

these it is indubitably the ambivalence that motivates the conflict, and observation shows that after it has run its course nothing in the nature of a triumph or a manic state of mind is left. We are thus directed to the third factor as the only one that can have this effect. That accumulation of cathexis which is first of all "bound" and then, after termination of the work of melancholia, becomes free and makes mania possible must be connected with the regression of the libido into narcissism. The conflict in the ego, which in melancholia is substituted for the struggle surging round the object, must act like a painful wound which calls out unusually strong anti-cathexes. Here again, however, it will be well to call a halt and postpone further investigations into mania until we have gained some insight into the economic conditions, first, of bodily pain, and then of the mental pain which is its analogue. For we know already that, owing to the interdependence of the complicated problems of the mind, we are forced to break off every investigation at some point until such time as the results of another attempt elsewhere can come to its aid.

[For the further discussion of this problem see "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego": 1921.—Ed.]

BEYOND THE PLEASURE-PRINCIPLE¹

(1920)

I. In the psychoanalytical theory of the mind we take it for granted that the course of mental processes is automatically regulated by "the pleasure-principle": that is to say, we believe that any given process originates in an unpleasant state of tension and thereupon determines for itself such a path that its ultimate issue coincides with a relaxation of this tension, i.e. with avoidance of "pain" or with production of pleasure. When we consider the psychic processes under observation in reference to such a sequence we are introducing into our work the *economic* point of view. In our opinion a presentation which seeks to estimate, not only the *topographical* and *dynamic*, but also the economic element is the most complete that we can at present imagine, and deserves to be distinguished by the term *metapsychological*.

We are not interested in examining how far in our assertion of the pleasure-principle we have approached to or adopted any given philosophical system historically established. Our approach to such speculative hypotheses

¹ *Jenseits der Lustprinzips*. Wein, 1920. G.S. vi, 189-257; LIB. 4. Trans. by C. J. M. Hubback.

is by way of our endeavor to describe and account for the facts falling within our daily sphere of observation. Priority and originality are not among the aims which psycho-analysis sets itself. . . .

We have decided to consider pleasure and "pain" in relation to the quantity of excitation present in the psychic life—and not confined in any way—along such lines that "pain" corresponds with an increase and pleasure with a decrease in this quantity. We do not thereby commit ourselves to a simple relationship between the strength of the feelings and the changes corresponding with them, least of all, judging from psychophysiological experiences, to any view of the direct proportion existing between them. . . .

The facts that have led us to believe in the supremacy of the pleasure-principle in psychic life also find expression in the hypothesis that there is an attempt on the part of the psychic apparatus to keep the quantity of excitation present as low as possible, or at least constant The pleasure-principle is deduced from the principle of constancy; in reality the principle of constancy was inferred from the facts that necessitated our assumption of the pleasure-principle. On more detailed discussion we shall find further that this tendency on the part of the psychic apparatus postulated by us may be classified as a special case of Fechner's principle of the *tendency towards stability* to which he has related the pleasure-pain feelings. . . .

The first case of . . . a check on the pleasure-principle is perfectly familiar to us in the regularity of its occurrence. We know that the pleasure-principle is adjusted to a primary mode of operation on the part of the psychic apparatus, and that for the preservation of the organism amid the difficulties of the external world it is ab initio useless and indeed extremely dangerous. Under the influence of the instinct of the ego for self-preservation it is replaced by the "reality-principle," which without giving up the intention of ultimately attaining pleasure yet de-

mands and enforces the postponement of satisfaction, the renunciation of manifold possibilities of it, and the temporary endurance of "pain" on the long and circuitous road to pleasure. The pleasure-principle however remains for a long time the method of operation of the sex impulses, which are not so easily educable, and it happens over and over again that, whether acting through these impulses or operating in the ego itself, it prevails over the reality-principle to the detriment of the whole organism.

It is at the same time indubitable that the replacement of the pleasure-principle by the reality-principle can account only for a small part, and that not the most intense, of painful experiences. Another and no less regular source of "pain" proceeds from the conflicts and dissociations in the psychic apparatus during the development of the ego towards a more highly co-ordinated organization. Nearly all the energy with which the apparatus is charged comes from the inborn instincts, but not all of these are allowed to develop to the same stage. On the way it over and again happens that particular instincts, or portions of them, prove irreconcilable in their aims or demands with others which can be welded into the comprehensive unity of the ego. They are thereupon split off from this unity by the process of repression, retained on lower stages of psychic development, and for the time being cut off from all possibility of gratification. If they then succeed, as so easily happens with the repressed sex-impulses, in fighting their way through—along circuitous routes—to a direct or a substitutive gratification, this success, which might otherwise have brought pleasure, is experienced by the ego as "pain." . . .

The two sources of "pain" here indicated still do not nearly cover the majority of our painful experiences, but as to the rest one may say with a fair show of reason that their presence does not impugn the supremacy of the pleasure-principle. Most of the "pain" we experience is of a perceptual order, perception either of the urge of unsatisfied instincts or of something in the external world

which may be painful in itself or may arouse painful anticipations in the psychic apparatus and is recognized by it as "danger." The reaction to these claims of impulse and these threats of danger, a reaction in which the real activity of the psychic apparatus is manifested, may be guided correctly by the pleasure-principle or by the reality-principle which modifies this. It seems thus unnecessary to recognize a still more far-reaching limitation of the pleasure-principle, and nevertheless it is precisely the investigation of the psychic reaction to external danger that may supply new material and new questions in regard to the problem here treated.

II. After severe shock of a mechanical nature, railway collision, or other accident in which danger to life is involved, a condition may arise which has long been recognized and to which the name "traumatic neurosis" is attached. . . . The clinical picture of traumatic neurosis approaches that of hysteria in its wealth of similar motor symptoms, but usually surpasses it in its strongly marked signs of subjective suffering—in this resembling rather hypochondria or melancholia—and in the evidences of a far more comprehensive general weakening and shattering of the mental functions. . . .

Fright, fear, apprehension are incorrectly used as synonymous expressions: in their relation to danger they admit of quite clear distinction. Apprehension (*Angst*) denotes a certain condition as of expectation of danger and preparation for it, even though it be an unknown one; fear (*Furcht*) requires a definite object of which one is afraid; fright (*Schreck*) is the name of the condition to which one is reduced if one encounters a danger without being prepared for it; it lays stress on the element of surprise. In my opinion apprehension cannot produce a traumatic neurosis; in apprehension there is something which protects against fright and therefore against the fright-neurosis. . . .

The study of dreams may be regarded as the most

trustworthy approach to the exploration of the deeper psychic processes. Now in the traumatic neuroses the dream life has this peculiarity: it continually takes the patient back to the situation of his disaster, from which he awakens in renewed terror. . . . The patient has so to speak undergone a physical fixation as to the trauma. . . .

I propose now to leave the obscure and gloomy theme of the traumatic neuroses and to study the way in which the psychic apparatus works in one of its earliest normal activities. I refer to the play of children. . . . Without the intention of making a comprehensive study of these phenomena I availed myself of an opportunity which offered of elucidating the first game invented by himself of a boy eighteen months old. It was more than a casual observation, for I lived for some weeks under the same roof as the child and his parents, and it was a considerable time before the meaning of his puzzling and continually repeated performance became clear to me.

The child was in no respect forward in his intellectual development; . . . but he made himself understood by his parents and the maidservant, and had a good reputation for behaving "properly." He did not disturb his parents at night; he scrupulously obeyed orders about not touching various objects and not going into certain rooms; and above all he never cried when his mother went out and left him for hours together, although the tie to his mother was a very close one: she had not only nourished him herself, but had cared for him and brought him up without any outside help. Occasionally, however, this well-behaved child evinced the troublesome habit of flinging into the corner of the room or under the bed all the little things he could lay his hands on, so that to gather up his toys was often no light task. He accompanied this by an expression of interest and gratification, emitting a loud long-drawn-out "o-o-o-oh" which in the judgment of the mother (one that coincided with my own) was not an interjection but meant "go away" (*fort*). I saw at last that this was a game, and that the child used all his toys only to play "being gone" (*forstein*) with them. One day I made

an observation that confirmed my view. The child had a wooden reel with a piece of string wound round it. It never occurred to him, for example, to drag this after him on the floor and so play horse and cart with it, but he kept throwing it with considerable skill, held by the string, over the side of his little draped cot, so that the reel disappeared into it, then said his significant "o-o-o-oh" and drew the reel by the string out of the cot again, greeting its reappearance with a joyful "*Da*" (there). This was therefore the complete game, disappearance and return, the first act being the only one generally observed by the onlookers, and the one untiringly repeated by the child as a game for its own sake, although the greater pleasure unquestionably attached to the second act.²

The meaning of the game was then not far to seek. It was connected with the child's remarkable cultural achievement—the forgoing of the satisfaction of an instinct—as the result of which he could let his mother go away without making any fuss. He made it right with himself, so to speak, by dramatizing the same disappearance and return with the objects he had at hand. It is of course of no importance for the affective value of this game whether the child invented it himself or adopted it from the suggestion from outside. Our interest will attach itself to another point. The departure of the mother cannot possibly have been pleasant for the child, nor merely a matter of indifference. How then does it accord with the pleasure-principle that he repeats this painful experience as a game? The answer will perhaps be forthcoming that the departure must be played as the necessary prelude to the joyful return, and that in this latter lay the true purpose of the game. As against this, however, there is the ob-

² This interpretation was fully established by a further observation. One day when the mother had been out for some hours she was greeted on her return by the information "Baby o-o-o-o" which at first remained unintelligible. It soon proved that during his long lonely hours he had found a method of bringing about his own disappearance. He had discovered his reflection in the long mirror which nearly reached to the ground and had then crouched down in front of it, so that the reflection was "*fort*."

servation that the first act, the going away, was played by itself as a game and far more frequently than the whole drama with its joyful conclusion.

The analysis of a single case of this kind yields no sure conclusion: on impartial consideration one gains the impression that it is from another motive that the child has turned the experience into a game. He was in the first place passive, was overtaken by the experience, but now brings himself in as playing an active part, by repeating the experience as a game in spite of its unpleasing nature. This effort might be ascribed to the impulse to obtain the mastery of a situation (the "power" instinct), which remains independent of any question of whether the recollection was a pleasant one or not. But another interpretation may be attempted. The flinging away of the object so that it is gone might be the gratification of an impulse of revenge suppressed in real life but directed against the mother for going away, and would then have the defiant meaning: "Yes, you can go, I don't want you, I am sending you away myself." . . .

It is known of other children also that they can give vent to similar hostile feelings by throwing objects away in place of people.³ Thus one is left in doubt whether the compulsion to work over in psychic life what has made a deep impression, to make oneself fully master of it, can express itself primarily and independently of the pleasure-principle. In the case discussed here, however, the child might have repeated a disagreeable impression in play only because with the repetition was bound up a pleasure gain of a different kind but more direct. . . .

We see that children repeat in their play everything that has made a great impression on them in actual life, that they thereby abreact the strength of the impression and so to speak make themselves masters of the situation. But on the other hand it is clear enough that all their

³ [The author analyzes a similar case from Goethe's childhood in "A Childhood Recollection from 'Dichtung und Wahrheit.'" —Ed.]

play is influenced by the dominant wish of their time of life: viz. to be grown-up and to be able to do what grown-up people do. . . . If a doctor examines a child's throat, or performs a small operation on him, the alarming experience will quite certainly be made the subject of the next game, but in this the pleasure gain from another source is not to be overlooked. In passing from the passivity of experience to the activity of play the child applies to his playfellow the unpleasant occurrence that befell himself and so avenges himself on the person of this proxy.

From this discussion it is at all events evident that it is unnecessary to assume a particular imitation impulse as the motive of play. We may add the reminder that the dramatic and imitative art of adults, which differs from the behavior of children in being directed towards the spectator, does not however spare the latter the most painful impressions, e.g. in tragedy, and yet can be felt by him as highly enjoyable. This convinces us that even under the domination of the pleasure-principle there are ways and means enough of making what is in itself disagreeable the object of memory and of psychic preoccupation. A theory of aesthetics with an economic point of view should deal with these cases and situations ending in final pleasure gain. . . .

III. Five-and-twenty years of intensive work have brought about a complete change in the more immediate aims of psychoanalytic technique. At first the endeavors of the analytic physician were confined to divining the unconscious of which his patient was unaware, effecting a synthesis of its various components and communicating it at the right time. Psychoanalysis was above all an art of interpretation. Since the therapeutic task was not thereby accomplished, the next aim was to compel the patient to confirm the reconstruction through his own memory. In this endeavor the chief emphasis was on the resistances of the patient; the art now lay in unveiling these as soon as possible, in calling the patient's attention to them, and by human influence—here came in suggestion

acting as "transference"—teaching him to abandon the resistances.

It then became increasingly clear, however, that the aim in view, the bringing into consciousness of the unconscious, was not fully attainable by this method either. The patient cannot recall all of what lies repressed, perhaps not even the essential part of it, and so gains no conviction that the conclusion presented to him is correct. He is obliged rather to *repeat* as a current experience what is repressed, instead of, as the physician would prefer to see him do, *recollecting* it as a fragment of the past. This reproduction appearing with unwelcome fidelity always contains a fragment of the infantile sex life, therefore of the Oedipus complex and its offshoots, and is played regularly in the sphere of transference, i.e. the relationship to the physician. When this point in the treatment is reached, it may be said that the earlier neurosis is now replaced by a fresh one, viz. the transference-neurosis. The physician makes it his concern to limit the scope of this transference-neurosis as much as he can, to force into memory as much as possible, and to leave as little as possible to repetition. . . .

[The "repetition-compulsion"] which psychoanalysis reveals in the transference phenomena with neurotics can also be observed in the life of normal persons. It here gives the impression of a pursuing fate, a daemonic trait in their destiny, and psychoanalysis has from the outset regarded such a life history as in a large measure self-imposed and determined by infantile influences. . . . Thus one knows people with whom every human relationship ends in the same way: benefactors whose protégés, however different they may otherwise have been, invariably after a time desert them in ill will, so that they are apparently condemned to drain to the dregs all the bitterness of ingratitude; men with whom every friendship ends in the friend's treachery; others who indefinitely often in their lives invest some other person with authority either in their own eyes or generally, and themselves overthrow such authority after a given time, only to replace it by

a new one; lovers whose tender relationships with woman each and all run through the same phases and come to the same end, and so on. We are less astonished at this "endless repetition of the same" if there is involved a question of active behavior on the part of the person concerned, and if we detect in his character an unalterable trait which must always manifest itself in the repetition of identical experiences. Far more striking are those cases where the person seems to be experiencing something passively, without exerting any influence of his own, and yet always meets with the same fate over and over again. . . .

In the light of such observations . . . drawn from the behavior during transference and from the fate of human beings, we may venture to make the assumption that there really exists in psychic life a repetition-compulsion, which goes beyond the pleasure-principle. We shall now also feel disposed to relate to this compelling force the dreams of shock-patients and the play-impulse in children. We must of course remind ourselves that only in rare cases can we recognize the workings of this repetition-compulsion in a pure form, without the co-operation of other motives. . . .

IV. What follows now is speculation, speculation often farfetched, which each will according to his particular attitude acknowledge or neglect. Or one may call it the exploitation of an idea out of curiosity to see whither it will lead.

Psychoanalytic speculation starts from the impression gained on investigating unconscious processes that consciousness cannot be the most general characteristic of psychic processes, but merely a special function of them; . . . it asserts that consciousness is the functioning of a particular system which may be called *Cs.* Since consciousness essentially yields perceptions of excitations coming from without and feelings (*Empfindungen*) of pleasure and "pain" which can only be derived from within the psychic apparatus, we may allot the system *Pcpt-Cs.*

(= perceptual consciousness) a position in space. It must lie on the boundary between outer and inner, must face towards the outer world, and must envelop the other psychic systems. . . .

Consciousness is not the only peculiar feature that we ascribe to the processes in [the system *Pcpt-Cs.*]. . . . All excitation processes in the other systems leave in them permanent traces forming the foundations of memory-records which have nothing to do with the question of becoming conscious. They are often strongest and most enduring when the process that left them behind never reached consciousness at all. But we find it difficult to believe that such lasting traces of excitation are formed also in the system *Pcpt-Cs.* itself. If they remained permanently in consciousness they would very soon limit the fitness of the system for registration of new excitations;⁴ on the other hand, if they became unconscious we should be confronted with the task of explaining the existence of unconscious processes in a system whose functioning is otherwise accompanied by the phenomenon of consciousness. . . . If one reflects how little we know from other sources about the origin of consciousness the pronouncement that *consciousness arises in the place of the memory-trace* must be conceded at least the importance of a statement which is to some extent definite.

The system *Cs.* would thus be characterized by the peculiarity that the excitation process does not leave in it, as it does in all other psychic systems, a permanent alteration of its elements, but is as it were discharged in the phenomenon of becoming conscious and vanishes. Such a departure from the general rule requires an explanation on the ground of a factor which comes into account in this one system only: this factor which is absent from all other systems might well be the exposed situation of the *Cs.* system—its immediate contact with the outer world.

⁴ Here I follow throughout J. Breuer's exposition in the theoretical section of the *Studien über Hysterie*, 1895.

Let us imagine the living organism in the simplest possible form as an undifferentiated vesicle of sensitive substance: then its surface, exposed as it is to the outer world, is by its very position differentiated and serves as an organ for receiving stimuli. . . . It would then be easily conceivable that, owing to the constant impact of external stimuli on the superficies of the vesicle, its substance would undergo lasting alteration to a certain depth, so that its excitation process takes a different course from that taken in the deeper layers. . . . Applying this idea to the system *Cs.*, this would mean that its elements are not susceptible of any further lasting alteration from the passage of the excitation, because they are already modified to the uttermost in that respect. But they are then capable of giving rise to consciousness. In what exactly these modifications of the substance and of the excitation process in it consist many views may be held which as yet cannot be tested. It may be assumed that the excitation has, in its transmission from one element to another, to overcome a resistance, and that this diminution of the resistance itself lays down the permanent trace of the excitation (a path): in system *Cs.* there would no longer exist any such resistance to transmission from one element to another. We may associate with this conception Breuer's distinction between quiescent (bound) and free-moving "investment-energy" in the elements of the psychic systems;⁵ the elements of the system *Cs.* would then convey no "bound" energy, only free energy capable of discharge. In my opinion, however, it is better for the present to express oneself as to these conditions in the least committal way. At any rate by these speculations we should have brought the origin of consciousness into a certain connection with the position of the system *Cs.* and with the peculiarities of the excitation process to be ascribed to this.

We have more to say about the living vesicle with its receptive outer layer. This . . . operates as a special integu-

⁵ J. Breuer and S. Freud: *Studien über Hysterie*.

ment or membrane that keeps off the stimuli, i.e. makes it impossible for the energies of the outer world to act with more than a fragment of their intensity on the layers immediately below [it] which have preserved their vitality. . . . For the living organism protection against stimuli is almost a more important task than reception of stimuli; the protective barrier is equipped with its own store of energy and must above all endeavor to protect the special forms of energy-transformations going on within itself from the equalizing and therefore destructive influence of the enormous energies at work in the outer world. The reception of stimuli serves above all the purpose of collecting information about the direction and nature of the external stimuli, and for that it must suffice to take little samples of the outer world, to taste it, so to speak, in small quantities. In highly developed organisms the receptive external layer of what was once a vesicle has long been withdrawn into the depths of the body, but portions of it have been left on the surface immediately beneath the common protective barrier. These portions form the sense organs, . . . and . . . it is characteristic of them that they assimilate only very small quantities of the outer stimulus, and take in only samples of the outer world; one might compare them to antennae which touch at the outer world and then constantly withdraw from it again.

At this point I shall permit myself to touch cursorily upon a theme which would deserve the most thorough treatment. The Kantian proposition that time and space are necessary modes of thought may be submitted to discussion today in the light of certain knowledge reached through psychoanalysis. We have found by experience that unconscious mental processes are in themselves "timeless." That is to say to begin with: they are not arranged chronologically, time alters nothing in them, nor can the idea of time be applied to them. These are negative characteristics, which can be made plain only by instituting a comparison with conscious psychic processes. Our abstract conception of time seems rather to be derived wholly from the mode of functioning of the system *Pcpt-*

Cs., and to correspond with a self-perception of it. In this mode of functioning of the system another form of protection against stimulation probably comes into play. I know that these statements sound very obscure, but I must confine myself to these few hints.

So far we have got to the point that the living vesicle is equipped with a protection against stimuli from the outer world. Before that, we had decided that the cortical layer next to it must be differentiated as the organ for reception of external stimuli. But this sensitive layer (what is later the system Cs.) also receives excitations from within: the position of the system between outer and inner and the difference in the conditions under which this receptivity operates on the two sides become deciding factors for the functioning of the system and of the whole psychic apparatus. Towards the outer world there is a barrier against stimuli, and the mass of excitations coming up against it will take effect only on a reduced scale; towards what is within no protection against stimuli is possible, the excitations of the deeper layers pursue their way direct and in undiminished mass into the system, while certain characteristics of their discharge produce the series of pleasure-pain feelings. Naturally the excitations coming from within will, in conformity with their intensity and other qualitative characteristics (or possibly their amplitude), be more proportionate to the mode of operation of the system than the stimuli streaming in from the outer world. Two things are, however, decisively determined by these conditions: first the preponderance over all outer stimuli of the pleasure and "pain" feelings, which are an index for processes within the mechanism; and secondly a shaping of behavior towards such inner excitations as bring with them an overplus of "pain." There will be a tendency to treat them as though they were acting not from within but from without, in order for it to be possible to apply against them the defensive measures of the barrier against stimuli (*Reizschutz*). This is the origin of projection, for which so important a part is reserved in the production of pathological states. . . .

Let us go a step further. Such external excitations as are strong enough to break through the barrier against stimuli we call traumatic. In my opinion the concept of trauma involves such a relationship to an otherwise efficacious barrier. An occurrence such as an external trauma will undoubtedly provoke a very extensive disturbance in the workings of the energy of the organism, and will set in motion every kind of protective measure. But the pleasure-principle is to begin with put out of action here. The flooding of the psychic apparatus with large masses of stimuli can no longer be prevented: on the contrary, another task presents itself—to bring the stimulus under control, to "bind" in the psyche the stimulus mass that has broken its way in, so as to bring about a discharge of it.

Probably the specific discomfort of bodily pain is the result of some local breaking through of the barrier against stimuli. From this point in the periphery there stream to the central psychic apparatus continual excitations such as would otherwise come only from within.⁶ What are we to expect as the reaction of the psychic life to this invasion? From all sides the "charging energy" is called on in order to create all round the breach correspondingly high "charges" of energy. An immense "counter-charge" is set up, in favor of which all the other psychic systems are impoverished, so that a wide spread paralysis or diminution of other psychic activity follows.

The indefinite nature of all the discussions that we term metapsychological naturally comes from the fact that we know nothing about the nature of the excitation process in the elements of the psychic systems and do not feel justified in making any assumption about it. Thus we are all the time operating with a large X, which we carry over into every new formula. . . .

I think one may venture (tentatively) to regard the ordinary traumatic neurosis as the result of an extensive rupture of the barrier against stimuli. In this way the old

⁶ Cf. "Instincts and their Vicissitudes."

naïve doctrine of "shock" would come into its own again, apparently in opposition to a later and psychologically more pretentious view which ascribes etiological significance not to the effect of the mechanical force, but to the fright and the menace to life. But these opposing views are not irreconcilable, and the psychoanalytic conception of the traumatic neurosis is far from being identical with the crudest form of the "shock" theory. While the latter takes the essential nature of the shock as residing in the direct injury to the molecular structure, or even to the histological structure, of the nervous elements, we seek to understand the effect of the shock by considering the breaking through of the barrier with which the psychic organ is provided against stimuli, and from the tasks with which this is thereby faced. Fright retains its meaning for us too. What conditions it is the failure of the mechanism of apprehension to make the proper preparation, including the over-charging of the systems first receiving the stimulus. In consequence of this lower degree of charging these systems are hardly in a position to bind the oncoming masses of excitation, and the consequences of the breaking through of the protective barrier appear all the more easily. We thus find that the apprehensive preparation, together with the over-charging of the receptive systems, represents the last line of defense against stimuli. . . . When the dreams of patients suffering from traumatic neuroses so regularly take them back to the situation of the disaster, they do not thereby, it is true, serve the purpose of wish-fulfillment, . . . but we may assume that they thereby subserve another purpose, which must be fulfilled before the pleasure-principle can begin its sway. These dreams are attempts at restoring control of the stimuli by developing apprehension, the premission of which caused the traumatic neurosis. They thus afford us an insight into a function of the psychic apparatus, which without contradicting the pleasure-principle is nevertheless independent of it, and appears to be of earlier origin than the aim of attaining pleasure and avoiding "pain."

This is therefore the moment to concede for the first

time an exception to the principle that the dream is a wish-fulfillment. Anxiety dreams are no such exception, as I have repeatedly and in detail shown; nor are the "punishment dreams," for they merely put in the place of the interdicted wish fulfillment the punishment appropriate to it, and are thus the wish-fulfillment of the sense of guilt reacting on the condemned impulse. But the dreams mentioned above of patients suffering from traumatic neuroses do not permit of classification under the category of wish-fulfillment, nor do the dreams occurring during psychoanalysis that bring back the recollection of the psychic traumata of childhood. They obey rather the repetition-compulsion, which in analysis, it is true, is supported by the (not unconscious) wish to conjure up again what has been forgotten and repressed. . . .

V. The fact that the sensitive cortical layer has no protective barrier against excitations emanating from within will have one inevitable consequence: viz. that these transmissions of stimuli acquire increased economic significance and frequently give rise to economic disturbances comparable to the traumatic neuroses. The most prolific sources of such inner excitations are the so-called instincts of the organism, the representatives of all forces arising within the body and transmitted to the psychic apparatus—the most important and most obscure element in psychological research.

Perhaps we shall not find it too rash an assumption that the excitations proceeding from the instincts do not conform to the type of the "bound" but of the free-moving nerve processes that are striving for discharge. The most trustworthy knowledge we have of these processes comes from the study of dreams. There we found that the processes in the unconscious systems are fundamentally different from those in the (pre)conscious; that in the unconscious "charges" may easily be completely transferred, displaced, or condensed, while if this happened with preconscious material only defective results would be obtained. This is the reason for the well-known peculiari-

ties of the manifest dream, after the preconscious residues of the day before have undergone elaboration according to the laws of the unconscious. I termed this kind of process in the unconscious the psychic "primary process" in contradistinction to the secondary process valid in our normal waking life. Since the excitations of instincts all affect the unconscious systems, it is scarcely an innovation to say that they follow the lines of the primary process, and little more so to identify the psychic primary process with the freely mobile charge, the secondary process with changes in Breuer's bound or tonic charge.⁷ . . .

The expressions of a repetition-compulsion which we have described, both in the early activities of infantile psychic life and in the experiences of psychoanalytic treatment, show in a high degree an instinctive character, and, where they come into contrast with the pleasure-principle, a daemonic character. . . . Here there is no contradiction of the pleasure-principle: it is evident that the repetition, the rediscovery of the identity, is itself a source of pleasure. . . .

In what way is the instinctive connected with the compulsion to repetition? At this point the idea is forced upon us that we have stumbled on the trace of a general and hitherto not clearly recognized—or at least not expressly emphasized—characteristic of instinct, perhaps of all organic life. According to this, *an instinct would be a tendency innate in living organic matter impelling it towards the reinstatement of an earlier condition*, one which it had to abandon under the influence of external disturbing forces—a kind of organic elasticity, or, to put it another way, the manifestation of inertia in organic life.⁸

This conception of instinct strikes us as strange, since we are accustomed to see in instinct the factor urging towards change and development, and now we find ourselves required to recognize in it the very opposite, viz.

⁷ Cp. Section VII, "Psychology of the Dream-Processes" in my *Interpretation of Dreams*.

⁸ I have little doubt that similar conjectures about the nature of instinct have been already repeatedly put forward.

the expression of the conservative nature of living beings. On the other hand, we soon think of those examples in animal life which appear to confirm the idea of instinct having been historically conditioned. When certain fish undertake arduous journeys at spawning time . . . they are only seeking the earlier homes of their kind; . . . the same is said to be true of the migratory flights of birds of passage, but the search for further examples becomes superfluous when we remember that in the phenomena of heredity and in the facts of embryology we have the most imposing proofs of the organic compulsion to repetition. We see that the germ cell of a living animal is obliged to repeat in its development—although in a fleeting and curtailed fashion—the structures of all the forms from which the animal is descended, instead of hastening along the shortest path to its own final shape. A mechanical explanation of this except in some trifling particulars is impossible, and the historical explanation cannot be disregarded. . . .

The obvious objection, that it may well be that besides the conservative instincts compelling repetition there are others which press towards new formation and progress, should certainly not be left unnoticed; it will be considered at a later stage of our discussion. . . .

If then all organic instincts are conservative, historically acquired, and are directed towards regression, towards reinstatement of something earlier, we are obliged to place all the results of organic development to the credit of external, disturbing, and distracting influences. The rudimentary creature would from its very beginning not have wanted to change, would, if circumstances had remained the same, have always merely repeated the same course of existence. But in the last resort it must have been the evolution of our earth, and its relation to the sun, that has left its imprint on the development of organisms. The conservative organic instincts have absorbed every one of these enforced alterations in the course of life and have stored them for repetition; they thus present the delusive appearance of forces striving after change and progress, while they are merely endeavoring to reach an old goal

by ways both old and new. This final goal of all organic striving can be stated too. It would be counter to the conservative nature of instinct if the goal of life were a state never hitherto reached. It must rather be an ancient starting point, which the living being left long ago, and to which it harks back again by all the circuitous paths of development. If we may assume as an experience admitting of no exception that everything living dies from causes within itself, and returns to the inorganic, we can only say "*The goal of all life is death,*" and, casting back, "*The inanimate was there before the animate.*" . . .

If these conclusions sound strangely in our ears, equally so will those we are led to make concerning the great groups of instincts which we regard as lying behind the vital phenomena of organisms. The postulate of the self-preservative instincts we ascribe to every living being stands in remarkable contrast to the supposition that the whole life of instinct serves the one end of bringing about death. The theoretic significance of the instincts of self-preservation, power, and self-assertion, shrinks to nothing, seen in this light; they are part-instincts designed to secure the path to death peculiar to the organism and to ward off possibilities of return to the inorganic other than the immanent ones, but the enigmatic struggle of the organism to maintain itself in spite of all the world, a struggle that cannot be brought into connection with anything else, disappears. It remains to be added that the organism is resolved to die only in its own way; even these watchmen of life were originally the myrmidons of death. Hence the paradox comes about that the living organism resists with all its energy influences (dangers) which could help it to reach its life-goal by a short way (a short circuit, so to speak); but this is just the behavior that characterizes a pure instinct as contrasted with an intelligent striving.⁹

But we must bethink ourselves: this cannot be the whole truth. The sexual instincts, for which the theory of the neuroses claims a position apart, lead us to quite another

⁹ Compare the subsequent criticism of this extreme view of the self-preservative instincts.

point of view. Not all organisms have yielded to the external compulsion driving them to an even further development. Many have succeeded in maintaining themselves on their low level up to the present time: there are in existence today, if not all, at all events many forms of life that must resemble the primitive stages of the higher animals and plants. And, similarly, not all the elementary organisms that make up the complicated body of a higher form of life take part in the whole path of evolution to the natural end, i.e. death. Some among them, the reproductive cells, probably retain the original structure of the living substance and, after a given time, detach themselves from the parent organism, charged as they are with all the inherited and newly acquired instinctive dispositions. Possibly it is just those two features that make their independent existence possible. If brought under favorable conditions they begin to develop, that is, to repeat the same cycle to which they owe their origin, the end being that again one portion of the substance carries through its development to a finish, while another part, as a new germinal core, again harks back to the beginning of the development. Thus these reproductive cells operate against the death of the living substance and are able to win for it what must seem to us to be potential immortality, although perhaps it only means a lengthening of the path to death. Of the highest significance is the fact that the reproductive cell is fortified for this function, or only becomes capable of it, by the mingling with another like it and yet different from it.

There is a group of instincts that care for the destinies of these elementary organisms which survive the individual being, that concern themselves with the safe sheltering of these organisms as long as they are defenseless against the stimuli of the outer world, and finally bring about their conjunction with other reproductive cells. These are collectively the sexual instincts. They are conservative in the same sense as the others are, in that they reproduce earlier conditions of the living substance, but they are so in a higher degree in that they show

themselves specially resistant to external influences, and they are more conservative in a wider sense still, since they preserve life itself for a longer time. They are the actual life-instincts; the fact that they run counter to the trend of the other instincts which lead towards death indicates a contradiction between them and the rest, one which the theory of neuroses has recognized as full of significance. There is as it were an oscillating rhythm in the life of organisms: the one group of instincts presses forward to reach the final goal of life as quickly as possible, the other flies back at a certain point on the way only to traverse the same stretch once more from a given spot and thus to prolong the duration of the journey.

Let us now retrace our steps for the first time, to ask whether all these speculations are not after all without foundation. Are there really, *apart from the sexual instincts*, no other instincts than those which have as their object the reinstatement of an earlier condition, none that strive towards a condition never yet attained? I am not aware of any satisfactory example in the organic world running counter to the characteristic I have suggested. The existence of a general impulse towards higher development in the plant and animal world can certainly not be established, though some such line of development is as a fact unquestionable. But, on the one hand, it is often merely a question of our own valuation when we pronounce one stage of development to be higher than another, and, on the other hand, biology makes clear to us that a higher development in one particular is often purchased with, or balanced by, retrogression in another. . . .

Many of us will also find it hard to abandon our belief that in man himself there dwells an impulse towards perfection, which has brought him to his present heights of intellectual prowess and ethical sublimation, and from which it might be expected that his development into superman will be ensured. But I do not believe in the existence of such an inner impulse, and I see no way of preserving this pleasing illusion. The development of man up to now does not seem to me to need any explanation

differing from that of animal development, and the restless striving towards further perfection which may be observed in a minority of human beings is easily explicable as the result of that repression of instinct upon which what is most valuable in human culture is built. The repressed instinct never ceases to strive after its complete satisfaction which would consist in the repetition of a primary experience of satisfaction: all substitution- or reaction-formations and sublimations avail nothing towards relaxing the continual tension; and out of the excess of the satisfaction demanded over that found is born the driving momentum which allows of no abiding in any situation presented to it, but in the poet's words "urges ever forward, ever unsubdued." The path in the other direction, back to complete satisfaction, is as a rule barred by the resistances that maintain the repressions, and thus there remains nothing for it but to proceed in the other, still unobstructed direction, that of development, without, however, any prospect of being able to bring the process to a conclusion or to attain the goal. What occurs in the development of a neurotic phobia, which is really nothing but an attempt at flight from the satisfaction of an insensible "impulse towards perfection" which, however, we stinct, gives us the prototype for the origin of his ostensible conditions are, it is true, quite generally present, but the economic relations seem only in rare cases to favor the phenomenon.

VI. . . . Let us turn back . . . to one of the assumptions we interpolated, in the expectation that it will permit of exact refutation. We built up further conclusions on the basis of the assumption that all life must die from internal causes. We made this assumption so lightheartedly because it does not seem to us to be one. We are accustomed so to think, and every poet encourages us in the idea. Perhaps we have resolved so to think because there lies a certain consolation in this belief. If man must himself die, after first losing his most beloved ones by

death, he would prefer that his life be forfeit to an inexorable law of nature, the sublime *Ἀνάγκη*, than to a mere accident which perhaps could have been in some way avoided. But perhaps this belief in the incidence of death as the necessary consequence of an inner law of being is also only one of those illusions that we have fashioned for ourselves so as to endure the burden of existence." It is certainly not a primordial belief: the idea of a "natural death" is alien to primitive races; they ascribe every death occurring among themselves to the influence of an enemy or an evil spirit. So let us not neglect to turn to biological science to test the belief.

If we do so, we may be astonished to find how little agreement exists among biologists on the question of natural death, that indeed the very conception of death altogether eludes them. . . .

[At this point the author enters into a lengthy biological discussion, which does not lend itself readily to abridgement.—Ed.]

I think this is the point at which to break off. But not without a few words of critical reflection in conclusion. I might be asked whether I am myself convinced of the views here set forward, and if so how far. My answer would be that I am neither convinced myself, nor am I seeking to arouse conviction in others. More accurately: I do not know how far I believe in them. It seems to me that the affective feature "conviction" need not come into consideration at all here. One may surely give oneself up to a line of thought, and follow it up as far as it leads, simply out of scientific curiosity, or—if you prefer—as *advocatus diaboli*, without, however, making a pact with the devil about it. . . . At all events there is no way of working out this idea except by combining facts with pure imagination many times in succession, and thereby departing far from observation. We know that the final result becomes the more untrustworthy the oftener one does this in the course of building up a theory, but the precise degree of uncertainty is not ascertainable. One may have

gone ignominiously astray. In such work I trust little to so-called intuition: what I have seen of it seems to me to be the result of a certain impartiality of the intellect—only that people unfortunately are seldom impartial where they are concerned with the ultimate things, the great problems of science and of life. My belief is that there everyone is under the sway of preferences deeply rooted within, into the hands of which he unwittingly plays as he pursues his speculation. Where there are such good grounds for distrust, only a tepid feeling of indulgence is possible towards the results of one's own mental labors. But I hasten to add that such self-criticism does not render obligatory any special tolerance of divergent opinions. One may inexorably reject theories that are contradicted by the very first steps in the analysis of observation and yet at the same time be aware that those one holds oneself have only a tentative validity. Were we to appraise our speculations upon the life and death-instincts it would disturb us but little that so many processes go on which are surprising and hard to picture, such as one instinct being expelled by others, or turning from the ego to an object, and so on. This comes only from our being obliged to operate with scientific terms, i.e. with the metaphorical expressions peculiar to psychology (or more correctly: psychology of the deeper layers). Otherwise we should not be able to describe the corresponding processes at all, nor in fact even to have remarked them. The shortcomings of our description would probably disappear if for the psychological terms we could substitute physiological or chemical ones. These too only constitute a metaphorical language, but one familiar to us for a much longer time and perhaps also simpler.

On the other hand we wish to make it quite clear that the uncertainty of our speculation is enhanced in a high degree by the necessity of borrowing from biological science. Biology is truly a realm of limitless possibilities; we have the most surprising revelations to expect from it, and cannot conjecture what answers it will offer in some

decades to the questions we have put to it. Perhaps they may be such as to overthrow the whole artificial structure of hypotheses. If that is so, someone may ask why does one undertake such work as the one set out in this article, and why should it be communicated to the world? Well, I cannot deny that some of the analogies, relations, and connections therein traced appeared to me worthy of consideration. . . .

VII. . . . Let us distinguish function and tendency more sharply than we have hitherto done. The pleasure-principle is then a tendency which subserves a certain function—namely, that of rendering the psychic apparatus as a whole free from any excitation, or to keep the amount of excitation constant or as low as possible. We cannot yet decide with certainty for either of these conceptions, but we note that the function so defined would partake of the most universal tendency of all living matter—to return to the peace of the inorganic world. We all know by experience that the greatest pleasure it is possible for us to attain, that of the sexual act, is bound up with the temporary quenching of a greatly heightened state of excitation. The “binding” of instinct-excitation, however, would be a preparatory function, which would direct the excitation towards its ultimate adjustment in the pleasure of discharge.

In the same connection, the question arises whether the sensations of pleasure and “pain” can emanate as well from the bound as from the “unbound” excitation-processes. It appears quite beyond doubt that the “unbound,” the primary, processes give rise to much more intense sensations in both directions than the bound ones, those of the “secondary processes.” The primary processes are also the earlier in point of time; at the beginning of mental life there are no others, and we may conclude that if the pleasure-principle were not already in action in respect to them, it would not establish itself in regard to the later processes. We thus arrive at the result which at bottom is not a simple one, that the search for pleasure

manifests itself with far greater intensity at the beginning of psychic life than later on, but less unrestrictedly: it has to put up with repeated breaches. At a maturer age the dominance of the pleasure-principle is very much more assured, though this principle as little escapes limitations as all the other instincts. In any case, whatever it is in the process of excitation that engenders the sensations of pleasure and “pain” must be equally in existence when the secondary process is at work as with the primary process.

This would seem to be the place to institute further studies. Our consciousness conveys to us from within not only the sensations of pleasure and “pain,” but also those of a peculiar tension, which again may be either pleasurable or painful in itself. Now is it the “bound” and “unbound” energy processes that we have to distinguish from each other by the help of these sensations, or is the sensation of tension to be related to the absolute quantity, perhaps to the level of the charge, while the pleasure-pain series refers to the changes in the quantity of charge in the unit of time? We must also be struck with the fact that the life-instincts have much more to do with our inner perception, since they make their appearance as disturbers of the peace, and continually bring along with them states of tension the resolution of which is experienced as pleasure; while the death-instincts, on the other hand, seem to fulfill their function unostentatiously. The pleasure-principle seems directly to subserve the death-instincts; it keeps guard, of course, also over the external stimuli, which are regarded as dangers by both kinds of instincts, but in particular over the inner increases in stimulation which have for their aim the complication of the task of living. At this point innumerable other questions arise to which no answer can yet be given. We must be patient and wait for other means and opportunities for investigation. We must hold ourselves too in readiness to abandon the path we have followed for a time, if it should seem to lead to no good

result. Only such "true believers" as expect from science a substitute for the creed they have relinquished will take it amiss if the investigator develops his views further or even transforms them.

For the rest we may find consolation in the words of a poet for the slow rate of progress in scientific knowledge:

Whither we cannot fly, we must go limping . . .
The Scripture saith that limping is no sin.

GROUP PSYCHOLOGY AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE EGO¹

(1921)

1. Introduction

THE contrast between Individual Psychology and Social or Group² Psychology, which at a first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a great deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely. It is true that Individual Psychology³ is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instincts; but only rarely and under certain exceptional conditions is Individual Psychology

¹ *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse*. Wien: 1921. G.S. vi, 259-349. LIB. 6. Trans. by James Strachey.

² ["Group" is used throughout this translation as equivalent to the rather more comprehensive German "*Masse*." The author uses this latter word to render both McDougall's "group," and also Le Bon's "*foule*," which would more naturally be translated "crowd" in English. For the sake of uniformity, however, "group" has been preferred in this case as well, and has been substituted for "crowd" even in the extracts from the English translation of Le Bon.—*Translator*.]

³ ["Individual Psychology" is here used literally in contrast to "Group Psychology." The late Dr. Alfred Adler (Vienna) used the term as a name for his school of thought.—*Ed.*]