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THE PSYCHOGENESIS OF A CASE OF FEMALE HOMOSEXUALITY

by

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I.

Homosexuality in women, which is certainly not less common than in men, although much less perturbing, has not only been ignored by the law, but has also been neglected by psycho-analytic research. The narration of a single case, not too pronounced in type, in which it was possible to trace with certainty and completeness the history of its psychical development, may, therefore, have a certain claim on our attention. If the presentation sets forth only the most general outlines of the various events concerned and the conclusions reached from study of the case, suppressing all the characteristic details on which the interpretation is founded, this limitation is easily to be explained by the medical discretion called for in discussing a recent case.

A beautiful and clever girl of eighteen, belonging to a family of good standing, had aroused displeasure and concern on the part of her parents by the tender passion with which she pursued a certain lady, about ten years older than herself. The parents asserted that this lady, in spite of her distinguished name, was no better than a cocotte. It was said to be a well-known fact that she lived with a married woman-friend, having intimate relations with her, while at the same time she carried on promiscuously with

a number of men. The girl did not contradict these evil reports, but she continued to be none the less enamoured of the lady in question, although she herself was by no means lacking in a sense of decency and propriety. No prohibitions and no supervision hindered the girl from seizing every one of the rare opportunities of being together with her beloved friend, of ascertaining all her habits, of waiting for her for hours outside her door or at a tram halt, of sending her gifts of flowers, and so on. It was evident that this one interest had swallowed up all others. The girl did not concern herself with any further educational studies, placed no value on social functions or girlish pleasures, and kept up relations only with those friends who could help her in the matter or serve as confidantes. The parents could not say to what lengths their daughter had gone in her relations to the questionable lady, or whether the limits of devoted admiration had already been exceeded. They had never remarked in their daughter any interest in young men, nor any pleasure at their attentions, and, on the other hand, they were quite sure that her present attachment for a woman was only a continuation in a marked degree of the feeling she had displayed of recent years for other members of her own sex, which had already aroused her father's suspicion and severity.

Two aspects of her behaviour, in apparent contrast with each other, her parents took especially badly. On the one hand, that she did not scruple to appear in the most frequented streets in the company of her questionable friend, being thus quite neglectful of her own reputation; while, on the other hand, she disdained no means of deception, no excuses, and no lies that would make meetings with her possible and cover them. She was thus as brazen in the one respect as deceitful in the other. One day it happened, as, indeed, was sooner or later inevitable in the circumstances, that the father met his daughter in the company of the lady. He passed them by with an angry glance which boded no good. Immediately after the girl rushed off and flung herself over a neighbouring wall on to the railway line. She paid for this undoubtedly serious attempt at suicide with a long stay in bed, though fortunately little permanent damage was done. After her recovery she found it easier to get her own way than before. The parents did not dare to oppose her so vigorously, and the lady, who up till then had coldly declined her advances, was moved by such

an unmistakable proof of serious passion and began to treat her in a more friendly manner.

About six months after this occurrence the parents sought medical advice and entrusted the doctor with the task of bringing their daughter back to the normal. The girl's attempted suicide had shown them that all the means of discipline at their disposal were powerless to overcome her mental disorder. Before going further it will be desirable to deal with the attitudes of the father and mother separately. The father was an earnest and worthy man, at bottom very tender-hearted, but by the sternness he had adopted he had somewhat estranged his children. His treatment of his only daughter was too much influenced by consideration for his wife. When he first came to know of his daughter's homosexual tendencies he boiled over with anger and tried to suppress them by threats; at that time he perhaps hesitated between different, though equally painful, views, whether to regard her as vicious, as degenerate, or as mentally afflicted. Even after the attempted suicide he did not achieve the lofty resignation shown by one of our medical colleagues who remarked of a similar case in his own family, "It is just a misfortune like any other". There was something about his daughter's homosexuality that aroused the deepest bitterness in him, and he was determined to combat it with all the means in his power; the depreciation of psycho-analysis so widespread in Vienna did not prevent him from turning to it for help. If this way failed he still had in reserve the strongest counter-measure; a speedy marriage was to awaken the natural instincts of the girl and stifle her unnatural tendencies.

The mother's attitude towards the girl was not so perspicuous. She was still a youngish woman, who was evidently unwilling to relinquish her claims to charm by her beauty. All that was clear was that she did not take her daughter's passion so tragically as did the father, nor was she so incensed at it. She had even for a long time enjoyed her daughter's confidence concerning the love affair, and her opposition to it seemed to have been aroused mainly by the harmful openness with which the girl publicly displayed her feelings. She had suffered for some years from neurotic troubles and enjoyed great consideration from her husband; she was very erratic in her treatment of her children, rather hard towards her daughter and over-indulgent to her three sons, the youngest of whom had been born after a long interval and was

not yet three years old. It was not easy to ascertain anything more definite as to her character, for, owing to motives that will only later become intelligible, the patient was always reserved in the accounts she gave of her mother, in contradistinction to those relating to her father.

The doctor who was to undertake the psycho-analytic treatment of the girl had several reasons for feeling uncomfortable. The situation he had to deal with was not one such as analysis demands and where alone it can demonstrate its effectiveness. As is well known, the ideal situation for analysis is when someone, otherwise master of himself, is suffering from an inner conflict which he is unable to resolve alone, so that he brings his trouble to the analyst and begs for his help. The doctor then works hand in hand with one part of the dissociated personality against the other partner in the conflict. Situations other than these are more or less unfavourable for psycho-analysis; they add other difficulties to those already present. Situations such as those of the proprietor who orders an architect to build him a villa according to his own tastes and desires, or of the pious donor who gets the artist to paint a picture of saints in the corner of which is to be a portrait of himself worshipping, are fundamentally incompatible with the conditions of psycho-analysis. It constantly happens that a husband informs the doctor, "My wife suffers from nerves, so that she gets on badly with me; please cure her, so that we may lead a happy married life again". But often enough it turns out that such a request is impossible to fulfil, *i. e.* that the doctor cannot bring about the result for which the husband sought the treatment. The moment the wife is freed from her neurotic inhibitions she insists on dissolving the marriage, for the maintenance of which the neurosis was essential. Or, to take another case, parents demand that their nervous and unruly child be cured. By a healthy child they mean one who gives his parents no difficulties, but only pleasure. The doctor may succeed in curing the child, but after that it goes its own way all the more decidedly, and the parents are now more dissatisfied than even before. In short, it is not a matter of indifference whether someone comes to analysis of his own accord or because he is brought to it, whether he himself desires to be changed or only his relatives who love him (or who might be expected to love him) desire this for him.

Further unfavourable features in the present case were the facts that the girl was not exactly a "patient" — her suffering had no inner source, nor did she complain of her condition — and that the task to be carried out did not consist in resolving a neurotic conflict but in converting the one variety of the genital organisation of sexuality into the other. The removal of genital inversion, or homosexuality, is in my experience never an easy matter. I have rather found that success is possible only under specially favourable circumstances, and even then that it essentially consists in being able to open to the restricted homosexuals the way to the opposite sex, till then barred, thus restoring their full bisexual functions. After that it lay with themselves to choose whether they wished to abandon the other way, banned by society, and in individual cases they have done so. One must remember that in normal sexuality also there is a limitation in the choice of object; in general to undertake to convert a fully developed homosexual into a heterosexual is not much more promising than to do the reverse, only that for good practical reasons the latter is never attempted.

In actual numbers the successes achieved by psycho-analytic treatment of the manifold forms of homosexuality are not specially striking. As a rule the homosexual is not able to give up his pleasure-object, and one cannot convince him that if he changed to the other object he would find again the pleasure he has renounced. If he comes at all to be treated it is mostly through the pressure of external motives, such as the social disadvantages and dangers attaching to his choice of object, and such components of the instinct for self-preservation prove to be too weak in the struggle against the sexual impulses. One then soon discovers his secret plan, namely, to obtain from the striking failure of his attempt the feeling of satisfaction that he has done everything possible against his abnormality, to which he can now resign himself with an easy conscience. The case is somewhat different when consideration for beloved parents and relatives has been the motive for his attempt to be cured. Then there really are libidinous tendencies present which may develop energies opposed to the homosexual choice of object, though their strength is rarely sufficient. It is only where the homosexual fixation has not yet become strong enough, or where there are considerable rudiments and remains of the heterosexual choice of object, *i. e.* in a still

oscillating or in a definitely bisexual organisation, that one may make a more favourable prognosis for the psycho-analytic therapy.

For these reasons I altogether refrained from holding out to the parents a prospect of their wish being fulfilled. I merely said I was prepared to study the girl carefully for a few weeks or months so as to be able then to pronounce how far a continuation of the analysis might influence her. In a considerable number of cases, indeed, the analysis divides itself into two clearly separated stages: in the first one the doctor procures from the patient the necessary information, makes him familiar with the premises and postulates of psycho-analysis, and unfolds to him the rendering of the genesis of his disorder, as deduced from the material brought up in the analysis. In the second stage the patient himself lays hold of the analytic material, works on it, recollects what he can from the apparently repressed memories, and tries to live over again the rest. In this way he can confirm, supplement, and correct the inferences made by the doctor. It is only during this work that he experiences, through overcoming resistances, the inner change aimed at, and acquires for himself the convictions that make him independent of the doctor's authority. These two stages in the course of the analytic treatment are not always sharply divided from each other; it only happens when the resistance keeps to certain conditions. But when this is so, one may institute a comparison with two corresponding stages of a journey. The first comprises all the necessary preparations, to-day so complicated and hard to effect, till at last, ticket in hand, one goes on to the platform and secures a seat in the train. One has now the right, and the possibility, to travel into the distant country, but after all these preliminary exertions one is not yet there — indeed, one is not a single kilometer nearer one's goal. For this to happen one has to make the journey itself from one station to another, and this part of the travel may well be compared with the second stage in the analysis.

The analysis of the patient referred to took the course of this two-stage schedule, but it was not continued beyond the beginning of the second stage. A special constellation of the resistance, made it possible, nevertheless, to gain full confirmation of my inferences, and to obtain a fairly adequate insight into the way in which her inversion had developed. But before narrating the findings of the analysis I have to deal with a few points which have either been

touched upon already by myself or which will have at once struck the reader as interesting.

I had made the prognosis partly dependent on how far the girl had got in the satisfaction of her passion. The information I gleaned during the analysis seemed favourable in this respect. With none of the objects of her passion had the patient enjoyed anything beyond a few kisses and embraces; her genital chastity, if one may use such a phrase, had remained intact. As for the demi-mondaine who had aroused the girl's most recent, and by far her strongest, emotions, she had always treated her coldly and had never allowed any greater favour than the kissing of her hand. Probably the girl was making a virtue of necessity when she kept insisting on the purity of her love and her physical repulsion against the idea of sexual intercourse. But perhaps she was not altogether wrong when she boasted of her wonderful beloved that, although of noble birth and forced into her present position only by adverse family circumstances, she had preserved, even in such a situation, a great deal of dignity. For the lady used to recommend the girl, every time they met, to withdraw her affection from herself and from women in general, and she had persistently rejected the girl's advances up to the time of the attempted suicide.

A second point, which I next tried to clear up, concerned the girl's own motives on which the psycho-analytic treatment might be based. She did not try to deceive me by saying that she felt any urgent need to be freed of her homosexuality. On the contrary, she said she could not conceive of any other way of being in love, but she added that for her parents' sake she would honestly help in the therapeutic endeavour, for it pained her very much to be the cause of so much grief to them. I had to take this also as a propitious sign to begin with, as I could not suspect what unconscious affective attitude lay behind it. What came to light later in this connection decisively influenced the course taken by the analysis and determined its premature conclusion.

Readers unversed in psycho-analysis will long have been impatiently awaiting an answer to two other questions. Did this homosexual girl show somatic characteristics plainly belonging to the opposite sex, and did the case prove to be one of congenital or of acquired (later developed) homosexuality?

I am aware of the importance attaching to the first of these questions. Only one should not exaggerate it, and obscure in its

favour the facts that sporadic secondary characteristics of the opposite sex are very often present in normal individuals, and that well-marked somatic characteristics of the opposite sex may be found in persons whose choice of object has undergone no change in the direction of inversion; in other words, that in both sexes *the degree of physical hermaphroditism is to a great extent independent of the psychical hermaphroditism*. In modification of this statement it must be added that this independence is more evident in men than in women, where bodily and mental traits belonging to the opposite sex are apt to coincide in their incidence. Still I am not in a position to give a satisfactory answer in the case of my patient to the first of our questions; the psychoanalyst often foregoes a thorough bodily examination of his patients in certain cases. Certainly there was no obvious deviation from the feminine physical type, nor any menstrual disturbance. The beautiful and well-developed girl had, it is true, her father's tall figure, and her facial features were sharp rather than soft and girlish, traits which might be regarded as indicating a physical masculinity. Some of her intellectual attributes also could be connected with masculinity: for instance, her acuteness of comprehension and her lucid objectivity, in so far as she was not dominated by her passion; though these distinctions are conventional rather than scientific. What is certainly of greater import is that in her behaviour towards her love-object she had approximated throughout to the masculine type: that is to say, she manifested the humility and the tremendous over-estimation of the sexual object so characteristic of the male lover, she renounced all narcissistic satisfaction, and she preferred to be the lover rather than the beloved. She had thus not only chosen a feminine love object, but had also developed a masculine attitude towards this object.

The second question, whether this was a case of inherited or acquired homosexuality will be answered by the whole history of the patient's trouble and its development. The study of this will show how far this very question is fruitless and inappropriate.

II.

After such a digressive introduction the sexual history of the case under consideration can be presented quite concisely. In childhood the girl had quietly passed through the normal stage

of the feminine Oedipus complex¹, and had later also begun to replace her father by a brother slightly older than herself. She could not remember any sexual traumata in early life, nor were any discovered by the analysis. Comparison of her brother's genital organs and her own, an event which took place about the beginning of the latency period (at five years old or perhaps a little earlier), left a strong impression on her and had far-reaching after-effects. There were only slight hints pointing to infantile onanism, or else the analysis did not go deep enough to throw light on this point. The birth of a second brother when she was between five and six years old had apparently no special influence upon her development. During school life and early adolescence she gradually became acquainted with the facts of sex and she received this knowledge with lubricity and shocked aversion, a reaction which might be called normal and not exaggerated. This amount of information seems meagre enough, nor can I guarantee that it is complete. It may be that the history of her youth was, in reality, richer in experiences; I do not know. As I have already said, the analysis was broken off after a short time, and yielded therefore an anamnesis not much more reliable than the other anamneses of homosexuals, which there is good cause to question. Further, the girl had never been neurotic, and came to the analysis without any hysterical symptom, so that one could not so soon find reasons for investigating the history of her childhood.

At the age of thirteen to fourteen she displayed a tender and, according to general opinion, exaggeratedly strong affection for a small boy, not quite three years old, whom she used to see regularly in a playground of one of the parks. She took to the child so warmly that in consequence a lasting friendly relationship sprang up between herself and his parents. One may infer from this episode that at that time she was possessed of a strong desire to be a mother herself and to have a child. However, after a short time she grew indifferent to the boy and began to take an interest in mature, but still youthful, women, the manifestations of which soon led to a painful chastisement being administered by her father.

The fact was established beyond doubt that this change occurred simultaneously with a certain event in the family, and one may

¹ I do not see any progress or advantage in the introduction of the term "Electra-complex", and do not advocate its use.

therefore look to this for some explanation of the change. Before it happened, her libido was focussed on motherhood, while afterwards she was a homosexual attracted to mature women, and remained so ever since. The event referred to, which is so significant for our understanding of the case, was a further pregnancy of her mother, and the birth of a third brother, when she was about sixteen.

The concatenation I shall now proceed to discover is not a product of my synthetizing faculty; it is based on such trustworthy analytical evidence that I can claim objective validity for it; it was in particular a series of inter-related dreams, easy of interpretation, that proved decisive in this respect.

The analysis revealed beyond all shadow of doubt that the beloved lady was a substitute for — the mother. It is true that she herself was not a mother, but then she was not the girl's first love. The first objects of her affection after the birth of her youngest brother were really mothers, women between thirty and thirty-five whom she had got to know with their children during summer holidays or in the family circle in town. The "love-condition" of motherhood was later on given up because it proved incompatible in real life with another one, which grew more and more important. The specially intensive fixation on her latest love, the "Lady", had still another basis, which the girl discovered quite easily one day. The lady, on account of her slender figure, regular beauty, and off-hand manner, reminded her of her own brother, a little older than herself. Hence her latest choice corresponded not only with her feminine, but also with her masculine ideal; it combined the gratification of the homosexual tendency with that of the heterosexual one. It is well-known that analysis of male homosexuals has in numerous cases revealed the same combination, which should admonish us not to form too simple a conception of the nature and genesis of inversion, and not to forget the general bisexuality of mankind.

But how are we to understand the fact that it was the birth of a late-comer in the family, when the girl herself was already mature and had strong wishes of her own, that moved her to bestow her passionate tenderness upon the child-bearer, *i. e.* her own mother, and to express that feeling towards a substitute for her mother? From all that we know we should have expected just the opposite. In such circumstances mothers, with daughters of

about a marriageable age, usually feel embarrassed in regard to them, while the daughters are apt to feel for their mothers a mixture of compassion, contempt, and envy which certainly does not help to increase their tenderness for them. The girl we are considering had little cause in general to feel affection for her mother. The latter, still youthful herself, saw in her rapidly-developing daughter an inconvenient competitor; she favoured the boys at her expense, limited her independence as much as possible, and kept a strict watch that the girl should not be too much with her father. A yearning for a kinder mother would therefore have been all along quite intelligible, but why it should have flamed up just then, and in the form of a consuming passion, is not comprehensible.

The explanation is as follows: When the girl suffered her disappointment, she was just experiencing the revival of the infantile Oedipus-complex so common at puberty. She was keenly conscious of the wish to have a child, and a male one; that it was to be from her father, and in his image, her consciousness was not allowed to know. And then: it was not she who bore the child, but the unconsciously hated rival, her mother. Exasperated and embittered, she turned away from the father, and from men altogether. After this first great reverse she foreswore her womanhood, and sought another goal for her libido.

: In doing so she behaved just as many men do, who after a first painful experience turn their backs for ever upon the faithless sex and become woman-haters. It is related of one of the most attractive and unfortunate princes of our time that he became a homosexual because the lady he was engaged to betrayed him with a stranger. I do not know whether this is true historically, but much psychological truth lies behind the rumour. In all of us, throughout life, the libido normally oscillates between the male and the female object; the bachelor gives up his men friends when he marries, and returns to club-life when married life has lost its savour. Naturally, when the swing over is fundamental and final, we suspect some special factor which has definitely favoured one side or the other, and which perhaps only waited for the appropriate moment in order to bend the choice of object in its direction.

After her disappointment, therefore, the girl had rejected entirely her wish for a child, the love of man, and femininity

altogether. Evidently at this point the possible developments were very manifold; what actually happened was the most extreme possible. She changed into a man, and took her mother in place of her father as her love-object¹. Her relation to her mother had certainly been ambivalent from the beginning, and it proved easy to revive her earlier love for her mother and with its help to over-compensate for her current hostility. Since there was little to be done with the real mother, there arose from the conversion of feeling just described the search for a mother-substitute to whom she could become passionately attached².

From her actual relations to her mother there arose a practical motive furthering the change of feeling, one which perhaps might be called an "advantage of illness" (*Krankheitsgewinn*). The mother herself still attached great value to the attentions and the admiration of men. If, then, the girl became homosexual and left the men to her mother (in other words "evaded the mother"), she removed something which had hitherto been partly responsible for her mother's disfavour³.

¹ It is by no means rare for a love relation to be broken off by means of a process of identification on the part of the lover with the loved object, a process equivalent to a kind of regression to narcissism. After this has been accomplished, it is easy in making a fresh choice of object to apply the libido to a member of the sex opposite to that of the earlier choice.

² The displacements of the libido here described are doubtless familiar to every analyst from the investigation of the anamneses of neurotics. With the latter, however, they occur in early childhood, with the beginning of the love-life; with our patient, who was in no way neurotic, they took place in the first years following puberty, though, by the way, they similarly were wholly unconscious. Perhaps one day this temporal factor may turn out to be of great import.

³ As "evasion" has not previously been mentioned among the causes of homosexuality, or in the mechanism of libido-fixation in general, I will add a similar analytical observation, which has a special feature of interest. I once knew two twin brothers, both of whom were endowed with strong libidinous impulses. One of them was very successful with women and had innumerable affairs with women and girls. The other went the same way at first, but it became unpleasant for him to be trespassing on his brother's beat, and, owing to the likeness between them, to be mistaken for him on intimate occasions, so he got out of the difficulty by becoming homosexual. He left the women, and thus got out of the latter's way ("evaded" him).

Another time I treated a young man, an artist, unmistakably bisexual in disposition, in whom the homosexual trend had won the day simultaneously with a disturbance in his work. He fled from both women and work together.

The attitude of the libido thus adopted was greatly reinforced as soon as the girl perceived how much it displeased the father. Since she was first punished for an over-affectionate overture made to a woman, she realized how she could hurt her father and take revenge on him. Henceforth she remained homosexual out of defiance against her father. Nor did she scruple to lie to him and to deceive him in every way. Towards her mother, indeed, she was only so far deceitful as was necessary to keep her father in the dark. I had the impression that her behaviour followed the principle of the satire: If you have betrayed me, you must put up with my betraying you. Nor can I come to any other conclusion about the striking lack of precaution displayed by this otherwise ingenious and clever girl. She *wanted* her father to know occasionally of her intercourse with the lady, otherwise it would mean her missing the satisfaction of her keenest desire — namely, revenge. So she saw to this by showing herself openly in the company of her adored friend, by taking walks in the streets near her father's place of business, and the like. This maladroitness was by no means unintentional. It was strange, by the way, that both parents behaved as though they understood the secret psychology of their daughter. The mother was tolerant, as though she appreciated as a kindness her daughter's withdrawal from the arena ("evasion"): the father was furious, as though he realized the deliberate revenge directed against himself.

The girl's inversion, however, received its final reinforcement when she found in her "lady" an object which promised to satisfy

The analysis, which was able to bring him back to both, showed that the fear of the father was the most powerful psychic motive for both the disturbances — which were, really, renunciations. In his imagination all women belonged to the father, and he sought refuge in men from the impulse to give way, so as to "evade" conflict with the father. Such motivation of the homosexual object-choice must be by no means uncommon; in the primæval ages of race all women presumably belonged to the father and head of the tribe.

Among brothers and sisters who are not twins this "evasion" plays a great part in other spheres as well as in that of the love-choice. For example, the elder brother studies music and is admired for it; the younger, far more gifted musically, soon gives up his own musical studies, in spite of his longing, and cannot be persuaded to touch an instrument again. This is one example of a very frequent occurrence, and the investigation of the motives leading to "evasion" rather than to open rivalry discloses very complicated psychical conditions.

not only her homosexual tendency, but also that part of her heterosexual libido still attached to her brother.

III.

Consecutive presentation is not a very adequate means of describing complicated mental processes going on in different layers of the mind. I am therefore obliged to pause in the discussion of the case and treat more fully and deeply some of the points brought forward above.

I mentioned the fact that the girl's relation to her adored lady resembled that characteristic of the masculine type of love. Her humility and her tender lack of pretension "*che poco spera e nulla chiede*", her bliss when she was allowed to accompany the lady a little way and to kiss her hand on parting, her joy when she heard her praised as beautiful — anyone else's recognition of her own beauty meaning nothing at all to her —, her pilgrimages to places once visited by the loved one, the oblivion of all more sensual wishes: all these little traits in her resembled the first enthusiastic passion of a youth for a celebrated actress whom he regards as far above him, to whom he scarcely dares lift his bashful eyes. The correspondence with the "type of masculine object-choice" I have previously described, whose special features I traced to the attachment to the mother¹, held good even in the details. It may seem remarkable that she was not in the least repelled by the evil reputation of her beloved one, although her own observations sufficiently confirmed the truth of such rumours. She was after all a well brought-up and modest girl, who had avoided sexual adventures herself, and who regarded coarsely sensual gratification as unaesthetic. But already her first passions had been for women who were not celebrated for specially strict propriety. The first protest her father made against her love-choice had been evoked by the pertinacity with which she sought the company of a cinematograph actress at a summer resort. In all these affairs it had never been a question of women who had any reputation for homosexuality, and who might, therefore, have offered her some prospect of homosexual gratification; on the contrary, she illogically courted women who were coquettes in the

¹ Sammlung kl. Schriften zur Neurosenlehre, 4. Folge, 1918.

ordinary sense of the word, and she rejected without hesitation the willing advances made by a homosexual friend of her own age. The "lady's" bad reputation, however, was positively a "love-condition" for her, and all that is enigmatical in this attitude vanishes when we remember that in the case also of the masculine type of object-choice derived from the mother it is an essential condition that the loved object should be somehow or other "in bad repute sexually", one who really may be called a *cocotte*. When the girl learnt later on how far the evil reputation of her adored lady was justified and that she lived simply from the giving of bodily favours, her reaction consisted in great compassion and in the development of phantasies and plans for "rescuing" her beloved from these ignoble circumstances. We have been struck by the same "rescuing" endeavours in the men of the type referred to above, and in my description of it I have tried to give the analytical derivation of this tendency.

We are led to quite another realm of explanation by the analysis of the attempt at suicide, which I must regard as seriously intended, and which, by the way, considerably improved her position both with her parents and with the beloved lady. She went for a walk with her one day in a neighbourhood and at an hour at which she was not unlikely to meet her father on his way from his office. So it turned out. Her father passed them in the street and cast a furious look at her and her companion, who was known to him. A few moments later she flung herself on to the railway cutting. The explanation she gave of the more intimate factors determining her resolution sounded quite plausible. She had confessed to the lady that the gentleman who had given them such an irate glance was her father, and that he had absolutely forbidden their friendship. The lady flared up at this and ordered the girl to leave her then and there, and never again to wait for her or to address her, as the affair must now come to a close. In despair that she had now lost her loved one for ever, the girl wanted to put an end to herself. The analysis, however, was able to disclose another, and deeper, interpretation behind the one she gave, and to confirm it by investigation of her dreams. The attempted suicide was, as might have been expected, determined by two other factors: a "punishment-fulfilment" (self-punishment), and a wish-fulfilment. The latter signified the attainment of the same wish the disappointment of which had driven her

into homosexuality — namely, the wish to have a child by her father, for now she “fell”¹ through her father’s fault².

The fact that at this moment the lady had spoken to the same effect as the father had, and had uttered the same prohibition, forms the connecting link between this deeper interpretation and the superficial one of which the girl herself was conscious. From the point of view of self-punishment the girl’s action proves that she had developed in her unconscious strong death-wishes against one or other of her parents: perhaps against her father, out of revenge for his impeding her love; or, more likely, against her mother also when she was pregnant with the little brother. For analysis has thrown the following light on the enigma of suicide: probably no one finds enough psychical energy to kill himself unless, in the first place, he in doing so is at the same time killing an object with whom he has identified himself, and, in the second place, is turning against himself a death-wish which had been directed against someone else. Nor need the regular discovery of these unconscious death-wishes in would-be suicides surprise us as strange (any more than it need make an impression as confirming our deductions), since the unconscious of all human beings is full enough of such death-wishes, even against those we love³. In the girl’s identification with her mother who ought to have died at the birth of the child denied to herself, this “punishment-fulfilment” itself is again a “wish-fulfilment”. Lastly, the fact that the most manifold strong motives must have cooperated to make possible such a deed is quite in keeping with what we would expect.

In the girl’s account of her conscious motives the father did not figure at all; even her fear of his anger was not mentioned. In the motivation laid bare by the analysis he played the principal part. Her relation to her father had the same decisive importance for the course and outcome of the analytic treatment, or rather exploration. Behind the pretended consideration for her parents, for whose sake she had been willing to make the attempt to be

¹ [In the text there is a play on the word “niederkommen”, which means both “to fall” and “to be delivered of a child”. Transl.]

² That the various means of suicide can represent sexual wish-fulfillments has long been known to all analysts. (To poison = to be pregnant; to drown = to bear a child; to throw oneself from a height = to be delivered of a child.) I do not know where they were first published.

³ Cp. “Zeitgemäßes über Krieg und Tod”, *Imago*.

transformed, was concealed the attitude of defiance and revenge against the father which bound her to homosexuality. Secure under this cover, the resistance left a considerable sphere free for analytic investigation. The analysis went forward almost without any signs of resistance, the patient actively participating intellectually, though absolutely tranquil emotionally. Once when I expounded to her a specially important part of the theory, one touching her nearly, she replied in an inimitable tone, "Oh, how interesting", as though she were a *grande dame* being taken over a museum and glancing through her lorgnon at objects to which she was completely indifferent. The impression one had of her analysis was not unlike that of an hypnotic treatment, where the resistance has in the same way withdrawn to a certain limit beyond which it then proves to be unconquerable. The resistance very often pursues similar tactics — Russian tactics, as they might be called — in cases of the obsessional neurosis, which for this reason yield the clearest results for a time and permit of a penetrating glimpse into the causation of the symptoms. One begins to wonder how it is that such marked progress in understanding of the analytic procedure can be unaccompanied by even the slightest change in the patient's compulsions and inhibitions, until at last one perceives that everything accomplished had been admitted only under the mental reservation of doubt¹, and behind this protective barrier the neurosis may feel secure. "It would be all very fine", thinks the patient, often quite consciously, "if I were obliged to believe what the man says, but there is no question of that, and so long as that is not so I need change nothing". Then, when one comes to close quarters with the motivation of this doubt, the fight with the resistances breaks forth in earnest.

In the case of our patient, it was not doubt, but the affective factor of revenge on her father that made her cool reserve possible, divided the analysis into two distinct stages, and rendered the results of the first stage so complete and perspicuous. It seemed, further, as though nothing resembling a transference to the doctor had been brought about. That, however, is of course absurd, or, at least, a loose way of expressing it; for some kind of relation to the doctor must come about, and this is mostly transferred from an infantile one. In reality she transferred to me the deep antipathy to men which had dominated her ever since the disappoint-

¹ [i. e. believed on condition that it is regarded as not certain. Transl.]

ment she had experienced through her father. Bitterness against men is as a rule easy to gratify with the doctor; it need not evoke any violent emotional manifestations, it simply expresses itself in rendering futile all his endeavours and in clinging to the neurosis. I know from experience how difficult it is to get the patient to understand just this mute kind of symptom and to make her aware of this latent, and often excessively strong, hostility without endangering the treatment. So I broke it off as soon as I recognized the girl's attitude to her father, and gave the advice that, if it was thought worth while to continue the therapeutic efforts, they should be carried out by a woman doctor. The girl had in the meanwhile promised her father that at any rate she would not communicate with the "lady", and I do not know whether my advice, the motive for which is evident, will be followed.

Only once in the course of this analysis did anything appear which I could regard as a positive transference, as a greatly weakened revival of the original passionate love for the father. Even this manifestation was not quite free from other motives, but I mention it because it brings up, in another direction, an interesting problem of analytic technique. At a certain period, not long after the treatment had begun, the girl brought a series of dreams which, distorted as is customary, and couched in the usual dream language, could nevertheless be easily translated with certainty. Their content, when interpreted, was, however, striking. They anticipated the cure of the inversion through the treatment, expressed her joy over the prospects in life then opened to her, confessed her longing for a man's love and for children, and so might be welcomed as a gratifying preparation for the desired change. The contradiction between them and the girl's utterances in waking life at the same time as them was very great. She did not conceal from me that she meant to marry, but only in order to escape from her father's tyranny and to follow her true inclinations undisturbed. As for the husband, she remarked rather contemptuously, she would easily deal with him, and besides, one could have sexual relations with a man and a woman at one and the same time, as the example of the adored lady showed. Warned through some slight impression or other, I told her one day that I did not believe these dreams, that I regarded them as false or hypocritical, and that she intended to deceive me just as she used to deceive her father. I was right: after this exposition this kind

of dream ceased. But I still believe that, besides the intention to mislead me, the dreams partly expressed the wish to win my favour; it was also an attempt to gain my interest and my good opinion — perhaps in order to disappoint me all the more thoroughly later on.

I can imagine that to indicate the existence of lying dreams of this kind, destined to please the analyst, will arouse in some readers who call themselves analysts a real storm of helpless indignation. "What", they will exclaim, "so the unconscious, the real centre of our mental life, the part of us that is so much nearer the divine than our poor consciousness, so that too can lie! Then how can we still build on the interpretations of analysis and the accuracy of our findings?" To which one must reply that the recognition of these lying dreams, a staggering surprise, signifies nothing. I know, indeed, that the craving of mankind for mysticism is ineradicable, and that it makes ceaseless efforts to win back for mysticism the sphere lost to it through the "*Traumdeutung*", but in the case under consideration surely everything is simple enough. The dream is not the unconscious itself; it is the form into which a thought from the preconscious, or even from waking conscious life, can, thanks to the favouring conditions of sleep, be recast. During sleep this thought has been reinforced by unconscious wish-excitations and thus experienced distortion through the "dream-work", which is determined by the mechanisms valid for the unconscious. With our dreamer, the intention to mislead me, just as she used to her father, certainly emanated from the preconscious, or perhaps even from consciousness; it could come to expression by entering into connection with the unconscious wish-impulse to please the father (or father-substitute), and in this way created a lying dream. The two intentions, to betray and to please the father, originated in the same complex; the former resulted from the repression of the latter, and the later one was reduced by the dream-work to the earlier one. There can therefore be no question of any devaluation of the unconscious, nor of a shaking of our confidence in the results of our analysis.

I will not miss this opportunity of expressing for once my astonishment that human beings can go through such great and momentous phases of their love-life without heeding them much, — even, indeed, without having the faintest notion of them: or else that, when they do become aware of these phases, they

deceive themselves so thoroughly in their judgement of them. This happens not only with neurotics, where we are familiar with the phenomena, but seems also to be common enough elsewhere. In the present case, for example, a girl develops a devotion for women, which her parents at first find merely vexatious and hardly take seriously. She herself knows quite well that her feelings are greatly engaged, but still she is only slightly aware of the sensations of intense love until a certain disappointment is followed by an absolutely excessive reaction, which shows everyone concerned that they have to do with a consuming passion of elemental strength. Even the girl herself had never perceived anything of the conditions necessary for the outbreak of such a mental upheaval. In other cases we come across girls or women in a state of severe depression, who on being asked for a possible cause of their condition tell us that they have, it is true, had a little feeling for a certain person, but that it was nothing deep and that they soon got over it when they had to give up hope. And yet it was this renunciation, apparently so easily borne, that became the cause of serious mental disturbance. Again, we have to do with men who have passed through casual love-affairs and then realize only from the sequelae that they had been passionately in love with someone whom they had apparently regarded lightly. One is also astonished at the unsuspected results that may follow on an artificial abortion which had been decided upon remorselessly and without scruple. One must agree that poets are right when they are fond of portraying people who love without knowing it, or are uncertain whether they do love, or think that they hate when in reality they love. It would seem that the information our consciousness receives of our love-life is especially liable to be incomplete, full of gaps, or falsified. Needless to say, in this discussion I have not omitted to allow for the part played by subsequent forgetting.

IV.

I now come back, after this digression, to the consideration of my patient's case. We have made a survey of the forces which led the girl's libido from the normal Oedipus attitude into that of homosexuality, and of the psychical paths thus traversed. Most important in this respect was the impression made by the birth

of her little brother, and we might from this be inclined to classify the case as one of late acquired inversion.

But at this point we become aware of a relation which also confronts us in many other instances of light thrown by psycho-analysis on a mental process. So long as we trace the development from its final stage backwards, the connection appears continuous, and we feel we have gained an insight which is completely satisfactory or even exhaustive. But if we proceed the reverse way, if we start from the premises inferred from the analysis and try to follow these up to the final result, then we no longer get the impression of an inevitable sequence of events which could not be otherwise determined. We notice at once that there might have been another result, and that we might have been just as able to understand and explain the latter. The synthesis is thus not so satisfactory as the analysis; in other words, from a knowledge of the premises we could not have foretold the nature of the result.

It is very easy to account for this disturbing state of affairs. Even supposing that we thoroughly know the aetiological factors that decide a given result, still we know them only qualitatively, not as to their relative strength. Some of them are so weak as to become suppressed by others, and therefore do not affect the final result. But we never know beforehand which of the determining factors will prove the weaker or the stronger. We only say at the end that those which succeeded must have been the stronger. Hence it is always possible in the direction of the analysis to recognise with certainty the causation, the prediction of which, however, in the direction of the synthesis is impossible.

- We will not, therefore, maintain that every girl who experiences a disappointment of this kind in the love-longing that emanates from the Oedipus attitude of puberty necessarily on that account falls a victim to homosexuality. On the contrary, other kinds of reaction to this trauma are probably commoner. Then, however, there must have been present in the girl special factors that turned the scale, factors apart from the trauma, probably of an internal nature. Nor is there any difficulty in pointing them out.

It is well known that even in the normal person it takes a certain time before the decision as to the sex of the love-object finally achieves the mastery. Homosexual enthusiasms, as well as unduly strong friendships tinged with sensuality, are common enough in both sexes during the first years after puberty. This

was also so with our patient, but in her these tendencies undoubtedly showed themselves stronger and lasted longer than with other girls. In addition, these presages of later homosexuality had always occupied her conscious life, while the attitude arising from the Oedipus complex had remained unconscious and had appeared only in such signs as her tender fondling of the little boy. As a school-girl she was for a long time in love with a strict and unapproachable mistress, obviously a mother-substitute. For a long time before the birth of her brother and still longer before her first rebuff at the hands of her father, she had taken a specially keen interest in various young mothers. From very early years, therefore, her libido had flowed in two streams, the more superficial one of which may unhesitatingly be designated as homosexual. This latter was probably the direct and unchanged continuation of an infantile mother-fixation. Possibly the analysis revealed nothing but the process which, given the appropriate occasion, guided also the deeper heterosexual libido-stream into the manifest homosexual one.

The analysis showed, further, that the girl had suffered from childhood from a strongly-marked "masculine complex". A spirited and pugnacious girl, not at all prepared to be second to her slightly older brother, she had, after inspecting his genital organs, developed a pronounced envy of the penis, and the thoughts derived from this envy still continued to fill her mind. Really she was a feminist, she felt it to be unjust that girls should not enjoy the same freedom as boys, and rebelled against the lot of woman in general. At the time of the analysis she regarded the ideas of pregnancy and child-birth as disagreeable, partly, I surmise, on account of the bodily disfigurement connected with them. Her girlish narcissism withdrew into this repudiation¹, and ceased to express itself as pride in her good looks. Various clues indicated that she must formerly have taken great pleasure in exhibitionism and "observationism". Whoever is anxious not to curtail the claims of environment in aetiology, as opposed to those of heredity, will call attention to the fact that the girl's behaviour, as described above, was exactly what would follow from the combined effect of the two influences of maternal indifference and the comparing of her genital organs with her brother's, in a person with a strong mother-fixation. It is also possible here to trace back to the

¹ Cp. Kriemhilde's confession in the *Nibelungenlied*.

impression of an effective external influence in early life something which one would have been ready to regard as a constitutional peculiarity. A part of this acquired disposition, if it has really been acquired, has to be ascribed to the inborn constitution. So we see in practice a continual mingling and blending of what in theory we would separate into a pair of opposites — namely inherited and acquired factors.

An earlier, tentative conclusion to the analysis might have led to the view that this was a case of late-acquired homosexuality, but the further investigation of the material impels us to conclude that it is rather a case of inborn homosexuality which, as usual, became fixed and unmistakably manifest only in the period following puberty. Each of these classifications does justice to only one part of the state of affairs ascertainable by observation, but neglects the other. It would be best not to attach too much value to this way of stating the problem.

Publications on homosexuality usually do not distinguish clearly enough between the questions of the choice of object, on the one hand, and of the sexual characteristics and sexual attitude on the other, as though the answer to the former necessarily involved the answers to the latter. Experience, however, proves the contrary: a man with predominantly male characteristics and also masculine in his love-life may still be inverted in respect to his object, loving only men instead of women. A man in whose character feminine attributes evidently predominate, who may, indeed, behave in love as a woman, might be expected, from this feminine attitude, to choose a man for his love-object; but he may nevertheless be heterosexual, and show no more inversion in respect of his object than an average normal man. The same is true of women; here also psychical sexual character and object-choice do not necessarily coincide. The mystery of homosexuality is therefore by no means so simple as is commonly depicted in popular expositions: a feminine personality, which therefore has to love a man, unhappily attached to a male body; or a masculine personality, irresistibly attracted by women, unfortunately cemented to a female body. It is rather a question of three series of characteristics, namely —

Somatic sexual characteristics — Psychical sexual characteristics
 (physical hermaphroditism) —, (masculine, or feminine, attitude)
 Kind of object-choice,

which, up to a certain point, vary independently of one another, and are met with in different individuals in manifold permutations. Tendencious publications have obscured our view of this inter-relationship through their putting into the foreground, from practical motives, the third feature (the kind of object-choice), which is the only one that strikes the layman, and in addition exaggerating the closeness of the association between this and the first feature. Further, they block the way leading to a deeper insight into all that is uniformly designated as homosexuality by oppugning two fundamental facts which have been revealed by psycho-analytic investigation. The first of these is that homosexual men have experienced a specially strong fixation in regard to the mother; the second, that, in addition to their manifest heterosexuality, a very considerable measure of latent or unconscious homosexuality can be detected in all normal people. If we take these findings into account, then the supposition that nature in a freakish mood created a "third sex" undoubtedly falls to the ground.

It is not for psycho-analysis to solve the problem of homosexuality. It must rest content with disclosing the psychical mechanisms that resulted in determination of the object-choice, and with tracing the paths leading from them to the instinctive basis of the disposition. There its work ends, and it leaves the rest to biological investigation, which has recently brought to light, through Steinach's researches, such very important results concerning the influence exerted by the first factor mentioned above on the second and third. Psycho-analysis has a common basis with biology, in that it presupposes an original bisexuality of human beings (as of animals). But psycho-analysis cannot elucidate the intrinsic nature of what in conventional or in biological phraseology is termed "masculine" and "feminine": it simply takes over the two concepts and makes them the foundation of its work. When we attempt to reduce them further, we find masculinity vanishing into activity and femininity into passivity, and that does not tell us enough. In what has gone before I have tried to explain how far we may reasonably expect, or how far experience has already proved, that the elucidations yielded by analysis furnish us with the means for altering inversion. When one compares the extent to which we can influence it with the remarkable transformations that Steinach has effected in some

cases by his operations, it does not make a very imposing impression. Still it would be premature or a harmful exaggeration were we at this stage to indulge in hopes of a "therapy" of inversion that could be generally used. The cases of male homosexuality in which Steinach has been successful fulfilled the condition, which is not always present, of a very patent somatic "hermaphrodisism". Any analogous treatment of female homosexuality is at present quite obscure. If it were to consist in removing the probably hermaphroditic ovaries, and in implanting other ones of a single sex, there would be little prospect of its being applied in practice. A woman who has felt herself to be a man, and has loved in masculine fashion, will hardly let herself be forced into playing the part of a woman when she must pay for this transformation, which is not in every way advantageous, by renouncing all hope of motherhood.