

Document

‘ANAL’ AND ‘SEXUAL’¹

Lou Andreas-Salomé (1916)

I

For some time now, it has become almost common practice to view the Vienna School’s emphasis on regressions to the anal stage as a kind of backwardness – as if, instead of moving on to an objective discussion of actual problems, one insisted on delving into the most unpleasant family gossip. This gives us all the more reason to believe, however, that it is precisely this point, perhaps more than any other, that still awaits a final resolution – not least because it is the point people most often fall back on when vilifying Freud for bringing up the sexual factor. His notion of ‘infantile sexuality’ especially has always raised a great deal of resistance, but it still calls forth less revulsion than anal sexuality. Indeed, while in the first case the outrage is directed at the offensiveness of sully the child’s demonstrations of tenderness with the word ‘sexual,’ in the second case it is the reviled sexuality itself that is sullied through reference to the anal. In a similar vein, the caresses lavished by the child upon its parents are regarded sentimentally and are permitted without constraint, while this other domain has ‘Ew!’ (*Pfui*) emblazoned across it from the very start. This first prohibition (*erstes Verbot*) that we have to assimilate into our sense of self marks, for each of us, the beginning of

1. This article was originally published as “‘Anal’ und ‘Sexual’” in *Imago: Zeitschrift für Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf die Geisteswissenschaften*, IV/5 (1916), pp. 249–73. Translated from the German by Nina Hausmann, S. Pearl Brilmyer, Filippo Trentin, Matt ffytche, and Melanie Adley, with thanks to Dagmar Herzog, Michael Molnar, and Catherine Gurr for their assistance.

LOU ANDREAS-SALOMÉ (1861–1937) was a psychoanalyst, novelist, and essayist. She was born and raised in Russia, but spent the majority of her life in Germany, where a meeting with Freud persuaded her to travel to Vienna to undertake the study of psychoanalysis. She is the author of studies of Ibsen, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Freud, along with several novels and works on sexuality.

a meaningful, momentous personal history. The obligation to suppress the drive (*Zwang zur Triebenthaltung*) and to practice cleanliness becomes the starting point for acquiring a sense of disgust – disgust as such – which, from now on, will never fade completely, neither from our upbringing nor from the way we live our lives. This, in turn, suggests that some interesting insights may lie concealed behind the normal disgust and resistance we feel, not least because one hesitates to look for them in this area – similar to the way in which the neurotic's pathological resistances conceal insights that need to be revealed for healing to take place, by opening one's eyes to what is. It thus may be that precisely this stage, which normally, as a result of our practical experience and achievements, appears to be the first that we outgrow, is also the one in which many a late fruit may yet ripen to our knowledge.

It would be hard to overestimate how important it is that when we hear that first 'Ew!', we are as yet barely aware of ourselves, of our existence. It is a time when our own impulses (*Triebregungen*) appear still undefined against the world around us, and we begin to experience them as our own mainly because we are prohibited from following them, and forced to comply, and this experience awakens us to a sense of ourselves. Admittedly, in this earliest stage of our life, there is another context in which we could be said to be forbidden from doing something, namely feeding, which is also subject to regulation, but in this case the denial is more passive, a mere inability to achieve gratification. Here, by contrast, the newborn not only comes up against a boundary that suddenly and disappointingly shuts it off from the external world that it had previously been a part of, but it is also made to act in a very peculiar manner, against itself, by setting up a boundary within its own impulse. Through control of the anal urge, it carries out the first true 'repression' (*Verdrängung*) upon itself. If one were to take these almost purely biological processes and read them through the psychological terminology more appropriate to later mental relationships, one might say that it is striking how the embryonic ego first emerges under the pressure of 'asceticism,' and that this is what most decisively distinguishes its initial growth from the drive impulses (*Triebreize*) proliferating around it. For it is only in being thrown back upon itself – through this most primitive exercise of ego upon drive impulse – that the experience of dealing with the stimulus of the drive, by holding back or by giving away, moves a shade closer to the conscious and personal.

Typically, Freud's remarks were greeted with laughter when he drew attention to the anal pleasure the infant derives from retaining its stool. And yet it is this pleasure, through which the little ego first shows itself to be master of the situation, that began with a suppression (*Unterdrückung*). By bringing a positive element of auto-erotic joy to the external compulsion to negate its drive, anal pleasure reunites the child with its criticized bodily life. The experience of anal pleasure reconciles the ego with the drive and the drive with the ego; but now the drive is no longer a mere involuntary process, it is brought nearer to consciousness: the sense of pleasure derives from a state of tension. Thus the human ego finds itself inserted into a nexus of conflicting elementary forces where it works as a balancing agent

between external constraints and internal urges, mediating between opposite poles which, through their opposition, enable the ego to unfold by forcing it to express the fundamental unity of desire and denial, what is and what ought to be, or – if to these somewhat anticipatory terms one would like to add that most emphatic pair of opposites, which in later development becomes the greatest antithesis of all – ‘body’ and ‘mind.’

As we learn to stand up to ourselves through prohibition, and as we come back to a more emphatic sense of ourselves through anal pleasure, an ambivalence arises in our relation to the environment. Prohibition and punishment rupture the complete, reciprocal unity of world and individual (*Einzelgeschöpf*): it has been shown early on by Freud and, after him, Ferenczi and Jones, how out of this primal libidinal disappointment the first drops of hate emerge to poison the necessary and seemingly harmless wound. Among the traits that Freud attributes to the anal character, two – obstinacy and parsimony – are directed against the outside world that broke with us and rose up against us as an Other from which we sought to escape into selfhood (*Egoität*) in order to save our own skin and carry the selfish pleasure into safety. The third trait of the anal character – extreme orderliness, which can also take the form of extreme moral rectitude (a kind of moral compulsive washing) – not only turns against the outside world but internalizes the duality as well, because we have come to feel ambiguous about the anal pleasure which, although sublimated, remains intact in obstinacy and parsimony. Let us compare this with another expression of libido in infancy, one which is oriented differently and takes as its erotogenic zone the other bodily aperture, the mouth: in this case, the infant (normally) finds itself welcomed, loved and cherished without ambiguity or protest. This expression of libido, which ultimately comes down to ‘incest,’ makes its first appearance in an atmosphere of sunshine and bliss, untroubled by the many murky shadows cast by the ‘education of the sphincter.’ To be sure, hate eventually establishes itself in incestuous love as well, but this occurs at one remove, as it were, often as a result of the magnifications of the neurotic’s guilt phantasies. Before there was hate, the mouth had encountered the breast in a seeming identity of ego and outside world, an identity which much later will hover above every new object cathexis like some primal memory, endowing it with a sense of reunion. This primal sense of being one with the parent (the mother) may well shine down into the ultimate depths of life, activating the forces that form religions and that support the hope and faith of being a ‘child of God,’ while the anal libido, overshadowed by the hateful primal experience of separation and individuation – demonized, so to say, at its root – must have as its starting point the dogma of protest: ‘I am not one with the father (the mother).’

In the first case, we learn to return to the object in loving reunion; in the second, however, a fundamental encounter with something alien is necessary for us to develop a sense of the world as an other, an object. And this, in turn, is the starting point for a third path to establishing a relationship to the world, the path by which the child arrives at one of the most important relationships in its life, for its anal eroticism enables it to become a progenitor and achieve ‘parental power.’ As the

child sees parts of itself transformed into objects in the outside world without being itself diminished, the separated world is gifted back to it in a union that is even more intense than in the encounter of mouth and breast, when the object meets the subject compliantly. The significance of our earliest impressions, first identified by Freud, has become more and more apparent thanks to psychoanalysis, which has gradually uncovered their underlying connections to the nature of all production, including intellectual as well as artistic activity. And if, to people's outrage, Freud has consistently emphasized children's fundamental curiosity about the problem of reproduction, then we may add that this curiosity arises not solely because reproduction raises specific material questions (e.g. when a younger sibling is born, etc.), but because children's intellect, their thirst for knowledge, their joy in shaping the world stand in a profound, primal relationship to it. The child's struggles make it painfully aware that world and ego are two, not one; pleasure and defiance reconcile it to this duality; as the child develops further, this reconciliation is denied it as it learns to feel 'shame' and 'disgust.' It is only thanks to Freud that we are beginning to discern something of the heights and depths from which the child is cast into the world of consciousness that it will inhabit in later years, seemingly oblivious to what it has overcome and what yet has marked it so deeply that its most intense experiences in later life are often no more than an echo of these violent, unfathomable, primal affects. If Freud assumes that the psychoses are libidinally fixated at earlier points of development than the neuroses, then perhaps the most serious illnesses are those in whose depths and abysses such memories stir, which, mute to our understanding, rise up with dead faces. But even within the most normal, average existence, influences from that sphere continually arise which never become conscious to us because they remain peripheral to all of our other activities: not only do we conventionally hide them from others – within ourselves, too, they are excluded from the society of respectable interests, and cannot make themselves felt in any direct way.

For the first rebuke (*Verpönung*) does more than set the small child straight, it also prohibits every sense of pleasure deriving from the regulated anal activity, thus summarily devaluing the entire zone: we can no longer feel good about it nor think well of it. If the child is able to cope with the ever-encroaching demands for self-control and self-negation, this is because it has had to distinguish itself early on from certain processes taking place within it – indeed, from entire provinces of its corporeality – until it had learned how to carry out reductions on its personal property without casting itself into doubt. The child experiences shame and disgust without harm insofar as it feels itself to be not only the doer of its deeds or misdeeds but also something more than that: insofar as it can include within itself, besides its present contents – parts of which it rejects – a corresponding piece of the future. This is, as it were, a still empty outline of being, sketched by the hand of the parental authorities, but just as often under the direction of the incipient individual. The naive idealism of youth, at once so moving and so brazen, that unhesitatingly associates itself only with the highest standard it can conceive, must in like manner derive the confidence of its identifications from that source. For

although this idealism no doubt harks back to the ‘omnipotence of thoughts’ that characterizes the child’s mental constitution, whose power of wishing knows no bounds, it has normally experienced a sufficient number of years and disappointments to have lost some of its assurance. If youthful self-love nevertheless enthusiastically embraces the most exalted of ideals, then it may well draw its right to do so from the fact that it has performed excisions, has defended itself, has borne harm, and has broadened itself through renunciation.² That is, unless we are dealing with pathological reactions caused by a sense of being lacking or flawed, or with cases where the formation of the ideal results from delusional compensations – rather than natural processes of mental development in the course of which conflicts have been successfully overcome and our character has emerged more clearly in the light of greater awareness (although this light is often accompanied by the shadow of unresolved repressions). Just as the child’s anal pleasure ultimately derives from the tension of its self-resistance, so too all life progresses in a similar manner from one regeneration to the next. An analogy to this process may, after all, be found in biology, where that to which we give the name ‘life’ is characterized by such an alternation – that which becomes, that

2. This coincides with the opinion expressed in Freud’s ‘On Narcissism: An Introduction’ (1914), where he says on p. 94: ‘This ideal ego is now the target of the self-love which was enjoyed in childhood by the actual ego. The subject’s narcissism makes its appearance displaced on to this new ideal ego, which, like the infantile ego, finds itself possessed of every perfection that is of value. As always where the libido is concerned, man has here again shown himself incapable of giving up a satisfaction he had once enjoyed’ etc. We should not forget, however, that all we later understand to be self-love, including a conscious sense of self-contentment or vanity, must be distinguished from a primal form of narcissism that cannot yet distinguish between subject and object, which it perceives as one. For it seems to me that this is why it will at a later time be easy and possible for a person to idealize, that is, to amalgamate with themselves objective values of which they have become aware, but in which they do not yet partake, and to seek to direct reality toward an ideal: not only in compliance or resignation, but also in ‘libidinal excitation.’

The ‘conscience’ that Freud here describes as an observing agency that ‘constantly watches the actual ego’ sits on slightly different foundations, depending on whether it is predominantly an autocratic continuation of the ‘critical influence of his parents [...], to whom were added, as time went on, those who trained and taught him and the innumerable and indefinable host of all the other people in his environment – his fellow-men – and public opinion’ (p. 96) that inspired the ‘formation of an ego ideal,’ or whether this influence was ‘introjected,’ identified with the ego in such a way that it fosters the growth of a narcissistic libido. In the one case, this influence will receive a more moralistic and lawful character, even aspiring to the Kantian Imperative. In the other, it will be more religious and devoted, perhaps culminating in pious ecstasy. In pathological cases, the one will be indicated by the paraphrenia cited by Freud, wherein even the ego’s utmost core has been externalized to take the form of voices calling from the outside, such that ‘the evolution of conscience is reproduced regressively’ (p. 96), the other, by hysteria with its unbounded object-choices and identifications even with complete strangers. See Freud, S. (1914), ‘On Narcissism.’

which is able to expel a portion of itself, to be expelled in turn, to attract and assimilate that which is foreign.

While practically speaking, our education with regard to the anal sphere does not take long, in the figurative sense it retains a lasting significance. What is characteristic about it is not only that, from very early on – indeed, already on an almost purely physiological basis – it proves to have a psychological emphasis, but also, no less, the quite peculiar situation in which our later judgment places it. For on the one hand, it is more and more made out to be a vital process, beyond morality, inaccessible to praise or censure, and on the other hand, the anal sphere still evokes reactions of shame and disgust, which draw their severity from those early psychological processes that are not to be recalled – those associated with the anal pleasure we learned to rebuke and deny. Although no longer regarded in any but physical terms, the anal zone remains under a psychological ban all the same: for the simple reason that it is here – exclusively here – that the cause of disgust and shame has been transferred from the action and its agent to the material, to the object as such, so that, although we are no longer guilty of its taint, we still have to deal with it as if we did not deal with such things. This unique situation, this intersection of two types of judgment, this shift of accent from the person to the thing gives rise to that interesting hybrid, that curious, self-conscious, embarrassed type of contempt that is directed at everything anal: a contempt which along the way has effectively lost its moral pledge, but which remains associated with more than mere matter-of-fact disapproval or conventional disavowal. For the object of this contempt has, in its entirety, forever come to represent everything that is to be repudiated, everything that is discharged and must be eliminated from life, in contrast to life as that which confers value per se – which constitutes our very self. The closer to completion our education with regard to the anal comes practically speaking, the more it takes on a quasi-symbolic function. It must ineluctably – despite its representational association with blackness (*Schwärze*) – be rendered harmless as a drive, even more thoroughly than would have been possible by increasing its value or through a metaphorical recuperation. For even the most extreme disgust – that which arises, for example, from being soiled with excrement – is confined from this point on entirely to the physical-aesthetic sphere: it remains directed at something that is so utterly alien to ‘us,’ so far removed from ‘us’ that, even with direct contact, its stain can never touch our essence. Confronted with this iconic image of ‘impurity,’ with this object-as-metaphor, the living subject’s innocence in relation to it becomes as profound as with death; that is, with the event that, while common to all, inevitable for all, is not a ‘living experience’ for anyone, since it reduces each of us into that which ‘we’ are not: the eternally alien, non-life, the inorganic – anal matter (*der Stoff des Analen*).

In approaching the anal, therefore, the object of our analysis is twofold: a reality and a symbol. On the one hand, there are the early forms of bodily pleasure which in normal development are removed from this sphere and absorbed into more mature forms of sexuality. On the other hand, there is the allegorical elaboration (*gleichnishafte Verarbeitung*) of that which has already shed or evacuated its real

content, into a way of expressing rejection. A third possibility, which hangs fatefully between these two, may arise from their imprecise differentiation from one another, from confusing one with the other. This can happen either because the original prohibition directed at the child was made in too emphatic, too threatening a manner, to the extent that something of this fear and fright remains attached to the activity of drives which have long outgrown anal forms of pleasure, or because a part of this most infantile pleasure did indeed change sides and comes to inhibit later forms of sexuality, or, finally, because an unhealthy phantasy harks back to early experiences in order to find relief. In any case, our sex life is, in no small way, contingent upon the success of the separation between the lived experience of the anal in childhood, which persists in our later development, and the anal as the abiding image of something dirty and abject. If this separation fails in even a single respect – if the tiniest speck of symbolizing scorn taints that which is needed to live and develop, thus inspiring an inhibiting disgust – then precisely that which should be joyful, pleasurable or thrilling produces the opposite effect. ‘Seductive’ and ‘dirty’ end up irresolvably entangled. What is beautiful about life becomes what is suspect about it, precisely because it is beautiful: death indelibly taints life with a stain of decay. Henceforth, when these no longer legitimate drives assert themselves, they do not work in harmony with the other drives, for which they can never be anything but evil temptations; yet if they are entirely subdued, the entire being will be impoverished as a result. In most cases, the outcome will be a mix of both: the drives will assert themselves here and there, but they will be masked – hiding from disapproval, appearing in other guises in other places; it begins with secrecy, with the deception of other people, and it ends with dissimulation and disavowal before our own consciousness – all the degrees of compromise between drive and defense that Freud has uncovered. When pathologically intensified, this becomes a neurotic symptom, but even under normal circumstances it is present as a sense of guilt. While in the case of pathological symptoms the drive has been repressed to such a degree that no trace of it remains within our field of consciousness, and its masks are naively accepted as genuine faces, in the case of mere feelings of guilt we remain aware of our wishes and the ruses we employ, yet we see through them with a revulsion that, in a sense, places them outside of ourselves: we regard them with ‘remorse’ and seek ‘atonement’ to ‘cleanse’ ourselves of them, to shake them off.³

3. It is only at first glance that the sense of guilt seems to lack the essential, distinguishing trait of a neurotic symptom: that of compromise. It is not for nothing that precisely the neurotics, who are such masters at feeling guilty (no one more remorseful than they), have an incredibly inflated opinion of themselves, never far from the ‘God complex.’ It seems to me that there is more to this than overcompensation, namely, the fact that ‘being able to be guilty’ corresponds to a quite considerable arrogance, given that in this at least the ambivalently conflicted sense of self binds itself to the satisfaction of shaping destiny, as it were, of having spun a cruel fate. A healthy innocence will always think more humbly about the things that happen because of it. (Let us recall Hegel’s very fine phrase: ‘It is the honor of these great characters to be culpable.’)

It is well known that when it comes to neurotic symptoms, psychoanalysis often finds a sense of guilt lingering in the background that arises with apparent spontaneity on the most curious and harmless of occasions. This sense of guilt, albeit displaced onto substitutes, can be traced back to the impact of early prohibitions by which the small child found itself torn away from its naive belief in its omnipotence, leaving it sunk in a 'piercing sense of its own nothingness.' This alone, however, would not entirely account for the sense of guilt. All that it accounts for is the inevitable duality of our human existence, an existence we experience in the form of ego and consciousness, but which can only manifest itself in the context of the whole, because it is ultimately at the same time isolated in itself and one with everything. This duality of position – the most fundamental experience of which has been in relation to our parents, who both conceived us and, at the same time, separated us from them – this confluence of self-assertion and identification, of the emerging ego (*Ich Tendenz*) and the sexual drives, whatever you may want to call it; this ambivalence comes to be felt as a cause for guilt, but not of and by itself. We tend to believe that feelings of guilt emerge from acts that we have admitted to ourselves, and it may seem rather odd at first to point out that guilt only takes root where there is something unacknowledged, that one half of the antagonism must be withheld from consciousness before it can be relegated to the realm of absolute negation, its value denied. The classical analogy for this realm is, of course, the anal, within which we dare not recognize ourselves. To be sure, even without any specific 'sense of guilt,' there is enough war and conflict between the drives in every human being. And perhaps the richer, the broader one's personal disposition, the more guilt there is, and the more pain. Yet such pains need not destroy the integrity of one's character; on the contrary, they may even serve to bolster it. Insofar as not only the victorious, but also the defeated drives become painfully tangible, the whole self becomes more aware of its scope than would have been possible if left in peace. Between pleasure and loss, the self achieves a greater intensity of life – it gains a fresh and more complete awareness of itself (through a similar process as was described at the beginning). Although the defeated drive may remain beyond consciousness, and, while inhibited, the need to react builds up until it bursts out inappropriately, etc., it is not in principle unable to become conscious; it is only its weakened state that keeps it suppressed (in the 'pre-conscious'). And yet, whenever guilt besets us or disease diminishes us, it does not openly challenge our triumphs and defeats; it rather resorts to ambush, assassination, changing of sides; it does not want to recognize the enemy as an equal – who may, so to speak, keep his sword when defeated – but feels tarnished by the sheer acknowledgment of his hostilities, which need to be repelled. In this way, the pathos of pain to which every one of us, qua human being, has an inalienable right, is replaced by the disgust of sin – honest combat by insidious disease.⁴

4. Among half-civilized peoples or those who have come under the influence of other civilizations, the transition from one of these positions to the other can often be very clearly

Nevertheless, both the possibility of becoming ill, and the alternative possibility of seeing the conflict of forces through to a successful end, are predicated on the aforementioned duality of all that is human. This is what distinguishes the human experience of the drives from that of all other creatures, who (so it seems to us) enjoy an undifferentiated experience of their drives: they are at one with themselves and the universe. In a dark and deadly manner, psychological suffering and guilt-conflict underscore the exceedingly vital fact that human existence does not follow a straight, rigid line, but unfolds through varying vicissitudes – turning back on itself, taking possession of itself. While external punishment may cause the first seeds of guilt to germinate, and the fruit of this plant may be illness, both guilt and illness ultimately have the same root, namely, that duality in human nature which no development can ever outgrow. The varied, endlessly contradictory ‘thou shalts’ and norms which have been imposed on us since time immemorial – not only, as one might think, in the so-called civilized world, but also, perhaps more strictly even, with unnatural severity, among the ‘most primitive savages’ – only reveal how different intellectual types come to terms and cope with this duality – with the core question, namely, to what extent human ‘being’ is at one with the ‘thou shalt’ that it is its fundamental task to assimilate – and to what extent it dissolves and disintegrates if it fails to express itself vis-à-vis the self-imposed law. There are many sides from which one can approach such questions when searching for answers – we encounter one of these when we consider the symbolism which is left over from our anal education (*anale Erziehung*) and takes on a figurative meaning. ‘Disgust,’ standing watch over ‘dirt’ (i.e. that which is in the wrong place, that which is excreted and must be eradicated), becomes the true mark of a life which – as human life – must distinguish life and death within itself yet again.

observed. On the one hand, guilt is already felt as such, and there is no doubt about the punishment being justified. Indeed, the punishment is often considered to be more inevitable than it actually is – a kind of natural catastrophe, not conceived of by man. On the other hand, the sense of guilt does not keep them from boasting of their misdeed as though it were a heroic act, precisely because it boldly provokes heavenly and earthly retribution. And the person who one carefully avoids because of the threatened punishment, is possibly avoided too out of a sense of awe. It was only with the arrival of Christianity that this perception of guilt changed: for if despite the guarantee of redemption human nature remains the same, then its guilt is on par with dirt, with that which has been rejected absolutely. However, if one goes back to a time before the ‘Son’s redemptive death for the Father,’ then one finds the events which Freud so persuasively describes in the section on ‘parricide’ in his book *Totem and Taboo*: the great feasts for the father and then father god, which serve both the excess of mourning and the excess of gaiety – as with the ‘tragic hero’ today, who remains both guilty and admired, sublime and lovable.

II

At the most recent congress of the International Psychoanalytical Association, held in Munich in autumn 1913, in his talk on ‘The Disposition to Obsessional Neurosis,’ Freud made the remark (unfortunately not recorded in the related publication, *Zeitschrift* II 6) that animal species with a regular mating season spend the greater part of the year effectively as anal erotists or sadists. Indeed, the coexistence of anal and genital tendencies is characteristic of animals. Outside of our domestication practices, animals educate one another, also with regard to the anal sphere, but they rate each other’s anal and genital excretions similarly, sniffing them and adding their own excretions as part of a performance of love and respect – one not without its own ceremony. One might observe something analogous among primitive societies. On the one hand, their sexuality seems to be more ‘animal,’ less regulated than ours; and yet, on the other hand, it seems to be under the sway of a more solemn rigidity of custom (as is, indeed, their freedom of action in general), almost as if the physiological regulations and constraints of instinctual life (*Triebleben*) were directly translated into human bonds. It is only when the sway of rigid custom begins to lift – when the sexual drive’s own development is the only thing that holds and binds it – that genital sexuality becomes more sharply differentiated from anal sexuality, and it will readmit the latter only after a disturbance or when a pathological inhibition causes one to regress to earlier stages. Indeed, there are so many affinities between anal and genital processes – not only early on, before they have fully developed, but also and especially in sexual maturity – that one might well argue that the regressions of anal-erotic types have ample somatic support. It is not for nothing that the genital apparatus remains the neighbor of the cloaca (and in the case of women is only taken from it on lease) – likewise, in their primitive manifestations, their periodic cycles and urges are quite similar. Like the anal urge (*Analdrang*), which was uncontrollable at first, the genital urge appears as an involuntary force overwhelming the ego. Although the genital urge is integrated, particularly well with men, into the aggressivity of their intentions – as part of their ego-tendencies toward domination – it also works against these tendencies, quite of its own accord, in that it has the effect of simultaneously dissolving the ego and paralyzing self and consciousness. And just as during the education of the sphincter, it is the struggle between drive and restraint that first awakens anal pleasure, so too the struggles and tensions between the ego and the sexual drive bring the drive to fruition. By their external aspect, the procreative substances are barely distinguishable from the multifarious waste substances, the vital secretions from the deathly excretions; the two great opposites that encompass everything – ejaculate and excrement, futurity and perishability – touch almost imperceptibly. As sexual development reaches completion, sexuality – which once embraced the whole body, such that any and every organ could be a site of pleasure – returns to those darkest bodily depths that ultimately offer the only place of rest or refuge for its most precious treasures: door

to door, as it were, with the junk room containing all that has become useless, that has been rejected – bodily waste.

But just as this withdrawal to the least remarkable, least organized part of the vast organism that is our body actually serves to unite the total force of all its organs under the banner of reproduction, so too, in a similar maneuver, sexuality concentrates in the genitals only to use them as a base from which to conquer and take possession of everything around it. While anal eroticism finds itself driven into a corner, forcibly retired before its career had truly begun, and excluded from all further development, genital sexuality overruns the prohibitions it likewise faces, taking them as incitements to reach its final goal by converting them into increases of pleasure, as indeed anal eroticism had briefly shown it how to do. With the anal zone turned into a symbolic representative of death, the genital area becomes the ambassador of life: instead of waste, we have a surplus that must hurl itself into an existence beyond the individual. This is why anal pleasure typically remains centered on auto-eroticism, while a mature sexuality craves a partner organism. If the anal drive, in its rebellion against the outside world, triumphs in defiant, self-indulgent isolation, the genital drive only achieves pleasure and fulfillment when isolation is breached and the drive to spend oneself, to create, fulfills itself in the partner's embrace. The partner element might be seen to sufficiently distinguish between 'anal' and 'genital' eroticism, were it not for transitional forms and interludes such as genital auto-eroticism (solitary masturbation without accompanying partner phantasies) or the expression of affection by anal means (for example by children toward caregivers).⁵ With regard to genital sexuality, however, the partner element illustrates most clearly how mature sexuality can overcome the sexual rebuke in a way that is wholly different from what anal eroticism was able to achieve. After all, shame and disgust accompany genital sexuality, too, and may be felt all the more strongly because of the partner. If the presence of another is what actually triggers shame about anal activities – even if the child learns at an early age to perform the anal functions almost perfunctorily, without the forbidden associations of pleasure – then shame and disgust must return in force when pleasure recurs, particularly when a partner is involved and especially when it concerns those prohibited regions of their body. Yet the partner's presence also opens up a possibility of overcoming shame by making him an accomplice as well as a witness. No doubt this is one of the reasons why, if only one partner achieves bliss, without the other partner sharing in it, the sexual act makes even those who are not generally very sensitive feel ashamed and

5. Hans Blüher (Zentralbl. IV, Heft 1/2, 'Studien über den perversen Charakter' [Studies on the Character of the Pervert]) remarks quite correctly that a more precise distinction needs to be drawn between anal eroticism and fecal eroticism, depending on whether pleasure is excited by the partner's touching the organs in question, or whether it derives from the products of defecation and the processes by which these are voided. – I have here adhered to common usage by subsuming both forms under the term 'anal eroticism.'

in the wrong – because in this case the other does not appear as one involved in the act but, rather, as one who is both judge and victim. For the object of love does indeed stand for all this: for sexual satisfaction as well as the evaluation and control and possible rejection of that satisfaction on the part of our consciousness. In the partner, we see reflected the simplicity of the basic process which invariably falls back on the carefree abandon of a drive that, in a sense, is directed against our own individuation and erupts from the organ of primary materials – and in the partner, too, we see the effects of the complexities deriving from the involvement of temperament and ego in this process. Our partner thus becomes the point of convergence between the earliest shame that we know (that of our incontinent body) and the ultimate intimacy people are able to share: complete, selfless surrender.

Because the pleasure of genital orgasm overwhelms everything, including our ego, the reaction of shame – that old anal rebuke through which, so to speak, we developed into our egos and which we ourselves implemented more and more consciously – reaches deep into the core of our experience of love. Shame can tinge even the sexual embrace, even the normal, drunken throes of ultimate possession, to which it adds a drop of bitterness or even fuel to the fire (given that the passionate excitation of a vigorous eroticism benefits from obstruction much in the same way as an obstacle course does). ‘Possession’ then seems to extend beyond the physical, as if the lovers possessed one another not so much by means of the body as in spite of the body – a body, which, after all (and this goes for our perception of our own body as well), is never perfectly identical with the entirety of a person, but always seems to be a part of that person. This elusive body resists even the most lively and penetrating embrace, the most complete union; there is something about it that is felt to obstinately maintain its difference. And which in this regard retains something of that early, forgotten, anal-erotic corporeality which we had learned to reject as something dead, something not us, excrement – and before which, at the moment of loving ecstasy, and perhaps especially at such a moment, we again stand, as if in some dark memory, as before some piece of life that has been withdrawn from us – as before a ‘beloved corpse.’ For, at the moment of sexual climax, nothing matters to the numbed consciousness of our desire but the unhindered illusion of mutual penetration. The momentary ecstasy of the sexual act, as it were, suspends the other, and it is only when the lovers come ‘to themselves’ that they again perceive their partner at something of a distance, albeit a small one, and see them as someone autonomous, a separate living being. In place of that wildly raging identity with the partner that incorporates everything into itself, the mysterious, enigmatic cypher that is unity dissolves into more elaborate individual marks of loving devotion by which this identity, while no longer expressed directly, is expressed more clearly and understandably. Without any hint of irony we could describe this behavior as ‘more platonic,’ since it draws on the erotic support of all the senses to render our feeling of this identity more conscious. It is telling, however, that only one of our senses manages to evoke all that is deepest and darkest in the past histories of this inconceivable union, namely,

the sense of smell – the most animal of our senses and the one most neglected in the separation of the human from its animal self, to the extent of having almost atrophied. While the olfactory sense draws its erotic significance from its roots in anal pleasure, it is later far more active in the service of pleasure's opposite – as the representative of disgust. In its positive aspect, however, it is, as it were, the last hint or whiff of that most primary unity of world and self represented by anal eroticism, a unity which, transcending its coarse materiality, throughout our lives clings to all that excites us, all that we come to love, as if it were its ultimate primal sanction.

All of our other senses have lighted upon erotogenic zones that, from the start, brought them within easy reach of social acceptance and civilized behavior: having settled in areas of physical development that serve the ego, they have become, in a sense, citizens of two countries. At a time in life when a strict separation between the realms of the ego and the sexual had not yet taken place in the infant organism, these dual existences found a peaceful home in both the sexual and the ego, their ambiguous situation occasioning the conflicts and confusions that come under the name of neurosis and give them a bad reputation. It is this link that makes anything sexual occurring in their vicinity suspect of being unnatural or perverse and desirous of usurping the throne, although in truth it only falls between two stools. And it is this link, too, that often allows us to forget that the partial drives normally accomplish a lot that is welcome, since with regard to the self they are often highly developed, while in sexual terms they have remained at an infantile level. Yet when from the core of sexual maturity the call goes out, these semi-exiled drives, although dispersed all over the body's surface, share in the excitement and join in the Song of Songs. Children of the same house, they gather at the communal feast and carry its drunken ecstasy to the remotest and highest corners of the ego. On the one hand, they enhance the sexual experience because of their long-standing association with non-sexual, personal and individual activities – activities which continue to echo in every caress of the hand or mouth or gaze. Yet, on the other hand, they revive the childhood of sexual experience, when the whole found fulfillment in every part and had not yet been pushed back from the specialized organs into its own particular area. Even in the middle of lovemaking, these peripheral caresses are augmented by powerful memories, as if their precarious presence were the harbinger of something incomprehensibly sweet. Although they have remained more infantile or primitive, they are of the mind as well as of the body; they fall short of the sexual aim and at the same time gesture beyond it, expressing a more personal form of relationship and containing within them a miniature image of the act of love in its entirety. For not only have the partial drives been displaced by the centrality of the genital, but the latter continues to encroach upon them and, by doing so, also takes over the ego-interest. These seemingly soulful demonstrations of love are occasionally, if imprecisely, described as 'sublimations'; yet an all too 'unsublimated' libido would be lacking less in sublimation than in libido, given the great extent to which the libido exhibits its all-embracing, overwhelming quality in such

demonstrations. This distinguishes the sexual experience from the way our specialized organs fulfill their functions (such as the alimentary organs, which have been commandeered by the self-preservation instinct): here total ecstasy would immediately give rise to suspicions of being pathological – of being entangled with the sexual drive. Where, in contrast, the sexual drive evinces too little of this – where a specialized, limited and isolated arousal hardly extends to the partner's person – the sexual drive does little more than replicate, by way of analogy, the anal process. Insofar as the sexual union is a return to that simplest and earliest of all processes, namely the fusion of ovum and sperm, and takes place in a fashion that is opaque to the individuals concerned, whatever this union expresses clearly about this fusion is only expressed metaphorically or through the partial activities around it. In the absence of such activities, one is as justified in speaking of an underdeveloped, fragmented sexual function as in the case of the neurotic, for whom the sexual encounter is likewise fragmented. Even if in its ordinariness such a case is not seen as pathological because it dovetails smoothly with the surface of practical life, it nonetheless entails such a renunciation of natural and complete pleasure that it almost amounts to a disability.

An interesting point about this, however, and one that really underscores the issue here, is that it is by no means the dullest, most ordinary people who are said to be affected by this disability; on the contrary, surprisingly, it often concerns the more remarkable among us. And it goes deeper than a mere primitive brutishness of sexual activities or tastes; their arrested development actually pushes the sexual back into its infantile form. Just as someone who is generally quite average can achieve a delicate harmony with regard to the sexual, so a more remarkable character can have a comparable lack in this sphere, a kind of stunted growth. One could almost think that some small deficiency in overall development is the psychological price one has to pay for the arrogant ambition to be all mind and almost no body. These are the true cases of 'sublimation': men and women who direct the entire fecundity of their warmth toward asexual aims (including a conceptual rather than personal love of their fellows). Torn from the core of personal relationships (which as such are still very much influenced by physical eroticism), they leave the root of their sexuality behind in the sunless depths of the unconscious from which it can never blossom into a joyous affirmation of the ego and where it can never unite the forces of earth and light within itself. That is why their sense of self has such a precarious basis – a small foothold on a steep mountain peak from which only an attack of vertigo – revealing the unacknowledged lure of the abyss – can draw them back. Certainly, the works of a productive and creative mind give life and form to an erotic abundance that invariably enriches those who truly receive them. And yet, while these works benefit from the enigmatic transformation of human warmth into intellectual form, and the creator experiences this as a relief to his urges, it also leads him to squander and expend himself in a way that can rob him of the unifying connection to his own fundamental being. There is no direct path from 'sublimation' to 'sublimation' or from peak to peak; we must pass through the valleys between.

Indeed, it is possible that the so-called ‘lowest’ of our drives, that is, the most fundamental ones, are generally more stirred up when there is a tendency toward intellectual creativity – the highest ‘sublimations’ may in fact erupt from correspondingly deep depths. It may be, as Freud has suggested with regard to psychic illnesses in their varying degrees of severity, that heightened psychic states which find their fulfillment in creativity likewise rely on ever ‘lower’ layers. It is only where the transition from infantile to mature sexuality is inhibited or incomplete that, in some fortunate cases, a leap into the mind can take place (rather than a collapse into the pathological). For all ‘creation,’ be it intellectual, artistic or practical – whatever form it may take – is simply another method of rejoining the objectworld with the subject (which ego development had placed in opposition). This method is differently oriented than that which achieves the same effect by centering the procreative drive on a fellow human being (in the narrowest and the broadest sense). That its onset must precede any development toward partnership, and that it springs from the very bottom, from the source of the sexual as such, is obvious. And it is precisely because the libido is still itself unexpended and unconstrained that it is perhaps able, as the driving force of intellectual work, to help express what goes beyond the individual and is more universally valid. For after all, the possibilities that originate from the libido’s earliest forms are as rich as those which grow from its later forms – although the earlier these forms are, the less usable they prove to be in sexual or social terms. If such manifestations are met by scorn and disapproval and are then not absorbed into normal development, this may well release forces that are oriented in a new direction. For in their primitive way, in the underdeveloped form that is later censured, they retain the original sense of what it means for subject and object to form a unified whole and for self to be at one with world – a sense which now, somehow, somewhere, must reassert itself (unless pathological fixation restricts this to the development of symptoms). Whatever was disapproved of and repressed because it was too infantile, too subjective, not sufficiently welcoming toward the object that was to be embraced within it – this will be taken up intellectually, so to speak, at the super-subjective level. The result is an impassioned interest, beyond the bare necessities of existence, in the wider contexts of thinking, creating and doing. Wherever objects are idealized and drives sublimated, something lies buried, isolated as in a tomb, repressed; but in these cases there is always something more involved, too, and this additional something stands in as sharp a contrast to all that is earthly as resurrection does to the tomb – given that resurrection never really intends to bring back the bodies as well.

Similarly, in Freud’s view, if I understand it correctly, the most disparaged and the most highly valued forces are inevitably mutually dependent; in the end, they come from the same root; they are so close to one another precisely because there is a distinction between them, and they rely upon one another. While they appear to move in entirely different directions – the one toward the non-human and the other toward the extra-human – beginning and end are linked in a secret, eternal flow, an unbreakable circle.

There are things in sexual life that seem not to belong to this circle, and which must instead play the role of Cinderella in relation to her more respected sisters (who represent the dignity and splendor of their house) – but for these things, too, the great hour may yet arrive when the fairy godmother’s golden carriage bears them off to an even more splendid, even more dignified realm where a crown awaits.

III⁶

If Freud’s aforementioned unified theory of sexuality is jettisoned by his former disciples C.G. Jung and A. Adler, then this would appear to be because both are determined to trump its empirical consistency by staking too much on philosophy.

Freud’s discovery of the same sexual process across the most diverse expressions of human life has been so very illuminating precisely because it enables us to clearly distinguish the libidinal tendencies from those concerning ego-development, allowing us to disentangle their interdependencies and points of connection in health and illness alike. Whatever philosophical reasons may have motivated Jung to subsume both of these tendencies under his new definition of the libido is not the issue here. One outcome of his decision, however, becomes immediately apparent: namely, the more he pushes for terminological uniformity, the more a gaping dualism arises in his approach to the different phases of the libido (into which sexual and ego manifestations are now partitioned). Where Freud, in line with the limits of our practical experience, easily accepts a duality, the interrelatedness of which enables us to interpret psychical experience, Jung finds himself having to sneak in through the backdoor the very dualism that his hasty terminological adjustments were meant to throw out. I’m pleased to see that Jung, for all his commonplaces about monism, fails to keep dualism out. In effect, he ends up joining cause with the old theory of sexuality centered on condemnation (*alte Sexualtheorie der Verpönung*). He makes his all-too-powerful libido look foolish when confronted with the ‘earth’s remains,’ too ‘distressing’ to carry,⁷ and has to figure out how best to rid himself of it again. Jung’s concept of the libido almost appears to be courting sexuality, even extending to it the sphere of the ego, which Freud had not allowed it: ‘All this is yours, if only you’ll sign yourself over to me!’ But no sooner is the pact made than he chops off sexuality’s head or, rather, slits open its belly, because for sexuality to take over its new sphere, it has to be so thoroughly ‘desexualized’ at both ends that hardly any

6. I do not mention here how much the works of A. Adler (outside the field of psychoanalysis) and C.G. Jung have meant to me, but instead explain where they differ from Freud’s notion of libido. It seems to me that the similarities can only become clear once the differences have been acknowledged and made plain.

7. [Goethe’s *Faust* (1990, p. 495).]

substance remains in the middle. Precisely this middle piece then falls victim to a kind of moral hara-kiri.

From Jung's earlier works one comes to understand quite well how his great insight from his study of paraphrenia (one of the most moving in this entire field), in which he traces pathological thinking back to archaic thinking, eventually misled him into concluding that everything drive-related belongs to the past and that everything that is logical and functional belongs to the future, until, at last, affective immediacy itself is nothing more than a residue of a humanity which has twisted itself free from it – with little more than symbolic value for the 'progressive potency of subliminal combinations.' Why the libido – the absolute and sovereign libido – should devour itself, starting at the tail end (*Schwanz*) and come full circle in a kind of fatal triumph of culture remains a mystery that has frequently been pointed out. Yet one can hardly escape the impression that when he draws on evolutionary theory (which in philosophical terms already has a lot to answer for!) to bolster an anti-sexual, moralistic standpoint, Jung is essentially returning to the old equation of the sexual with filth, knotting together the sexual and the primordially anal (a knot that psychoanalysis has made it its business to untie). This is the point at which, following the old pattern, 'repression' returns. If it did not, it would become clear that what is here narrowly defined and loathed as sexuality is in fact simply what sexuality inherits from the anal – a symbol, an analogy, a kind of recycled odium. Conversely, that which Jung evaporates into a mere symbol is assigned a positive value which it retains through all forms of development and which lends its driving force to even the most cultural of 'progressions.' Because Jung understands the nature of sexuality as lying somewhere beyond itself from the start, he simply overlooks the point at which Freud, for his part, introduces an 'ethical' emphasis, if we can call it that, which inheres in the liberating triumph over precisely those resistances that ward off insights into one's own sexual nature and keep it imprisoned in its old confusions – and this is also the ultimate rationale for Freud's 'regressive' method of treatment. That is why any moralistic, pedagogical, religious, or other additional motive can only be detrimental;⁸ and why it is absolutely necessary to go back, every time, to the individual psychological events, down to the lowest and deepest layers that can be explored – not to allow them to dissipate into insubstantial symbols, but rather to allow them to enable, more substantially, a full and conscious lived experience. Now, I think that in trying to get around this, Jung can hardly help turning toward

8. One is tempted to quote Jung back at himself: 'Our aim is simply and solely scientific knowledge [...] If religion and morality are blown to pieces in the process so much the worse for them for not having more stamina [...] Undoubtedly, the tremendous need of the masses to be led will force many people to abandon the standpoint of the psychoanalyst and to start "prescribing." One person will prescribe morality, another licentiousness. Both of them cater to the masses and both follow the currents that drive the masses hither and thither. Science stands above all this and lends the strength of its armour to Christian and anti-Christian alike. It has no confessional axe to grind' (Jung, 1977[1910], pp. 395–6).

some violent form of sublimation, since this is the only thing that makes possible a return to the ontogenetic, given that all that is effective about the drives threatens to disintegrate in his hands, leaving him with nothing but symbolic generalizations: the past, limited to the ‘archaic,’ is enhanced with intimations of futurity, a prophetic tendency building a golden bridge for the individual, leading them from humanity to something beyond humanity.⁹ From both perspectives described here, however, Jung’s ideas (unless I have misunderstood them, which is very well possible) appear to me to retrace paths which were followed to a certain point at the beginning of the Freudian movement, but which were eventually abandoned. Among these I would count, first, an overemphasis on evolutionary theory in the guise of philosophical monism, and second, a predominance of rationalist views: both correspond to theories put forward by some of Freud’s collaborators but soon revised by Freud in his careful attention to reality – an attention that did not shy away from the contradictory, the inconspicuous or the inconvenient – until such riches were spread before his eyes as to rule out artificially augmenting anything.

A. Adler, who anticipated Jung in so many ways, does not commit the Jungian error of underrating the individual case in his psychology, but goes too far down this other road. While he does not forfeit the depth of the psychical in favor of the breadth of the historical (or prehistorical) genesis and perspective, he obstructs access to it by approaching the individual all too individually, that is, as too much a product of consciousness and not enough a product of unconscious relationships. Instead of Jung’s ascetic optimism, Adler ends up with a kind of ironic pessimism: instead of taking a moralistic approach to the libido, he simply abolishes it. There is no longer any need for it to take on ethical meaning, given that it has been declared null and void, so to speak. Jung’s unclear bundling together of opposites is here replaced by an all-too-clear and one-sided schematism, whereby the human being appears to shed his libido once and for all. Yet the cure here is a little reminiscent of that of Doctor Eisenbart, who made the lame see and the blind walk: sexuality is purged from an organ it does not reside in. Where with Jung, even the most normal sexuality is thought to be atavistic, ethically diseased, and in need of energetic dematerialization, with Adler, conversely, the sick are only a little more insistent than the normal in demonstrating that their instinctual life, too, is a mere illusion, hallucination, fiction, ‘arrangement.’ Essentially, to put it in slightly exaggerated terms, according to Adler ‘neurosis’ is simply a less favorable course taken by the illness ‘psyche.’ Speaking facetiously, one might say that the healthiest mind (*Gehirn*) with all its supporting fictions (which, according to

9. It seems to me that Jung’s thinking was fatally influenced by his early tendency to understand the ‘ego’ as ‘one complex among many complexes’ – the most autonomous one, in normal cases, among the bundles of drives for which he found this term – instead of distinguishing it from the various contents of the complexes as a formative principle. This means that with him the special mutuality of drive content and ego position is blurred: and without further ado, always at the same level, so to speak, and without any sort of differentiation, ‘self-preservative’ drives can acquire and shed a sexual dimension at will, and all is covered by the mantle of the libido.

Adler, is what the mind (*Gehirn*) is really there for) would be the one whose presence is not actually needed, and the healthiest psyche (*Seele*) is that which is not necessary at all: since its necessity arises solely from the somatic and its organic inferiorities. As you can see, even the blissful materialism of former times, which without much ado dragged the psychical forth from the physical, was harmless and good-hearted in comparison: given that the psychical, with Adler, only emerges from the gaps and faults of the physical body, the negation of a negation,¹⁰ a mirage. It is out of a 'masculine protest' against this origin from the negative, from impotence, that the psyche's basic striving makes itself known as the drive to 'be on top,' to 'have power' – even in those instances where such violent overcompensation can only reach its goal indirectly by the detour of crafty humility – 'feminine wiles,' 'secondary safeguards,' feigned surrender. Now, one could hold the opinion, really, that here at least an oppositional will asserts itself, with the repressed libido donning a servant's mask to take its revenge on its master. But apart from this, the complete denial of the libido's facticity, the limitlessness of the will to power, make the latter sufficiently suspect of sexualization, and one might indeed think that Adler coined the fitting term of 'confluence' (*Verschränkung*) precisely for such a case.

That the neurosis compensates by means of flaws and deficiencies is something that Freud emphasized strongly from the very beginning, as is evident from terms like 'bonus of pleasure,' 'gain through illness,' 'flight into illness,' etc., and he observed early on, in his 'Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis,' 'But the results of such an illness are never unintentional; what appears to be the consequence of the illness is in reality the cause or motive of falling ill' (Freud, 1909, p. 199), making similar remarks elsewhere. For him, it was always the result of interior and exterior injuries or inhibitions, not psychical experience as such, that was the beneficiary of physical flaws. On the contrary, psychical experience, in his view, arises far more from a sense of abundance, excess and the precondition of omnipotence – followed, of course, by disappointment when reality imposes its boundaries, but not necessarily through fear of inferiority either: this only arises through social comparison. It is thus on this point that one must distinguish more decisively between Freud and Adler than between Freud and Jung. With Freud, the psychical – because it is defined in a positive sense, because it is not derived indirectly from the physical or explained in negative terms – warrants its own autonomous method. That is, it insists on the right to leave the remaining dark X of

10. – which ultimately conceals itself behind epistemological considerations about the 'relativity of truth' and, referring to the work *As if* by the Kantian [Hans] Vaihinger, equates the nature of hallucinatory fictions with the theoretical supportive structures discussed by him. Although Vaihinger seems to have agreed with Adler's argument, it is impossible to overlook the fundamental difference between the provisional solutions deliberately resorted to by science, which Vaihinger very carefully places out of reach of any evaluation beyond their immediate purpose, and the tremendous overvaluation of unconsciously made arrangements whose sole *raison d'être* lies in this very overvaluation and involuntariness.

residual problems at the frontier of empirical exploration, rather than consigning it to a foreign province that cannot admit it or its special nature, that cannot shed light on it, but can only abolish it. It is thus also at this point that Freud neatly and explicitly distinguishes his field of research from both the speculations of philosophy and the intrusions of biology. The border to which this field of research extends – and which it must not cross, but must still maintain – emerges most clearly in relation to the concept of narcissism that Freud has so meaningfully elaborated in recent years – a concept that, to my knowledge, neither Adler nor Jung have really addressed. Initially, the term ‘narcissism,’ borrowed by Freud (from P. Näcke and H. Ellis) to refer to auto-eroticism, indicated merely a stage elaborated and inserted by Freud in the progress toward genital sexuality. But it later became important to him in another sense as well: namely, as an enduring component of every stage of development. Narcissism ‘in this sense would not be a perversion, but the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation,’ including ‘the idea of there being an original libidinal cathexis of the ego, from which some is later given off to objects, but which fundamentally persists and is related to the object-cathexes much as the body of an amoeba is related to the pseudopodia which it puts out,’ Freud says in his essay ‘On Narcissism’ (Freud, 1914, pp. 73–5), adding, ‘as regards the differentiation of psychical energies, we are led to the conclusion that to begin with, during the state of narcissism, they exist together and that our analysis is too coarse to distinguish between them; not until there is object-cathexis is it possible to discriminate a sexual energy – the libido – from an energy of the ego-instincts’ (p. 76). While I do not wish to dissect the entirety of this rich and densely packed short essay, let me add some sentences from the third, revised edition of the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*: ‘We thus reach the idea of a quantity of libido, to the mental representation of which we give the name of “ego-libido”, and whose production, increase or diminution, distribution and displacement should afford us possibilities for explaining the psychosexual phenomena observed’ (Freud, 1905, p. 217). ‘In contrast to object-libido, we also describe ego-libido as “narcissistic” libido. From the vantage-point of psychoanalysis we can look across a frontier, which we may not pass, at the activities of narcissistic libido, and may form some idea of the relation between it and object-libido. Narcissistic or ego-libido seems to be the great reservoir from which the object-cathexes are sent out and into which they are withdrawn once more; the narcissistic libidinal cathexis of the ego is the original state of things, realized in earliest childhood, and is merely covered by the later extrusions of libido, but in essentials persists behind them’ (Freud, 1905, p. 218).

Seen from the outside, it might seem as if defining the libido as a ‘complement to egoism’ neither sufficiently nor fundamentally distinguishes it from what, by its positive content, is a neutralized sexuality, which according to Adler the ego exploits at will. Or, at the very least, in this view, Adler’s constructions might erroneously and misleadingly be taken as consequences of the Freudian system, or future projections of it – in much the same way as some Jungian views appear to be exaggerated reiterations of earlier phases of Freudian theories. The concept of

narcissism prevents such an overshooting of the mark by stabilizing at just the right point, by highlighting the dark abundance of the as yet undifferentiated fusion of sexual drives and ego-tendencies rather than their bright intensification in an activity of ego-consciousness. In so doing, it also prevents us from misunderstanding it as an affirmation of the Adlerian view of the negativity of the psychical, since Freud has always emphasized that the 'drive' is about getting rid of unpleasure, lack, disorder ('We have recognized our mental apparatus as being first and foremost a device designed for mastering excitations which would otherwise be felt as distressing or would have pathogenic effects.' – 'On Narcissism,' p. 85) and equates an organ's erotogenicity with an excessive sensitivity that 'may have the same effect upon the distribution of libido as is produced by a material illness of the organs' (p. 84). Erotogenicity requires 'libidinal object-cathexis' to prevent the ego-libido from being made ill by its own excess – after ego and world have first emerged as conscious opposites and no longer narcissistically flow into one another within the subject itself. What in fact occurs through this object-cathexis is, after all, no more than an attempt to achieve something like the old fusion by different means: object-cathexis is a means of reunion insofar as the original stage corresponded to an as-yet-undivided unity. It could be said that it not only serves, in a negative sense, as a discharge for a distressing state of excitation, but also, in a positive sense, as a drawing-in, an incorporation, an 'introjection' of the world. What in physiological terms can appear as painful tension, a troublesome excess, or a desire for pacification can, in psychical terms, be represented by a desire for thirst and yearning (following [Goethe's *Faust*] 'Thus I reel from desire to enjoyment, / And in enjoyment languish for desire'¹¹ in every way). It is probably for this reason that the sexual is so paradoxical and contradictory: because it is forced to express itself in and through the corporeal, whose organic language – so tightly bound within itself – does not quite know how to articulate these expressions beyond our isolated existence; but in the psychical organization of the individual, the libido always remains like a special substitute for that original all-encompassing abundance. Certainly, following Freud, 'drive' as such must be equated with aggression, and terms such as 'active' or 'passive' can be applied only with regard to the aim of the drive. But when an aim gives rise to such passivity, this is not necessarily a mere reaction-formation against an activity that needs to be suppressed. Under certain circumstances, something might be revived here, specifically, from the original narcissistic condition that held active and passive undivided and interlocked and indeed keeps holding them so. What is 'passive,' after all, appears so only from the point of view of the ego that has since developed – it appears reactive, negative, contingent only because its positive meaning has been concealed, so to speak, under the ever-expanding mantle of the ego. And yet, it remains the complement to that in which, in the original form of existence, both sides fuse into one. After

11. [Goethe (1990, p. 313).]

all, even in its most active attempts at domination, the sexual drive submits to the object, annihilating the ego, overwhelming consciousness, without being weakened. Might not also the 'sexual overvaluation' thought by Freud to be typical of men (and which in his view makes them 'attachment types' ['On Narcissism,' p. 88]) be understood as just such a complement – insofar as precisely that aggressiveness of the male libido, the extroverted grasp of their courtship, impoverishes their self-love, and they therefore need to replenish their narcissism through the love of their counterpart? And does not the same hold true for women, to whom Freud attributes a form of narcissism that is more self-sufficient, content with a more passive surrender? For this sexual passivity at the same time gives rise to a submission that is entirely alien to the ego, and yet which is experienced as something blissful.

Certainly, it would be better not to touch upon this subject and all its many ramifications at all than to deal with it as superficially and tangentially as I am doing here. I am also aware that, instead of stating facts, I have been falling into idiosyncratic interpretations of Freudian theory. And yet, if this is so, it is because it so often appears to me that, with regard to the forms of activity of the ego-tendency (which according to Adler is the only tendency at work in us), the integrity of the libido can only be maintained if, even in opposition to the ego, it can still assert itself substantially, in a positive way, and not just in appearance only. If the special character of the libido, consistently traced by Freud, is threatened by Jung with a new, divisive condemnation, then approaches such as that of Adler threaten it with manslaughter: and the only reason it escapes this blow is that it has already found a safe place behind the emerging ego-intentions – that is, where these are not yet empirically distinguishable from it. This is something that has only become clear to me through Freud's concept of narcissism, and I do not think that by applying it here I am misapplying the concept beyond the limits of the psychical reality indicated by him. I, too, accept it as Freud's way of defining the boundaries of the domain of psychoanalysis, in order not to stray too far into the biological, on the one hand, or into philosophical speculation, on the other. The difference perhaps lies only in that for me it has not remained a cold, inanimate marking post, but with regard to my inner experience, has become a tree from which I pluck fruits to take home to my own garden.

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