THE CLAIMS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS TO SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

(1913)

EDITORS' NOTE

DAS INTERESSE AN DER PSYCHOANALYSE

GERMAN EDITIONS

1913 *Scientia*, **14** (31 and 32), 240–50 and 369–84. [164]
1924 *GS*, **4**, 313–43.
1943 *GW*, **8**, 390–420.

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

'The Claims of Psycho-Analysis to Scientific Interest'
1955 *SE*, **13**, 165–90. (Tr. James Strachey.)
1986 *PFL*, **15**, 29–56. (Reprint of above.)

The present translation is a revised and corrected reprint of the *SE* version.

This paper was written by Freud at the express request of the editor of *Scientia*, the well-known Italian scientific periodical. The precise dates of its publication were probably September and November, 1913. It is the only at all comprehensive account that he gave of the non-medical applications of psychoanalysis.

THE CLAIMS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS TO SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

PART I
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL INTEREST OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

Psychoanalysis is a medical procedure which aims at the cure of certain forms of nervous disease (the neuroses) by a psychological technique. In a small volume published in 1910[I] I described the evolution of psychoanalysis from Josef Breuer's cathartic procedure and its relation to the theories of Charcot and Pierre Janet. [165]

We may give as instances of disorders that are accessible to psychoanalytic treatment hysterical convulsions and paralyses as well as the various symptoms of obsessional neurosis (obsessive ideas and actions). All of these are conditions which are occasionally subject to spontaneous recovery and are dependent on the personal influence of the physician in a haphazard fashion which has not yet been explained. Psychoanalysis has no therapeutic effect on the severer forms of mental disorder [*Geistesstörungen*][T] properly so called. But – for the first time in the history of medicine – psychoanalysis has made it possible to get some insight into the origin and mechanism alike of the neuroses and psychoses. *Geist*

This medical significance of psychoanalysis would not, however, justify me in bringing it to the notice of a circle of *savants* concerned in the synthesis of the sciences. And such a plan must seem particularly premature so long as a large number of psychiatrists and neurologists are opposed to the new therapeutic method and reject both its postulates and its findings. If, nevertheless, I regard the experiment as a legitimate one, it is because psychoanalysis can also claim to be of interest to others than psychiatrists, since it touches upon various other spheres of knowledge and reveals unexpected relations between them and the pathology of mental life [*Seelenlebens*].

1 *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis* [1910*a*; *RSE*, **11**, 11 ff.].

[166] Accordingly in my present paper I shall leave the medical interest of psychoanalysis on one side and illustrate what I have just asserted of the young science by a series of examples.

There are a large number of phenomena related to facial and other expressive movements and to speech, as well as many processes of thought (both in normal and sick people), which have hitherto escaped the notice of psychology because they have been regarded as no more than the results of organic disorder or of some abnormal failure in function of the mental apparatus. What I have in mind are 'parapraxes' [*Fehlleistungen*][T] (slips of the tongue or pen, forgetfulness [*Versprechen*, *Verschreiben*, *Vergessen*], etc.), haphazard actions and dreams in normal people, and convulsive attacks, deliria, visions, and obsessive ideas or acts in neurotic subjects. These phenomena (insofar as they were not entirely neglected, as was the case with the parapraxes) were relegated to pathology and an attempt was made to find 'physiological' explanations for them, though these were invariably unsatisfactory. Psychoanalysis, on the contrary, has been able to show that all these things can be explained by means of hypotheses of a purely psychological nature and can be fitted into the chain of psychical events already known to us. Thus, on the one hand, psychoanalysis has narrowed the region subject to the physiological point of view and, on the other hand, has brought a large section of pathology into the sphere of psychology. In this instance the normal phenomena provide the more convincing evidence. Psychoanalysis cannot be accused of having applied to normal cases findings arrived at from pathological material. The evidence in the latter and in the former was reached independently and shows that normal processes and what are described as pathological ones follow the same rules.

I shall now discuss in greater detail two of the normal phenomena with which we are here concerned (phenomena, that is, which can be observed in normal people) – namely, parapraxes and dreams.

By parapraxes, then, I understand the occurrence in healthy and normal [167] people of such events as forgetting words and names that are normally familiar to one, forgetting what one intends to do, making slips of the tongue and pen, misreading, mislaying things and being unable to find them, losing things, making mistakes against one's better knowledge, and certain habitual gestures and movements. All of these have on the whole had little attention paid to them by psychology; they have been classed as instances of 'absent-mindedness' and have been attributed to

fatigue, to distracted attention or to the contributory effects of certain slight illnesses. Analytic enquiry, however, shows with enough certainty to satisfy every requirement that these latter factors merely operate as facilitating factors and may be absent. Parapraxes are full-blown psychical phenomena and always have a meaning and an intention. They serve definite purposes which, owing to the prevailing psychological situation, cannot be expressed in any other way. These situations as a rule involve a psychical conflict which prevents the underlying intention from finding direct expression and diverts it along indirect paths. A person who is guilty of a parapraxis may notice it or overlook it; the suppressed intention underlying it may well be familiar to him; but he is usually unaware, without analysis, that that intention is responsible for the parapraxis in question. Analyses of parapraxes are often quite easily and quickly made. If a person's attention is drawn to a blunder, the next thought that occurs to him provides its explanation.

Parapraxes are the most convenient material for anyone who wishes to convince himself of the trustworthiness of psychoanalytic explanations. In a small work, first published in book form in 1904, I presented a large number of examples of this kind, and since then I have been able to add to my collection many contributions from other observers.[1]

The commonest motive [*Motiv*][T] for suppressing an intention, which has thereafter to be content with finding its expression in a parapraxis, turns out to be the avoidance of unpleasure [*Unlust*][T]. Thus, one obstinately forgets a proper name if one nourishes a secret grudge against its owner; one forgets to carry out an intention if one has in fact only formed it unwillingly – only, for instance, under the pressure of some [168]
convention; one loses an object, if one has quarrelled with someone of whom the object reminds one – with its original donor, for instance; one gets on to the wrong train if one is making a journey unwillingly and would rather be somewhere else. This motive of avoiding unpleasure is seen most clearly where the forgetting of impressions and experiences is concerned – a fact which had already been observed by many writers before psychoanalysis existed. Memory shows its partiality by being ready to prevent the reproduction of impressions with a distressing affect, even though this purpose cannot be achieved in every case.

In other instances the analysis of a parapraxis is less simple and requires less obvious explanations, on account of the intrusion of a

1 *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* [Freud, 1901*b*; *RSE*, **6**]. Cf. also works on the subject by Maeder, Brill, Jones, Rank, etc. [See also Part I of Freud's *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17*a*), ibid., **15**.]

process which we describe as 'displacement' [*'Verschiebung'*][T]. One may, for instance, forget the name of someone against whom one has no objection; analysis will show, however, that the name has stirred up the memory of someone else, who has the same or a similar-sounding name and whom one has good reason to dislike. This connection has led to the innocent person's name being forgotten; the intention to forget has, as it were, been displaced along some line of association.

Nor is the intention to avoid unpleasure the only one which can find its outlet in parapraxes. In many cases analysis reveals other purposes which have been suppressed in the particular situation and which can only make themselves felt, so to say, as background disturbances. Thus a slip of the tongue will often serve to betray opinions which the speaker wishes to conceal from his interlocutor. Slips of the tongue have been understood in this sense by various great writers and employed for this purpose in their works. The loss [*Verlieren*] of precious objects often turns out to be an act of sacrifice intended to avert some expected evil; and many other superstitions too survive in educated people in the form of parapraxes. The mislaying [*Verlegen*] of objects means as a rule getting rid of them; damage is done to one's possessions (ostensibly by accident) so as to make it necessary to acquire something better – and so on.

Nevertheless, in spite of the apparent triviality of these phenomena, the psychoanalytic explanation of parapraxes involves some slight modifica-
[169] tions in our view of the world. We find that even normal people are far more frequently moved by contradictory motives than we should have expected. The number of occurrences that can be described as 'accidental' is considerably diminished. It is almost a consolation to be able to exclude the loss of objects from among the chance events of life; our blunders often turn out to be a cover for our secret intentions. But – what is more important – many serious accidents that we should otherwise have ascribed entirely to chance reveal under analysis the participation of the subject's own volition, though without its being clearly admitted by him. The distinction between a chance accident and deliberate self-destruction, which in practice is so often hard to draw, becomes even more dubious when looked at from an analytic point of view.

The explanation of parapraxes owes its theoretical value to the ease with which they can be solved and their frequency in normal people. But the success of psychoanalysis in explaining them is far surpassed in importance by a further achievement made by it, relating to another phenomenon of normal mental life. What I have in mind is

the interpretation [*Deutung*]^{T} of *dreams*, which brought psychoanalysis for the first time into the conflict with official science which was to be its destiny. Medical research explains dreams as purely somatic phenomena, without meaning [*Sinn*] or significance [*Bedeutung*], and regards them as the reaction of a mental organ sunk in a state of sleep to physical stimuli which partially awaken it. Psychoanalysis raises the status of dreams into that of psychical acts possessing meaning and purpose, and having a place in the subject's mental life, and thus disregards their strangeness, incoherence and absurdity. On this view somatic stimuli merely play the part of material that is worked over in the course of the construction of the dream [*Traumbildung*]^{T}. There is no halfway house between these two views of dreams. What argues against the physiological hypothesis [*Auffassung*]^{T} is its unfruitfulness, and what may be argued in favour of the psychoanalytic one is the fact that it has translated [*übersetzt*]^{T} and given a meaning to thousands of dreams and has used them to throw light on the intimate details of the human mind.

Bildung

Übersetzung

I devoted a volume published in 1900 to the important subject of dream interpretation and have had the satisfaction of seeing the theories put forward in it confirmed and amplified by contributions from almost every worker in the field of psychoanalysis.[1] It is generally agreed that dream interpretation is the foundation stone of psychoanalytic work and that its findings constitute the most important contribution made by psychoanalysis to psychology.

[170]

I cannot enter here into the technique by which an interpretation of dreams is arrived at, nor can I give the grounds for the conclusions to which the psychoanalytic investigation of dreams has led. I must restrict myself to enunciating some new concepts, reporting my findings and stressing their importance for normal psychology.

Psychoanalysis, then, has demonstrated the following facts. All dreams have a meaning. Their strangeness is due to distortions that have been made in the expression of their meaning. Their absurdity is deliberate and expresses derision, ridicule and contradiction. Their incoherence is a matter of indifference for their interpretation. The dream as we remember it after waking is described by us as its 'manifest content'. In the process of interpreting this, we are led to the 'latent dream thoughts', which lie hidden behind the manifest content and which are represented by it. These latent dream thoughts are no longer strange, incoherent or absurd; they are completely valid constituents of our waking thought.

1 *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*) [*RSE*, **4–5**]. See also my shorter essay *On Dreams* (1901*a*) [ibid., **5**, 573 ff.], and other writings by Rank, Stekel, Jones, Silberer, Brill, Maeder, Abraham, Ferenczi, etc. [See further Part II of Freud's *Introductory Lectures* (1916–17*a*), *RSE*, **15**.]

We give the name of 'dream-work' to the process which transforms the latent dream thoughts into the manifest content of the dream; it is this dream-work that brings about the distortion which makes the dream thoughts unrecognizable in the content of the dream.

The dream-work is a psychological process the like of which has hitherto been unknown to psychology. It has claims upon our interest in two main directions. In the first place, it brings to our notice novel processes such as 'condensation' [*Verdichtung*]^{T} (of ideas [*Vorstellungen*]^{T}) and 'displacement' [*Verschiebung*] (of psychical emphasis from one idea to another), processes which we have never come across at all in our waking life, or only as the basis of what are known as 'errors in thought'. In the second place, it enables us to detect the operation in the mind of a play [171] of forces [*Kräftespiel*]^{T} *Kraft* which was concealed from our conscious perception. We find that there is a 'censorship' [*Zensur*], a testing agency, at work in us, which decides whether an idea cropping up in the mind shall be allowed to reach consciousness, and which, so far as lies within its power, ruthlessly excludes anything that might produce or revive unpleasure. And it will be recalled at this point that in our analysis of parapraxes we found traces of this same intention to avoid unpleasure in remembering things and of similar conflicts between mental impulses.

A study of the dream-work forces on us irresistibly a view of mental life which appears to decide the most controversial problems of psychology. The dream-work compels us to assume the existence of an *unconscious* psychical activity which is more comprehensive and more important than the familiar activity that is linked with consciousness. (I shall have some more to say on this point when I come to discuss the *philosophical* interest of psychoanalysis [p. 169 f. below].) It enables us to dissect the psychical apparatus into a number of different agencies or systems, and shows us that in the system of unconscious mental activity processes operate which are of quite another kind from those perceived in consciousness.

The dream-work has only one function – namely to maintain sleep. 'Dreams are the guardians of sleep.' The dream *thoughts* themselves may serve the purposes of the most various mental functions. The dream-work accomplishes its task by representing a wish that arises from the dream thoughts as fulfilled in a hallucinatory fashion.

It may safely be said that the psychoanalytic study of dreams has given us our first insight into a 'depth psychology' whose existence had not hitherto been suspected.[1] Fundamental changes will have to be

1 Psychoanalysis does not at present postulate any relation between this psychical topography and anatomical stratification or histological layers.

introduced into normal psychology if it is to be brought into harmony with these new findings.

It is quite impossible to exhaust the psychological interest of dream interpretation within the limits of my present paper. Let us bear in mind that what I have so far stressed is merely that dreams have a [172]
meaning and are objects for psychological study, and let us now proceed with our consideration of the new territory which has been annexed by psychology in the domain of pathology.

The psychological novelties inferred from dreams and parapraxes must be applicable as an explanation of other phenomena if we are to believe in the value of these novelties, or, indeed, in their existence. And we do in fact find that psychoanalysis has shown that the hypotheses of unconscious mental activity, of censorship and repression [*Verdrängung*][T] and of distortion and substitution, at which we have arrived from our study of these normal phenomena, also afford us a first understanding of a number of *pathological* phenomena and, as one might say, put into our hands the key to all the riddles of the psychology of the neuroses. Thus dreams are to be regarded as the normal prototypes of all psychopathological structures. Anyone who understands dreams can also grasp the psychical mechanism of the neuroses and psychoses.

Starting from dreams, the investigations of psychoanalysis have enabled it to construct a psychology of the neuroses which is being continuously built up piece by piece. But what we are here concerned with – the *psychological* interest of psychoanalysis – obliges us to enter more fully into only two sides of this far-reaching subject: the evidence that many pathological phenomena which had hitherto been believed to require physiological explanations are, in fact, psychical acts, and the evidence that the processes which lead to abnormal consequences can be traced back to psychical drive forces [*Triebkräfte*][T].

I will illustrate the first of these theses by a few examples. Hysterical attacks have long been recognized as signs of increased emotional excitement [*Erregung*][T] and equated with outbreaks of affect. Charcot attempted to reduce the multiplicity of their modes of manifestation by means of descriptive formulas; Pierre Janet recognized the unconscious ideas operating behind such attacks;[1] while psychoanalysis has shown that they are mimetic representations of scenes (whether actually experienced or only invented) with which the patient's [173]
imagination [*Phantasie*][T] is occupied without his becoming conscious

1 [See, however, Freud's later comments on Janet's views in Section III of his *Autobiographical Study* (1925*d*), *RSE*, **20**, 26–7.]

of them. The meaning of these pantomimes is concealed from the spectators by means of condensations and distortions of the acts which they represent. And this applies equally to what are described as the 'chronic' symptoms of hysterical patients. All of them are mimetic or hallucinatory representations of phantasies [*Phantasien*] which unconsciously dominate the subject's emotional life and which have the meaning of fulfilments of secret and repressed wishes. The tormenting character of these symptoms is due to the internal conflict into which these patients' minds are driven by the need to combat such unconscious wishes.

In another neurotic disorder, obsessional neurosis [*Zwangsneurose*][T], the patients become the victims of distressing and apparently senseless ceremonials which take the form of the rhythmical repetition of the most trivial acts (such as washing or dressing) or of carrying out meaningless injunctions or of obeying mysterious prohibitions. It was nothing less than a triumph of psychoanalytic research when it succeeded in showing that all these obsessive acts [*Zwangshandlungen*], even the most insignificant and trivial of them, have a meaning, and that they are reflections, translated into indifferent terms, of conflicts in the patients' lives, of the struggle between temptations and moral restraints [*Hemmungen*][T] – reflections of the proscribed wish itself and of the punishment and atonement which that wish incurs. In another form of the same disorder the victim suffers from tormenting ideas (obsessions [*Zwangsideen*]) which force themselves upon him and are accompanied by affects whose character and intensity are often only quite inadequately accounted for by the terms of the obsessive ideas [*Zwangsideen*] themselves. Analytic investigation has shown in their case that the affects are entirely justified, since they correspond to self-reproaches which are based on something that is at least *psychically* real. But the ideas to which these affects are attached are not the original ones, but have found their way into their present position by a process of displacement – by being substituted for something that has been repressed. If these displacements can be reversed, the way is open to the discovery of the repressed ideas, and the relation between affect and idea is found to be perfectly appropriate.

[174] In another neurotic disorder, dementia praecox (paraphrenia or schizophrenia), a condition which is, in fact, incurable, the patient is left, in the most severe cases, in a state of apparently complete apathy. Often his sole remaining actions are certain movements and gestures

which are repeated monotonously and have been given the name of 'stereotypies'. An analytic investigation of residues of this kind, made by Jung, has shown that they are the remains of perfectly significant mimetic actions, which at one time gave expression to the subject's ruling wishes. The craziest speeches and the most peculiar poses and attitudes adopted by these patients become intelligible and can be given a place in the chain of their mental processes if they are approached on the basis of psychoanalytic hypotheses. [Cf. Jung, 1908.]

Similar considerations apply to the deliria and hallucinations, as well as to the delusional systems, exhibited by various psychotic patients. Where hitherto nothing but the most freakish capriciousness has seemed to prevail, psychoanalytic research has introduced law, order and connection, or has at least allowed us to suspect their presence where its work is still incomplete. The most heterogeneous forms of mental disorder are revealed as the results of processes which are at bottom identical and which can be understood and described by means of psychological concepts. What had already been discovered in the formation of dreams is operative everywhere – psychical conflict, the repression of certain drive impulses which have been pushed back into the unconscious by other mental forces, reaction-formations set up by the repressing forces, and substitutes constructed by the drives which have been repressed but have not been robbed of all their energy. The accompanying processes of condensation and displacement, so familiar to us in dreams, are also to be found everywhere. The multiplicity of clinical pictures observed by psychiatrists depends upon two other things: the multiplicity of the psychical mechanisms at the disposal of the repressive process and the multiplicity of developmental dispositions which give the repressed impulses an opportunity for breaking through into substitutive structures.

Psychoanalysis points to psychology for the solution to a good half [175]
of the problems of psychiatry. It would nevertheless be a serious mistake to suppose that analysis favours or aims at a *purely* psychological view of mental disorders. It cannot overlook the fact that the other half of the problems of psychiatry are concerned with the influence of organic factors (whether mechanical, toxic or infective) on the mental apparatus. Even in the case of the mildest of these disorders, the neuroses, it makes no claim that their origin is purely psychogenic but traces their aetiology to the influence upon mental life of an unquestionably organic factor to which I shall refer later [p. 171 f. below].

The number of detailed psychoanalytic findings which cannot fail to be of importance for general psychology is too great for me to enumerate them here. I will mention only two other points: psychoanalysis unhesitatingly ascribes the primacy in mental life to affective processes, and it reveals an unexpected amount of affective disturbance and blinding of the intellect in normal no less than in sick people.

PART II
THE CLAIMS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS TO THE INTEREST OF THE NON-PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

(A) THE PHILOLOGICAL INTEREST OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

I shall no doubt be overstepping common linguistic usage in postulating an interest in psychoanalysis on the part of philologists, that is of experts in language [*Sprache*]. For in what follows 'language' must be understood not merely to mean the expression of thought in words but to include the language of gesture and every other method, such, for instance, as writing, by which mental activity can be expressed. That being so, it may be pointed out that the interpretations made by psychoanalysis are first and foremost translations [*Übersetzungen*] from an alien method of expression into the one which is familiar to us. When we interpret a dream we are simply translating a particular thought content (the latent dream thoughts) from the 'language of dreams' into our waking language. In the course of doing so we learn the peculiarities of this dream language and it is borne in upon us that it forms part of a highly archaic system of expression. Thus, to take an instance, there is no special indication for the negative in the language of dreams. Contraries may stand for each other in the dream's content and may be represented by the same element. Or we may put it like this: concepts are still ambivalent in dream language, and unite within themselves contrary meanings – as is the case, according to the hypotheses of philologists, in the oldest roots of historical languages.[1] Another striking feature of our dream language is its extremely frequent use of symbols, which make us able to some extent to translate the content of dreams without reference to the associations [*Assoziationen*][T] of the individual dreamer. Our researches have not yet sufficiently elucidated the essential nature of these symbols. They are in part substitutes and analogies based upon obvious similarities; but in some of these symbols the *tertium comparationis* which is presumably present escapes our conscious knowledge. It is precisely this latter class of symbols which must probably originate from the earliest

[176]

[177]

1 Cf. Abel [1884] on the antithetical meaning of primal words, and my review of his paper [1910*e*; *RSE*, **11**, 143 ff.].

phases of linguistic development and conceptual construction. In dreams it is above all the sexual organs and sexual activities which are represented symbolically instead of directly. A philologist, Hans Sperber, of Uppsala, has only recently (1912) attempted to prove that words which originally represented sexual activities have, on the basis of analogies of this kind, undergone an extraordinarily far-reaching change in their meaning.

If we reflect that the means of representation in dreams are principally visual images and not words, we shall see that it is even more appropriate to compare dreams with a system of writing than with a language. In fact the interpretation of dreams is completely analogous to the decipherment of an ancient pictographic script such as Egyptian hieroglyphs. In both cases there are certain elements which are not intended to be interpreted (or read, as the case may be) but are only designed to serve as 'determinatives', that is to establish the meaning of some other element. The ambiguity of various elements of dreams finds a parallel in these ancient systems of writing; and so too does the omission of various relations, which have in both cases to be supplied from the context. If this conception of the method of representation in dreams has not yet been followed up, this, as will be readily understood, must be ascribed to the fact that psychoanalysts are entirely ignorant of the attitude and knowledge with which a philologist would approach such a problem as that presented by dreams.

The language of dreams may be looked upon as the method by which unconscious mental activity expresses itself. But the unconscious speaks more than one dialect. According to the differing psychological conditions governing and distinguishing the various forms of neurosis, we find regular modifications in the way in which unconscious mental impulses are expressed. While the gesture language of hysteria agrees on the whole with the picture language of dreams and visions, etc., the
[178] thought language of obsessional neurosis and of the paraphrenias (dementia praecox and paranoia) exhibits special idiomatic peculiarities which, in a number of instances, we have been able to understand and interrelate. For instance, what a hysteric expresses by vomiting an obsessional will express by painstaking protective measures against infection, while a paraphrenic will be led to complaints or suspicions that he is being poisoned. These are all of them different representations of the patient's wish to become pregnant which have been repressed into the unconscious, or of his defensive reaction [*Abwehr*][T] against that wish.

(B) THE PHILOSOPHICAL INTEREST OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

Philosophy, insofar as it is built on psychology, will be unable to avoid taking the psychoanalytic contributions to psychology fully into account and reacting to this new enrichment of our knowledge just as it has to every considerable advance in the specialized sciences. In particular, the setting up of the hypothesis of unconscious mental activities must compel philosophy to decide one way or the other and, if it accepts the idea, to modify its own views on the relation of mind to body so that they may conform to the new knowledge. It is true that philosophy has repeatedly dealt with the problem of the unconscious, but, with few exceptions, philosophers have taken up one or other of the two following positions. Either their unconscious has been something mystical, something intangible and undemonstrable, whose relation to the mind has remained obscure, or they have identified the mental with the conscious and have proceeded to infer from this definition that what is unconscious cannot be mental or a subject for psychology. These opinions must be put down to the fact that philosophers have formed their judgement on the unconscious without being acquainted with the phenomena of unconscious mental activity, and therefore without any suspicion of how far unconscious phenomena resemble conscious ones or of the respects in which they differ from them. If anyone possessing that knowledge nevertheless holds to the conviction which equates the conscious and the psychical and consequently denies the unconscious the attribute of being psychical, no objection can, of course, be made except that such a distinction [179] turns out to be highly unpractical. For it is easy to describe the unconscious and to follow its developments if it is approached from the direction of its relation to the conscious, with which it has so much in common. On the other hand, there still seems no possibility of approaching it from the direction of physical events. So that it is bound to remain a matter for psychological study.

There is yet another way in which philosophy can derive a stimulus from psychoanalysis, and that is by itself becoming a subject of psychoanalytic research. Philosophical theories and systems have been the work of a small number of men of striking individuality. In no other science does the personality of the scientific worker play anything like so large a part as in philosophy. And now for the first time psychoanalysis enables us to construct a 'psychography' of a personality. (See the sociological section below, p. 177 f.) It teaches us to recognize the affective units – the complexes dependent on drives – whose presence is to be presumed in

each individual, and it introduces us to the study of the transformations and end products arising from these drive forces. It reveals the relations of a person's constitutional disposition and the events of his life to the achievements open to him owing to his peculiar gifts. It can conjecture with more or less certainty from an artist's work the intimate personality that lies behind it. In the same way, psychoanalysis can indicate the subjective and individual motives behind philosophical theories which have ostensibly sprung from impartial logical work, and can draw a critic's attention to the weak spots in the system. It is not the business of psychoanalysis, however, to undertake such criticism itself, for, as may be imagined, the fact that a theory is psychologically determined does not in the least invalidate its scientific truth.

(c) THE BIOLOGICAL INTEREST OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

It has not been the fate [*Schicksal*][T] of psychoanalysis to be greeted (like other young sciences) with the sympathetic encouragement of those who are interested in the advance of knowledge. For a long time it was disregarded, and when at last it could no longer be neglected it
[180] became, for emotional reasons, the object of the most violent attacks from people who had not taken the trouble to become acquainted with it. It owed this unfriendly reception to a single circumstance: for at an early stage of its researches psychoanalysis was driven to the conclusion that nervous illnesses are an expression of a disturbance of the sexual function and it was thus led to devote its attention to an investigation of that function – one which had been far too long neglected. But anyone who respects the rule that scientific judgement should not be influenced by emotional attitudes will assign a high degree of biological interest to psychoanalysis on account of these very investigations and will regard the resistances to it as actual evidence in favour of the correctness of its assertions.

Psychoanalysis has done justice to the sexual function in man by making a detailed examination of its importance in mental and practical life – an importance which has been emphasized by many creative writers and by some philosophers, but which has never been recognized by science.[1] But in the first place it was necessary to enlarge the unduly restricted concept of sexuality, an enlargement that was justified by reference to the extensions of sexuality occurring in the so-called perversions and to the behaviour of children. It turned

1 [See Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905*d*), *RSE*, 7, 115 ff.]

out to be impossible to maintain any longer that childhood was asexual and was invaded for the first time by a sudden inrush of sexual impulses at the age of puberty. On the contrary, when once the blinkers of partiality and prejudice had been removed, observation had no difficulty in revealing that sexual interests and activities are present in the human child at almost every age and from the very first. The importance of this infantile sexuality is not impaired by the fact that we cannot everywhere draw a clear line between it and a child's asexual activity. It differs, however, from what is described as the 'normal' sexuality of adults. It includes the germs of all those sexual activities which in later life are sharply contrasted with normal sexual life as being perversions, and as such bound to seem incomprehensible and vicious. The normal sexuality of adults emerges from infantile sexuality by a series of developments, combinations, divisions and suppressions, which are scarcely ever achieved with ideal perfection [181] and consequently leave behind predispositions to a retrogression of the function in the form of illness.

Infantile sexuality exhibits two other characteristics which are of importance from a biological point of view. It turns out to be put together from a number of component drives which seem to be attached to certain regions of the body ('erotogenic zones') and some of which emerge from the beginning in pairs of opposites – drives with an active and a passive aim. Just as in later life what is loved is not merely the object's sexual organs but his whole body, so from the very first it is not merely the genitals but many other parts of the body which are the seat of sexual excitation and respond to appropriate stimuli with sexual pleasure. This fact is closely related to the second characteristic of infantile sexuality – namely that to start with it is attached to the self-preservative functions of nutrition and excretion, and, in all probability, of muscular excitation and sensory activity.

If we examine sexuality in the adult with the help of psychoanalysis, and consider the life of children in the light of the knowledge thus gained, we perceive that sexuality is not merely a function serving the purposes of reproduction, on a par with digestion, respiration, etc. It is something far more independent, which stands in contrast to all the individual's other activities and is forced into an alliance with the individual's economy only after a complicated course of development involving the imposition of numerous restrictions. Cases, theoretically quite conceivable, in which the interests of these sexual impulses fail to coincide with the self-preservation of the individual seem actually

to be presented by the group of neurotic illnesses. For the final formula which psychoanalysis has arrived at on the nature of the neuroses runs thus: The primal conflict which leads to neuroses is one between the sexual drives and those which maintain the ego [*Ich*][T]. The neuroses represent a more or less partial overpowering of the ego by sexuality after the ego's attempts at suppressing sexuality have failed.

We have found it necessary to hold aloof from biological considerations during our psychoanalytic work and to refrain from using them
[182] for heuristic purposes, so that we may not be misled in our impartial judgement of the psychoanalytic facts before us. But after we have completed our psychoanalytic work we shall have to find a point of contact with biology; and we may rightly feel glad if that contact is already assured at one important point or another. The contrast between the ego drives and the sexual drive, to which we have been obliged to trace back the origin of the neuroses, is carried into the sphere of biology in the contrast between the drives which serve the preservation of the individual and those which serve the survival of the species. In biology we come upon the more comprehensive conception of an immortal germ-plasm to which the different transitory individuals are attached like organs that develop successively. It is only this conception which enables us rightly to understand the part played by the sexual drive forces in physiology and psychology.

In spite of all our efforts to prevent biological terminology and considerations from dominating psychoanalytic work, we cannot avoid using them even in our descriptions of the phenomena that we study. We cannot help regarding the term 'drive' as a concept on the frontier between the spheres of psychology and biology. We speak, too, of 'masculine' and 'feminine' mental attributes and impulses, although, strictly speaking, the differences between the sexes can lay claim to no special psychical characterization. What we speak of in ordinary life as 'masculine' or 'feminine' reduces itself from the point of view of psychology to the qualities of 'activity' and 'passivity' – that is, to qualities determined not by the drives themselves but by their aims. The regular association of these 'active' and 'passive' drives in mental life reflects the bisexuality of individuals, which is among the clinical postulates of psychoanalysis.

I shall be satisfied if these few remarks have drawn attention to the many respects in which psychoanalysis acts as an intermediary between biology and psychology.

(D) THE INTEREST OF PSYCHOANALYSIS FROM A DEVELOPMENTAL POINT OF VIEW

Not every analysis of psychological phenomena deserves the name of psychoanalysis. The latter implies more than the mere analysis of com- [183]
posite phenomena into simpler ones. It consists in tracing back one psychical structure to another which preceded it in time and out of which it developed. Medical psychoanalytic procedure was not able to eliminate a symptom until it had traced that symptom's origin and development. Thus from the very first psychoanalysis was directed towards tracing developmental processes. It began by discovering the genesis of neurotic symptoms, and was led, as time went on, to turn its attention to other psychical structures and to construct a genetic [*genetischen*][T] psychology which would apply to them too.

Psychoanalysis has been obliged to derive the mental life of adults from that of children, and has had to take seriously the old saying that the child is father to the man. It has traced the continuity between the infantile and adult mind, and has also noted the transformations and rearrangements that occur in the process. In most of us there is a gap in our memories covering the first years of our childhood, of which only a few fragmentary recollections survive. Psychoanalysis may be said to have filled in this gap and to have abolished man's infantile amnesia. (See the section on 'Educational Interest' below [p. 178 f.].)

Some notable discoveries have been made in the course of this investigation of the infantile mind. Thus it has been possible to confirm, what has often already been suspected, the extraordinarily important influence exerted by the impressions of childhood (and particularly by its earliest years) on the whole course of later development. This brings us up against a psychological paradox – which for psychoanalysts alone is no paradox – that it is precisely these most important of all impressions that are not remembered in later years. Psychoanalysis has been able to establish the decisive and indestructible character of these earliest experiences in the clearest possible way in the case of sexual life. '*On revient toujours à ses premiers amours*' is sober truth. The many riddles in the sexual life of adults can only be solved if stress is laid on the infantile factors in love. Theoretical light is thrown on their influence by the consideration that an individual's first experiences in childhood do not occur only by chance but also correspond to the first activities of his innate or constitutional drive dispositions.

Another and far more surprising discovery has been that, in spite of all [184]

the later development that occurs in the adult, none of the infantile mental formations perishes. All the wishes, drive impulses, modes of reaction and attitudes of childhood are still demonstrably present in maturity and in appropriate circumstances can emerge once more. They are not destroyed but merely overlaid – to use the spatial mode of description which psychoanalytic psychology has been obliged to adopt. Thus it is part of the nature of the mental past that, unlike the historic past, it is not absorbed by its derivatives; it persists (whether actually or only potentially) alongside what has proceeded from it. The proof of this assertion lies in the fact that the dreams of normal people revive their childhood characters every night and reduce their whole mental life to an infantile level. This same return to psychical infantilism ('regression') appears in the neuroses and psychoses, whose peculiarities may to a great extent be described as psychical archaisms. The strength in which the residues of infancy are still present in the mind shows us the amount of disposition to illness; that disposition may accordingly be regarded as an expression of an inhibition in development. The part of a person's psychical material which has remained infantile and has been repressed as being unserviceable constitutes the core of his unconscious. And we believe we can follow in our patients' life histories the way in which this unconscious, held back as it is by the forces of repression, lies in wait for a chance to become active and makes use of its opportunities if the later and higher psychical structures fail to master the difficulties of real life.

In the last few years psychoanalytic writers[1] have become aware that the principle that 'ontogeny is a recapitulation of phylogeny'[2] must be applicable to mental life; and this has led to a fresh extension of psychoanalytic interest.

(E) THE INTEREST OF PSYCHOANALYSIS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION

[185] The comparison between the childhood of individual men and the early history of societies has already proved its fruitfulness in several directions, even though the study has scarcely more than begun. In this connection the psychoanalytic mode of thought acts like a new instrument of research. The application of its hypotheses to social psychology enables us both to raise fresh problems and to see old ones in a fresh light and contribute towards their solution.

1 Abraham, Spielrein and Jung.

2 [An allusion to Haeckel's biogenetic law (see 1905*d*; *RSE*, 7, 116 f.).]

In the first place, it seems quite possible to apply the psychoanalytic views derived from dreams to products of ethnic imagination such as myths and fairy tales.[1] The need to interpret such productions [*Gebilde*] has long been felt; some 'secret meaning' has been suspected to lie behind them and it has been presumed that that meaning is concealed by changes and transformations. The study made by psychoanalysis of dreams and neuroses has given it the necessary experience to enable it to guess the technical procedures that have governed these distortions. But in a number of instances it can also reveal the hidden motives which have led to this modification in the original meaning of myths. It cannot accept as the first impulse to the construction of myths a theoretical craving for finding an explanation of natural phenomena or for accounting for cult observances and usages which have become unintelligible. It looks for that impulse in the same psychical 'complexes', in the same emotional trends, which it has discovered at the base of dreams and symptoms.

A similar application of its points of view, its hypotheses and its findings has enabled psychoanalysis to throw light on the origins of our great cultural [*kulturellen*][T] institutions – on religion, morality, justice and philosophy.[2] By examining the primitive psychological situations which were able to provide the motive for creations of this kind, it has been in a position to reject certain attempts at an explanation that were based on too superficial a psychology and to replace them with a more penetrating insight. *Kultur*

Psychoanalysis has established an intimate connection between these psychical achievements of individuals on the one hand and societies on the other by postulating one and the same dynamic source for both of them. It starts out from the basic idea that the principal function of the mental mechanism is to relieve the individual from the tensions created in him by his needs. One part of this task can be achieved by extracting satisfaction from the external world; and for this purpose it is essential to have control over the real world. But the satisfaction of another part of these needs – among them certain affective impulses – is regularly frustrated by reality. This leads to the further task of finding some other means of dealing with the unsatisfied impulses. The whole course of the history of civilization [*Kulturgeschichte*] is no more than an account of the various methods adopted by mankind for 'binding' their unsatisfied wishes, which, according to changing conditions (modified, moreover, [186]

1 Cf. Abraham, Rank and Jung.

2 For some first attempts in this direction, see Jung (1911–12) and Freud (1912–13*a*).

by technological advances), have been met by reality sometimes with favour and sometimes with frustration [*Versagung*][T].

An investigation of primitive peoples shows mankind caught up, to begin with, in a childish belief in its own omnipotence.[1] A whole number of mental structures [*Bildungen*][T] can thus be understood as attempts to deny whatever might disturb this feeling of omnipotence and so to prevent emotional life from being affected by reality until the latter could be better controlled and used for purposes of satisfaction. The principle of avoiding unpleasure [*Unlustvermeidung*] dominates human actions until it is replaced with the better one of adaptation to the external world. *Pari passu* with men's progressive control over the world goes a development in their *Weltanschauung*, their view of the world as a whole. They turn away more and more from their original belief in their own omnipotence, rising from an animistic phase through a religious to a scientific one. Myths, religion and morality find their place in this scheme as attempts to seek a compensation for the lack of satisfaction of human wishes.

Our knowledge of the neurotic illnesses of individuals has been of much assistance to our understanding of the great social institutions. For the neuroses themselves have turned out to be attempts to find *individual* solutions to the problems of compensating for unsatisfied wishes, while the institutions seek to provide *social* solutions to these same problems.
[187] The recession of the social factor and the predominance of the sexual one turn these neurotic solutions to the psychological problem into caricatures which are of no service except to help us in explaining such important questions.

(F) THE INTEREST OF PSYCHOANALYSIS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE SCIENCE OF AESTHETICS

Psychoanalysis throws a satisfactory light upon some of the problems concerning arts and artists; but others escape it entirely. In the exercising of an art it sees once again an activity intended to allay ungratified wishes – in the first place in the creative artist himself and subsequently in his audience or spectators. The driving forces [*Triebkräfte*][T] of artists are the same conflicts which drive other people into neurosis and have encouraged society to construct its institutions. Whence it is that the artist derives his creative capacity is not a question for psychology. The artist's first aim is to set himself free and, by communicating his work to other

1 Cf. Ferenczi (1913*c*) and Freud (1912–13*a*), Chapter III [above, p. 84 ff.].

people suffering from the same arrested desires, he offers them the same liberation.[1] He represents his most personal wishful phantasies as fulfilled; but they only become a work of art when they have undergone a transformation which softens what is offensive in them, conceals their personal origin and, by obeying the laws of beauty, bribes other people with a bonus of pleasure. Psychoanalysis has no difficulty in pointing out, alongside the manifest part of artistic enjoyment, another that is latent though far more potent, derived from the hidden sources of drive liberation. The connection between the impressions of the artist's childhood and his life history on the one hand and his works, as reactions to those impressions, on the other is one of the most attractive subjects of analytic examination.[2]

For the rest, most of the problems of artistic creation and appreciation await further study, which will throw the light of analytic knowledge on them and assign them their place in the complex structure presented by [188] the compensation for human wishes. Art is a conventionally accepted reality in which, thanks to artistic illusion, symbols and substitutes are able to provoke real emotions. Thus art constitutes a region halfway between a reality which frustrates wishes and the wish-fulfilling world of the imagination – a region in which, as it were, primitive man's strivings for omnipotence are still in full force.

(G) THE SOCIOLOGICAL INTEREST OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

It is true that psychoanalysis has taken the individual mind as its subject, but in investigating the individual it could not avoid dealing with the emotional basis of the relation of the individual to society. It has found that the social feelings invariably contain an erotic element – an element which, if it is overemphasized and then repressed, becomes one of the marks of a particular group of mental disorders. Psychoanalysis has recognized that in general the neuroses are asocial in their nature and that they always aim at driving the individual out of society and at replacing the safe monastic seclusion of earlier days with the isolation of illness. The intense feeling of guilt which dominates so many neuroses has been shown to be a social modification of neurotic anxiety.

On the other hand, psychoanalysis has fully demonstrated the part played by social conditions and requirements in the causation of

1 Cf. Rank (1907).

2 Cf. Rank (1912*c*). See also, for the application of psychoanalysis to aesthetic problems, my book on *Jokes* (Freud, 1905*c*; *RSE*, **8**). [Cf. also Freud's studies on Leonardo (1910*c*), *RSE*, **11**, 61 ff., and Michelangelo (1914*b*), below, p. 205 ff.]

neurosis. The forces which, operating from the ego, bring about the restriction and repression of drive owe their origin essentially to compliance with the demands of civilization. A constitution and a set of childhood experiences which, in other cases, would inevitably lead to a neurosis will produce no such result where this compliance is absent or where these demands are not made by the social circle in which the particular individual is placed. The old assertion that the increase in nervous disorders is a product of civilization is at least a half-truth. Young people are brought into contact with the demands of civilization by upbringing [*Erziehung*]^{T} and example; and if drive repression occurs independently of these two factors, it is a plausible hypothesis to suppose that a primaeval and prehistoric demand has at last become part of the organized
[189] and inherited endowment of mankind. A child who produces drive repressions spontaneously is thus merely repeating a part of the history of civilization. What is today an act of internal restraint was once an external one, imposed, perhaps, by the necessities of the moment; and, in the same way, what is now brought to bear upon every growing individual as an external demand of civilization may some day become an internal disposition to repression.

(H) THE EDUCATIONAL INTEREST OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

The overmastering interest which must be felt in psychoanalysis by the theory of education is based upon a fact which has become evi-
Einfühlung dent. Only someone who can feel his way into [*einfühlen*]^{T} the minds of children can be capable of educating them; and we grown-up people cannot understand children because we no longer understand our own childhood. Our infantile amnesia proves that we have grown estranged from our childhood. Psychoanalysis has brought to light the wishes, the thought structures and the developmental processes of childhood. All earlier attempts in this direction have been in the highest degree incomplete and misleading because they have entirely overlooked the inestimably important factor of sexuality in its physical and mental manifestations. The incredulous astonishment which meets the most certainly established findings of psychoanalysis on the subject of childhood – the Oedipus complex, self-love (or 'narcissism'), the disposition to perversions, anal erotism, sexual curiosity – is a measure of the gulf which separates our mental life, our judgements of value and, indeed, our processes of thought from those of even normal children.

When educators have become familiar with the findings of psychoanalysis, it will be easier for them to reconcile themselves to certain phases of infantile development and they will, among other things, not be in danger of overestimating the importance of the socially unserviceable or perverse drive impulses which emerge in children. On the contrary they will refrain from any attempt at forcibly suppressing such impulses, when they learn that efforts of this kind often produce no less undesirable results than the alternative, which is so much dreaded by educators, of giving free play to children's naughtiness. The forcible suppression of strong drives by external means never [190]
has the effect in a child of these drives being extinguished or brought under control; it leads to repression, which establishes a predisposition to later nervous illness. Psychoanalysis has frequent opportunities of observing the part played by inopportune and undiscerning severity of upbringing in the production of neuroses, or the price, in loss of efficiency and of capacity for enjoyment, which has to be paid for the normality upon which the educator insists. And psychoanalysis can also show what precious contributions to the formation of character are made by these asocial and perverse drives in the child, if they are not subjected to repression but are diverted from their original aims to more valuable ones by the process known as 'sublimation'. Our highest virtues have grown up, as reaction-formations and sublimations, out of our worst dispositions. Education should scrupulously refrain from burying these precious springs of action and should restrict itself to encouraging the processes by which these energies are led along safe paths. Whatever we can expect in the way of prophylaxis against neurosis in the individual lies in the hands of a psychoanalytically enlightened education.[1]

It has not been my aim in my present paper to lay before a scientifically orientated public an account of the compass and content of psychoanalysis or of its hypotheses, problems and findings. My purpose will have been fulfilled if I have made clear the many spheres of knowledge in which psychoanalysis is of interest and the numerous links which it has begun to forge between them.

1 See the writings of the Zürich pastor Dr Oskar Pfister.