

that the conflict between two trends does not break out till certain intensities of cathexis have been reached, even though the determinants for it have long been present so far as their subject-matter is concerned. In the same way, the pathogenic significance of the constitutional factors must be weighed according to how much *more* of one component instinct than of another is present in the inherited disposition. It may even be supposed that the disposition of all human beings is qualitatively alike and that they differ only owing to these quantitative conditions. The quantitative factor is no less decisive as regards capacity to resist neurotic illness. It is a matter of *what quota* of unemployed libido a person is able to hold in suspension and of *how large a fraction* of his libido he is able to divert from sexual to sublimated aims. The ultimate aim of mental activity, which may be described qualitatively as an endeavour to obtain pleasure and avoid unpleasure, emerges, looked at from the economic point of view, as the task of mastering the amounts of excitation (mass of stimuli) operating in the mental apparatus and of keeping down their accumulation which creates unpleasure.¹

This, then, is what I wanted to tell you about the formation of symptoms in the neuroses. But I must not fail to lay emphasis expressly once again on the fact that everything I have said here applies only to the formation of symptoms in hysteria. Even in obsessional neurosis there is much – apart from fundamentals, which remain unaltered – that will be found different. The anticathexes opposing the demands of the instincts (which we have already spoken of in the case of hysteria as well [p. 406]) become prominent in obsessional neurosis and dominate the clinical picture in the form of what are known as ‘reaction-

1. [Here Freud appears to be equating the ‘pleasure principle’ and ‘the principle of constancy’, though in the earlier passage above (p. 402 f.), where this subject is touched on, there is a hint at a doubt about this. At a later date he drew a clear distinction between the two: see ‘The Economic Problem of Masochism’ (1924c).]

formations’. We discover similar and even more far-reaching divergences in the other neuroses, where our researches into the mechanisms of symptom-formation are not yet concluded at any point.

Before I let you go to-day, however, I should like to direct your attention a little longer to a side of the life of phantasy which deserves the most general interest. For there is a path that leads back from phantasy to reality – the path, that is, of art. An artist is once more in rudiments an introvert, not far removed from neurosis. He is oppressed by excessively powerful instinctual needs. He desires to win honour, power, wealth, fame and the love of women; but he lacks the means for achieving these satisfactions. Consequently, like any other unsatisfied man, he turns away from reality and transfers all his interest, and his libido too, to the wishful constructions of his life of phantasy, whence the path might lead to neurosis. There must be, no doubt, a convergence of all kinds of things if this is not to be the complete outcome of his development; it is well known, indeed, how often artists in particular suffer from a partial inhibition of their efficiency owing to neurosis. Their constitution probably includes a strong capacity for sublimation and a certain degree of laxity in the repressions which are decisive for a conflict. An artist, however, finds a path back to reality in the following manner. To be sure, he is not the only one who lead a life of phantasy. Access to the half-way region of phantasy is permitted by the universal assent of mankind, and everyone suffering from privation expects to derive alleviation and consolation from it. But for those who are not artists the yield of pleasure to be derived from the sources of phantasy is very limited. The ruthlessness of their repressions forces them to be content with such meagre day-dreams as are allowed to become conscious. A man who is a true artist has more at his disposal. In the first place, he understands how to work over his day-dreams in such a way as to make them lose what is too personal about them and repels strangers, and to make it possible

for others to share in the enjoyment of them. He understands, too, how to tone them down so that they do not easily betray their origin from proscribed sources. Furthermore, he possesses the mysterious power of shaping some particular material until it has become a faithful image of his phantasy; and he knows, moreover, how to link so large a yield of pleasure to his representation of his unconscious phantasy that, for the time being at least, repressions are outweighed and lifted by it. If he is able to accomplish all this, he makes it possible for other people once more to derive consolation and alleviation from their own sources of pleasure in their unconscious which have become inaccessible to them; he earns their gratitude and admiration and he has thus achieved *through* his phantasy what originally he had achieved only *in* his phantasy – honour, power and the love of women.

LECTURE 24

THE COMMON NEUROTIC STATE

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, – Now that we have disposed of such a difficult piece of work in our last discussions, I propose for a time to leave the subject and turn to you yourselves.

For I am aware that you are dissatisfied. You pictured an 'Introduction to Psychoanalysis' very differently. What you expected to hear were lively examples, not theory. On one occasion, you say, when I told you the parable of 'In the Basement and on the First Floor' [p. 398], you grasped something of the way in which neuroses are caused; the observations should have been real ones, however, and not made-up stories. Or when at the start I described two symptoms to you (not invented ones this time, let us hope) and described their solution and their relation to the patients' lives [p. 300 ff.], the 'sense' of symptoms dawned on you. You hoped I should go on along those lines. But instead I gave you long-winded theories, hard to grasp, which were never complete but were always having something fresh added to them; I worked with concepts which I had not yet explained to you; I went from a descriptive account of things to a dynamic one and from that to what I called an 'economic' one; I made it hard for you to understand how many of the technical terms I used meant the same thing and were merely being interchanged for reasons of euphony; I brought up such far-reaching conceptions as those of the pleasure and reality principles and of phylogenetically inherited endowments; and, far from introducing you to anything, I paraded something before your eyes which constantly grew more and more remote from you.

Why did I not begin my introduction to the theory of neuroses with what you yourselves know of the neurotic state and what has long aroused your interest – with the peculiar characteristics of neurotic people, their incomprehensible