; for, as a rule, infants do not dirty strangers. (There are similar if less intense reactions with urine.) Defaecation affords the first occasion on which the child must decide between a narcissistic and an object-loving attitude. He either parts obediently with his faeces, 'sacrifices' them to his love, or else retains them for purposes of auto-erotic satisfaction and later as a means of asserting his own will. If he makes the latter choice we are in the presence of defiance (obstinacy) which, accordingly, springs from a narcissistic clinging to anal erotism.

It is probable that the first meaning which a child's interest

¹ ['Little Hans's' word for faeces. Cf. *Standard Ed.*, 10, 54 and 68n.]

in faeces develops is that of 'gift' rather than 'gold' or 'money'. The child knows no money apart from what is given him—no money acquired and none inherited of his own. Since his faeces are his first gift, the child easily transfers his interest from that substance to the new one which he comes across as the most valuable gift in life. Those who question this derivation of gifts should consider their experience of psycho-analytic treatment, study the gifts they receive as doctors from their patients, and watch the storms of transference which a gift from them can rouse in their patients.

Thus the interest in faeces is continued partly as interest in money, partly as a wish for a baby, in which latter an anal-erotic and a genital impulse ('envy for a penis') converge. But the penis has another anal-erotic significance apart from its relation to the interest in a baby. The relationship between the penis and the passage lined with mucous membrane which it fills and excites already has its prototype in the pregenital, anal-sadistic phase. The faecal mass, or as one patient called it, the faecal 'stick', represents as it were the first penis, and the stimulated mucous membrane of the rectum represents that of the vagina. There are people whose anal erotism remains vigorous and unmodified up to the age preceding puberty (ten to twelve years); we learn from them that during the pregenital phase they had already developed in phantasy and in perverse play an organization analogous to the genital one, in which penis and vagina were represented by the faecal stick and the rectum. In other people—obsessional neurotics—we can observe the result of a regressive debasement of the genital organization. This is expressed in the fact that every phantasy originally conceived on the genital level is transposed to the anal level—the penis being replaced by the faecal mass and the vagina by the rectum.

As the interest in faeces recedes in a normal way, the organic analogy we have described here has the effect of transferring the interest on to the penis. When, later, in the course of the child's researches¹ he discovers that babies are born from the bowel, they inherit the greater part of his anal erotism; they have, however, been preceded by the penis in this as well as in another sense.

I feel sure that by this time the manifold interrelations of

¹ [See Freud's paper 'On the Sexual Theories of Children' (1908c).]

the series—faeces, penis, baby—have become totally unintelligible; so I will try to remedy the defect by presenting them diagrammatically, and in considering the diagram [Fig. 2] we can review the same material in a different order. Unfortunately, this technical device is not sufficiently pliable for our purpose, or possibly we have not yet learned to use it with effect. In any case I hope the reader will not expect too much from it.

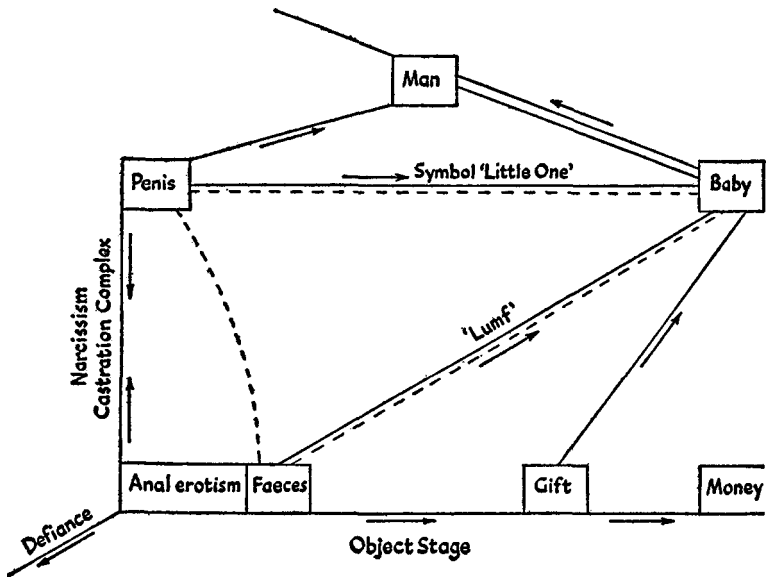


FIG. 2.

Anal erotism finds a narcissistic application in the production of defiance, which constitutes an important reaction on the part of the ego against demands made by other people. Interest in faeces is carried over first to interest in gifts, and then to interest in money. In girls, the discovery of the penis gives rise to envy for it, which later changes into the wish for a man as the possessor of a penis. Even before this the wish for a penis has changed into the wish for a baby, or the latter wish has taken the place of the former one. An organic analogy between penis and baby (dotted line) is expressed by the existence of a symbol ('little one') common to both. A rational wish (double line) then leads from the wish for a baby to the wish for a man: we have already appreciated the importance of this instinctual transformation.

Another part of the nexus of relations can be observed much more clearly in the male. It arises when the boy's sexual researches lead him to the discovery of the absence of a penis in women. He concludes that the penis must be a detachable part of the body, something analogous to faeces, the first piece of bodily substance the child had to part with. Thus the old anal defiance enters into the composition of the castration complex. The organic analogy which enabled the intestinal contents to be the forerunner of the penis during the pregenital phase cannot come into account as a motive; but the boy's sexual researches lead him to a psychical substitute for it. When a baby appears on the scene he regards it as 'lumpf', in accordance with those researches, and he cathects it with powerful anal-erotic interest. When social experiences teach that a baby is to be regarded as a love-token, a gift, the wish for a baby receives a second contribution from the same source. Faeces, penis and baby are all three solid bodies; they all three, by forcible entry or expulsion, stimulate a membranous passage, i.e. the rectum and the vagina, the latter being as it were 'taken on lease' from the rectum, as Lou Andreas-Salomé aptly remarks.¹ Infantile sexual researches can only lead to the conclusion that the baby follows the same route as the faecal mass. The function of the penis is not usually discovered by those researches. But it is interesting to note that after so many détours an organic correspondence reappears in the psychical sphere as an unconscious identity.

¹ In her paper '“Anal” und “Sexual”' (1916). [Freud added a footnote in 1920 to the second of his *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905d, *Standard Ed.*, 7, 187n.), in which he summarized the contents of that paper.]