

## EDITOR'S NOTE

### BEMERKUNGEN ÜBER EINEN FALL VON ZWANGSNEUROSE

(a) GERMAN EDITIONS:

- 1909 *Jb. psychoanal. psychopath. Forsch.*, 1 (2), 357-421.  
1913 *S.K.S.N.*, III, 123-197. (1921, 2nd. ed.)  
1924 *G.S.*, 8, 269-351.  
1932 *Vier Krankengeschichten*, 284-376.  
1941 *G.W.*, 7, 381-463.

(b) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

'Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis'

- 1925 *C.P.*, 3, 293-383. (Tr. Alix and James Strachey.)

The present translation of the case history is a reprint (with considerable alterations and a number of additional foot-notes) of the original English version of 1925.

Freud's treatment of this case began on October 1st, 1907. An account of its beginnings, given by Freud and followed by a discussion, occupied two evenings at the Vienna Psycho-Analytical Society, on October 30th and November 6th. Some account of the Minutes of these two Meetings has been given by Federn (1948) in a paper with the title 'Professor Freud: The Beginning of a Case-History'. He gives the date of the second of them incorrectly, however, as November 16th. Further short reports on details of the case were given by Freud to the Vienna Society on November 20th, 1907, and January 22nd and April 8th, 1908. A longer report was

delivered by him at the First International Psycho-Analytical Congress, which was held at Salzburg on April 27th, 1908. According to Dr. Ernest Jones, who was present, Freud's address took over four hours. A very brief summary of it, by Otto Rank, will be found in the *Zentralbl. Psychoanal.*, 1 (1910), 125-6, published a year after the case history in its final form. At the time of the Congress, however, the treatment was by no means finished, for it lasted, as Freud tells us below (p. 186), for nearly a year. In the summer of 1909 he prepared the history for publication. We learn from a letter to Jung that he took a month over it and finally sent it to the printers on July 7th, 1909.

Freud's original record of the earlier part of this treatment, which was made from day to day as the treatment proceeded and which served as the basis of the published case history, has survived. It is published for the first time in the English translation which will be found at the end of this volume, together with some explanatory remarks which may assist the reader in following the complicated story. (See p. 253 ff.)

(In all previous editions the patient is referred to once as 'Lieutenant H.' (p. 172), and the 'cruel captain' as 'Captain M.' (p. 169). In order to harmonize these letters with the names chosen for the 'Original Record', they have here been changed to 'L' and 'N' respectively.)

## NOTES UPON A CASE OF OBSESSIONAL NEUROSIS

### [INTRODUCTION]

THE matter contained in the following pages will be of two kinds. In the first place I shall give some fragmentary extracts from the history of a case of obsessional neurosis. This case judged by its length, the injuriousness of its effects, and the patient's own view of it, deserves to be classed as a moderately severe one; the treatment, which lasted for about a year, led to the complete restoration of the patient's personality, and to the removal of his inhibitions. In the second place, starting out from this case, and also taking other cases into account which I have previously analysed, I shall make some disconnected statements of an aphoristic character upon the genesis and finer psychological mechanism of obsessional processes, and I shall thus hope to develop my first observations on the subject, published in 1896.<sup>1</sup>

A programme of this kind seems to me to require some justification. For it might otherwise be thought that I regard this method of making a communication as perfectly correct and as one to be imitated; whereas in reality I am only accommodating myself to obstacles, some external and others inherent in the subject, and I should gladly have communicated more if it had been right or possible for me to do so. I cannot give a complete history of the treatment, because that would involve my entering in detail into the circumstances of my patient's life. The importunate interest of a capital city, focussed with particular attention upon my medical activities, forbids my giving a faithful picture of the case. On

<sup>1</sup> 'Further Remarks on the Neuro-Psychoses of Defence', 1896*b* (Section II. 'The Nature and Mechanism of Obsessional Neurosis').

the other hand I have come more and more to regard the distortions usually resorted to in such circumstances as useless and objectionable. If the distortions are slight, they fail in their object of protecting the patient from indiscreet curiosity; while if they go beyond this they require too great a sacrifice, for they destroy the intelligibility of the material, which depends for its coherence precisely upon the small details of real life. And from this latter circumstance follows the paradoxical truth that it is far easier to divulge the patient's most intimate secrets than the most innocent and trivial facts about him; for, whereas the former would not throw any light on his identity, the latter, by which he is generally recognized, would make it obvious to every one.<sup>1</sup>

Such is my excuse for having curtailed so drastically the history of this case and its treatment. And I can offer still more cogent reasons for having confined myself to the statement only of some disconnected results of the psycho-analytic investigation of obsessional neuroses. I must confess that I have not yet succeeded in completely penetrating the complicated texture of a *severe* case of obsessional neurosis, and that, if I were to reproduce the analysis, it would be impossible for me to make the structure, such as by the help of analysis we know or suspect it to be, visible to others through the mass of therapeutic work superimposed upon it. What add so greatly to the difficulty of doing this are the resistances of the patients and the forms in which they are expressed. But even apart from this it must be admitted that an obsessional neurosis is in itself not an easy thing to understand—much less so than a case of hysteria. Actually, indeed, we should have expected to find the contrary. The language of an obsessional neurosis—the means by which it expresses its

<sup>1</sup> [In the footnote to the case history of 'Dora' added to Vol. VIII of the *Gesammelte Schriften* (1924) and referred to above on p. 4, Freud expressly states that the present case was published with the patients' assent. See *Standard Ed.*, 7, 14.]

secret thoughts—is, as it were, only a dialect of the language of hysteria; but it is a dialect in which we ought to be able to find our way about more easily, since it is more nearly related to the forms of expression adopted by our conscious thought than is the language of hysteria. Above all, it does not involve the leap from a mental process to a somatic innervation—hysterical conversion—which can never be fully comprehensible to us.

Perhaps it is only because we are less familiar with obsessional neuroses that we do not find these expectations confirmed by the facts. Persons suffering from a severe degree of obsessional neurosis present themselves far less frequently for analytic treatment than hysterical patients. They dissimulate their condition in daily life, too, as long as they possibly can, and often call in a physician only when their complaint has reached such an advanced stage as, had they been suffering, for instance, from tuberculosis of the lungs, would have led to their being refused admission to a sanatorium. I make this comparison, moreover, because, as with the chronic infectious disease which I have just mentioned, we can point to a number of brilliant therapeutic successes in severe no less than in light cases of obsessional neurosis, where these have been taken in hand at an early stage.

In these circumstances there is no alternative but to report the facts in the imperfect and incomplete fashion in which they are known and in which it is legitimate to communicate them. The crumbs of knowledge offered in these pages, though they have been laboriously enough collected, may not in themselves prove very satisfying; but they may serve as a starting-point for the work of other investigators, and common endeavour may bring the success which is perhaps beyond the reach of individual effort.

# I

## EXTRACTS FROM THE CASE HISTORY

A YOUNGISH man of university education introduced himself to me with the statement that he had suffered from obsessions ever since his childhood, but with particular intensity for the last four years. The chief features of his disorder were *fears* that something might happen to two people of whom he was very fond—his father and a lady whom he admired. Besides this he was aware of *compulsive impulses*—such as an impulse, for instance, to cut his throat with a razor; and further he produced *prohibitions*, sometimes in connection with quite unimportant things. He had wasted years, he told me, in fighting against these ideas of his, and in this way had lost much ground in the course of his life. He had tried various treatments, but none had been of any use to him except a course of hydrotherapy at a sanatorium near —; and this, he thought, had probably only been because he had made an acquaintance there which had led to regular sexual intercourse. Here he had no opportunities of the sort, and he seldom had intercourse and only at irregular intervals. He felt disgust at prostitutes. Altogether, he said, his sexual life had been stunted; masturbation had played only a small part in it, in his sixteenth or seventeenth year. His potency was normal; he had first had intercourse at the age of twenty-six.

He gave me the impression of being a clear-headed and shrewd person. When I asked him what it was that made him lay such stress upon telling me about his sexual life, he replied that that was what he knew about my theories. Actually, however, he had read none of my writings, except that a short time before he had been turning over the pages

of one of my books <sup>1</sup> and had come across the explanation of some curious verbal associations which had so much reminded him of some of his own 'efforts of thought' in connection with his ideas that he had decided to put himself in my hands.

#### (A) THE BEGINNING OF THE TREATMENT

The next day I made him pledge himself to submit to the one and only condition of the treatment—namely, to say everything that came into his head, even if it was *unpleasant* to him, or seemed *unimportant* or *irrelevant* or *senseless*. I then gave him leave to start his communications with any subject he pleased, and he began thus:<sup>2</sup>

He had a friend, he told me, of whom he had an extraordinarily high opinion. He used always to go to him when he was tormented by some criminal impulse, and ask him whether he despised him as a criminal. His friend used then to give him moral support by assuring him that he was a man of irreproachable conduct, and had probably been in the habit, from his youth onwards, of taking a dark view of his own life. At an earlier date, he went on, another person had exercised a similar influence over him. This was a nineteen-year-old student (he himself had been fourteen or fifteen at the time) who had taken a liking to him, and had raised his self-esteem to an extraordinary degree, so that he appeared to himself to be a genius. This student had subsequently become his tutor, and had suddenly altered his

<sup>1</sup> *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* [1901*b*].

<sup>2</sup> What follows is based upon notes made on the evening of the day of treatment, and adheres as closely as possible to my recollection of the patient's words.—I feel obliged to offer a warning against the practice of noting down what the patient says during the actual time of treatment. The consequent withdrawal of the physician's attention does the patient more harm than can be made up for by any increase in accuracy that may be achieved in the reproduction of his case history. [This point is enlarged upon in Freud's first paper of technical 'Recommendations' (1912*e*), Sections *b* and *c*.]

behaviour and begun treating him as though he were an idiot. At length he had noticed that the student was interested in one of his sisters, and had realized that he had only taken him up in order to gain admission into the house. This had been the first great blow of his life.

He then proceeded without any apparent transition:—

#### (B) INFANTILE SEXUALITY

'My sexual life began very early. I can remember a scene during my fourth or fifth year. (From my sixth year onwards I can remember everything.) This scene came into my head quite distinctly, years later. We had a very pretty young governess called Fräulein Peter.<sup>1</sup> One evening she was lying on the sofa lightly dressed, and reading. I was lying beside her, and begged her to let me creep under her skirt. She told me I might, so long as I said nothing to any one about it. She had very little on, and I fingered her genitals and the lower part of her body, which struck me as very queer. After this I was left with a burning and tormenting curiosity to see the female body. I can still remember the intense excitement with which I waited at the Baths (which I was still allowed to go to with the governess and my sisters) for the governess

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Alfred Adler, who was formerly an analyst, once drew attention in a privately delivered paper to the peculiar importance which attaches to the *very first* communications made by patients. Here is an instance of this. The patient's opening words laid stress upon the influence exercised over him by men, that is to say, upon the part played in his life by homosexual object-choice; but immediately afterwards they touched upon a second *motif*, which was to become of great importance later on, namely, the conflict between man and woman and the opposition of their interests. Even the fact that he remembered his first pretty governess by her surname, which happened to be a man's first name, must be taken into account in this connection. In middle-class circles in Vienna it is more usual to call a governess by her first name, and it is by that name that she is more commonly remembered.—[In the original (1909) version, the first words of this footnote ran: 'My colleague Dr. Alfred Adler . . .' They were changed to their present form in 1913.]



to undress and get into the water. I can remember more things from my sixth year onwards. At that time we had another governess, who was also young and good-looking. She had abscesses on her buttocks which she was in the habit of pressing out at night. I used to wait eagerly for that moment, to appease my curiosity. It was just the same at the Baths—though Fräulein Lina was more reserved than her predecessor.' (In reply to a question which I threw in, 'As a rule,' the patient told me, 'I did not sleep in her room, but mostly with my parents.')

'I remember a scene which must have taken place when I was seven years old.<sup>1</sup> We were sitting together one evening—the governess, the cook, another servant-girl, myself and my brother, who was eighteen months younger than me. The young women were talking, and I suddenly became aware of Fräulein Lina saying: "It could be done with the little one; but Paul" (that was I) "is too clumsy, he would be sure to miss it." I did not understand clearly what was meant, but I felt the slight and began to cry. Lina comforted me, and told me how a girl, who had done something of the kind with a little boy she was in charge of, had been put in prison for several months. I do not believe she actually did anything wrong with me, but I took a great many liberties with her. When I got into her bed I used to uncover her and touch her, and she made no objections. She was not very intelligent, and clearly had very strong sexual cravings. At twenty-three she had already had a child. She afterwards married its father, so that to-day she is a Frau Hofrat.<sup>2</sup> Even now I often see her in the street.

'When I was six years old I already suffered from erections, and I know that once I went to my mother to complain about

<sup>1</sup> The patient subsequently admitted that this scene probably occurred one or two years later.

<sup>2</sup> [The Austrian title of '*Hofrat*' was awarded to prominent physicians, lawyers, university professors, civil servants, etc. It was perhaps equivalent to a knighthood in modern England.]

them. I know too that in doing so I had some misgivings to get over, for I had a feeling that there was some connection between this subject and my ideas and inquisitiveness, and at that time I used to have a morbid idea *that my parents knew my thoughts; I explained this to myself by supposing that I had spoken them out loud, without having heard myself do it.* I look on this as the beginning of my illness. There were certain people, girls, who pleased me very much, and I had a very strong wish *to see them naked.* But in wishing this I had *an uncanny feeling, as though something must happen if I thought such things, and as though I must do all sorts of things to prevent it.'*

(In reply to a question he gave an example of these fears: 'For instance, *that my father might die.*') 'Thoughts about my father's death occupied my mind from a very early age and for a long period of time, and greatly depressed me.'

At this point I learnt with astonishment that the patient's father, with whom his obsessional fears were, after all, occupied *now* [p. 158], had died several years previously.

The events in his sixth or seventh year which the patient described in the first hour of his treatment were not merely, as he supposed, the beginning of his illness, but were already the illness itself. It was a complete obsessional neurosis, wanting in no essential element, at once the nucleus and the prototype of the later disorder,—an elementary organism, as it were, the study of which could alone enable us to obtain a grasp of the complicated organization of his subsequent illness. The child, as we have seen, was under the domination of a component of the sexual instinct, the desire to look [scopophilia], as a result of which there was a constant recurrence in him of a very intense wish connected with persons of the female sex who pleased him—the wish, that is, to see them naked. This wish corresponds to the later obsessional or compulsive idea; and if the quality of compulsion was not yet present in the wish, this was because the

ego had not yet placed itself in complete opposition to it and did not yet regard it as something foreign to itself. Nevertheless, opposition to this wish from some source or other was already in activity, for its occurrence was regularly accompanied by a distressing affect.<sup>1</sup> A conflict was evidently in progress in the mind of this young libertine. Side by side with the obsessive wish, and intimately associated with it, was an obsessive fear: every time he had a wish of this kind he could not help fearing that something dreadful would happen. This something dreadful was already clothed in a characteristic indeterminateness which was thenceforward to be an invariable feature of every manifestation of the neurosis. But in a child it is not hard to discover what it is that is veiled behind an indeterminateness of this kind. If the patient can once be induced to give a particular instance in place of the vague generalities which characterize an obsessional neurosis, it may be confidently assumed that the instance is the original and actual thing which has tried to hide itself behind the generalization. Our present patient's obsessive fear, therefore, when restored to its original meaning, would run as follows: 'If I have this wish to see a woman naked, my father will be bound to die.' The distressing affect was distinctly coloured with a tinge of uncanniness and superstition, and was already beginning to give rise to impulses to do something to ward off the impending evil. These impulses were subsequently to develop into the *protective measures* which the patient adopted.

We find, accordingly: an erotic instinct and a revolt against it; a wish which has not yet become compulsive and, struggling against it, a fear which is already compulsive; a distressing affect and an impulsion towards the performance of defensive acts. The inventory of the neurosis has reached its full muster. Indeed, something more is present, namely, a

<sup>1</sup> Yet attempts have been made to explain obsessions without taking the affects into account!

kind of *delusion* or *delirium*<sup>1</sup> with the strange content that his parents knew his thoughts because he spoke them out loud without his hearing himself do it. We shall not go far astray if we suppose that in making this attempt at an explanation the child had some inkling of those remarkable mental processes which we describe as unconscious and which we cannot dispense with if we are to throw any scientific light upon this obscure subject. 'I speak my thoughts out loud, without hearing them' sounds like a projection into the external world of our own hypothesis that he had thoughts without knowing anything about them; it sounds like an endopsychic perception of what has been repressed.

For the situation is clear. This elementary neurosis of childhood already involved a problem and an apparent absurdity, like any complicated neurosis of maturity. What can have been the meaning of the child's idea that if he had this lascivious wish his father would be bound to die? Was it sheer nonsense? Or are there means of understanding the words and of perceiving them as a necessary consequence of earlier events and premises?

If we apply knowledge gained elsewhere to this case of childhood neurosis, we shall not be able to avoid a suspicion that in this instance as in others (that is to say, before the child had reached his sixth year) there had been conflicts and repressions, which had themselves been overtaken by amnesia, but had left behind them as a residuum the particular content of this obsessive fear. Later on we shall learn how far it is possible for us to rediscover those forgotten experiences or to reconstruct them with some degree of certainty. In the meantime stress may be laid on the fact, which is probably more than a mere coincidence, that the

<sup>1</sup> ['Delirium' is here and elsewhere in this paper used in a special sense which is explained below on p. 222. In French and German psychiatry, the term often corresponds to the English 'delusion'.]

patient's infantile amnesia ended precisely with his sixth year [see p. 160].

To find a chronic obsessional neurosis beginning like this in early childhood, with lascivious wishes of this sort connected with uncanny apprehensions and an inclination to the performance of defensive acts, is no new thing to me. I have come across it in a number of other cases. It is absolutely typical, although probably not the only possible type. Before proceeding to the events of the second session, I should like to add one more word on the subject of the patient's early sexual experiences. It will hardly be disputed that they may be described as having been considerable both in themselves and in their consequences. But it has been the same with the other cases of obsessional neurosis that I have had the opportunity of analysing. Such cases, unlike those of hysteria, invariably possess the characteristic of premature sexual activity. Obsessional neuroses make it much more obvious than hysterias that the factors which go to form a psychoneurosis are to be found in the patient's *infantile* sexual life and not in his present one. The current sexual life of an obsessional neurotic may often appear perfectly normal to a superficial observer; indeed, it frequently offers to the eye far fewer pathogenic elements and abnormalities than in the instance we are now considering.

### (c) THE GREAT OBSESSIVE FEAR

'I think I will begin to-day with the experience which was the immediate occasion of my coming to you. It was in August, during the manœuvres in ——. I had been suffering before, and tormenting myself with all kinds of obsessional thoughts, but they had quickly passed off during the manœuvres. I was keen to show the regular officers that people like me had not only learnt a good deal but could stand a good deal too. One day we started from —— on a short march. During a halt I lost my pince-nez, and, although I

could easily have found them, I did not want to delay our start, so I gave them up. But I wired to my opticians in Vienna to send me another pair by the next post. During that same halt I sat between two officers, one of whom, a captain with a Czech name, was to be of no small importance to me. I had a kind of dread of him, *for he was obviously fond of cruelty*. I do not say he was a bad man, but at the officers' mess he had repeatedly defended the introduction of corporal punishment, so that I had been obliged to disagree with him very sharply. Well, during this halt we got into conversation, and the captain told me he had read of a specially horrible punishment used in the East . . . '

Here the patient broke off, got up from the sofa, and begged me to spare him the recital of the details. I assured him that I myself had no taste whatever for cruelty, and certainly had no desire to torment him, but that naturally I could not grant him something which was beyond my power. He might just as well ask me to give him the moon. The overcoming of resistances was a law of the treatment, and on no consideration could it be dispensed with. (I had explained the idea of 'resistance' to him at the beginning of the hour, when he told me there was much in himself which he would have to overcome if he was to relate this experience of his.) I went on to say that I would do all I could, nevertheless, to guess the full meaning of any hints he gave me. Was he perhaps thinking of impalement?—'No, not that; . . . the criminal was tied up . . . '—he expressed himself so indistinctly that I could not immediately guess in what position—'. . . a pot was turned upside down on his buttocks . . . some *rats* were put into it . . . and they . . . '—he had again got up, and was showing every sign of horror and resistance—'. . . *bored their way in . . .*'—Into his anus, I helped him out.

At all the more important moments while he was telling his story his face took on a very strange, composite expression.

I could only interpret it as one of *horror at pleasure of his own of which he himself was unaware*. He proceeded with the greatest difficulty: 'At that moment the idea flashed through my mind that this was happening to a person who was very dear to me.'<sup>1</sup> In answer to a direct question he said that it was not he himself who was carrying out the punishment, but that it was being carried out as it were impersonally. After a little prompting I learnt that the person to whom this 'idea' of his related was the lady whom he admired.

He broke off his story in order to assure me that these thoughts were entirely foreign and repugnant to him, and to tell me that everything which had followed in their train had passed through his mind with the most extraordinary rapidity. Simultaneously with the idea there always appeared a 'sanction', that is to say, the defensive measure which he was obliged to adopt in order to prevent the phantasy from being fulfilled. When the captain had spoken of this ghastly punishment, he went on, and these ideas had come into his head, by employing his usual formulas (a 'but' accompanied by a gesture of repudiation, and the phrase 'whatever are you thinking of?') he had just succeeded in warding off *both* of them. [Cf. p. 224.]

This 'both' took me aback, and it has no doubt also mystified the reader. For so far we have heard only of one idea—of the rat punishment being carried out upon the lady. He was now obliged to admit that a second idea had occurred to him simultaneously, namely, the idea of the punishment also being applied to his father. As his father had died many years previously, this obsessive fear was much more non-sensical even than the first, and accordingly it had attempted to escape being confessed to for a little while longer.

<sup>1</sup> He said 'idea'—the stronger and more significant term 'wish', or rather 'fear', having evidently been censored. Unfortunately I am not able to reproduce the peculiar indeterminateness of all his remarks.

That evening, he continued, the same captain had handed him a packet that had arrived by the post and had said: 'Lieutenant A.<sup>1</sup> has paid the charges<sup>2</sup> for you. You must pay him back.' The packet had contained the pince-nez that he had wired for. At that instant, however, a 'sanction' had taken shape in his mind, namely, *that he was not to pay back the money* or it would happen—(that is, the phantasy about the rats would come true as regards his father and the lady). And immediately, in accordance with a type of procedure with which he was familiar, to combat this sanction there had arisen a command in the shape of a vow: '*You must pay back the 3.80 kronen*<sup>3</sup> to Lieutenant A.' He had said these words to himself almost half aloud.

Two days later the manœuvres had come to an end. He had spent the whole of the intervening time in efforts at repaying Lieutenant A. the small amount in question; but a succession of difficulties of an apparently *external* nature had arisen to prevent it. First he had tried to effect the payment through another officer who had been going to the post office. But he had been much relieved when this officer brought him back the money, saying that he had not met Lieutenant A. there, for this method of fulfilling his vow had not satisfied him, as it did not correspond with the wording, which ran: '*You must pay back the money to Lieutenant A.*' Finally, he had met Lieutenant A., the person he was looking for; but that officer had refused to accept the money, declaring that he had not paid anything for him, and had nothing whatever to do with the post, which was the business of Lieutenant B. This had thrown my patient into great perplexity, for it meant that he was unable to keep his vow, since it had been based upon false premises. He had excogitated a very curious

<sup>1</sup> The names are of little consequence here. [But see p. 291 n.]

<sup>2</sup> [The charges in question were for the cost of the new pince-nez. In Austria a system of 'cash on delivery' operated through the post office.]

<sup>3</sup> [A sum at that time equal to about 3s. 2d. or 75 cents.]



means of getting out of his difficulty, namely, that he should go to the post office with both the men, A. and B., that A. should give the young lady there the 3.80 *kronen*, that the young lady should give them to B., and that then he himself should pay back the 3.80 *kronen* to A. according to the wording of his vow.

It would not surprise me to hear that at this point the reader had ceased to be able to follow. For even the detailed account which the patient gave me of the external events of these days and of his reactions to them was full of self-contradictions and sounded hopelessly confused. It was only when he told the story for the third time that I could get him to realize its obscurities and could lay bare the errors of memory and the displacements in which he had become involved. I shall spare myself the trouble of reproducing these details, the essentials of which we shall easily be able to pick up later on, and I will only add that at the end of this second session the patient behaved as though he were dazed and bewildered. He repeatedly addressed me as 'Captain', probably because at the beginning of the hour I had told him that I myself was not fond of cruelty like Captain N., and that I had no intention of tormenting him unnecessarily.

The only other piece of information that I obtained from him during this hour was that from the very first, on all the previous occasions on which he had had a fear that something would happen to people he loved no less than on the present one, he had referred the punishments not only to our present life but also to eternity—to the next world. Up to his fourteenth or fifteenth year he had been devoutly religious, but from that time on he had gradually developed into the free-thinker that he was to-day. He reconciled the contradiction between his beliefs and his obsessions by saying to himself: 'What do you know about the next world? Nothing *can* be known about it. You're not risking anything—so do it.' This form of argument seemed unobjectionable to a man who was

in other respects particularly clear-headed, and in this way he exploited the uncertainty of reason in the face of these questions to the benefit of the religious attitude which he had outgrown.

At the third session he completed his very characteristic story of his efforts at fulfilling his obsessional vow. That evening the last gathering of officers had taken place before the end of the manœuvres. It had fallen to him to reply to the toast of 'The Gentlemen of the Reserve'. He had spoken well, but as if he were in a dream, for at the back of his mind he was being incessantly tormented by his vow. He had spent a terrible night. Arguments and counter-arguments had struggled with one another. The chief argument, of course, had been that the premise upon which his vow had been based—that Lieutenant A. had paid the money for him—had proved to be false. However, he had consoled himself with the thought that the business was not yet finished, as A. would be riding with him next morning part of the way to the railway station at P——,<sup>1</sup> so that he would still have time to ask him the necessary favour.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact he had not done this, and had allowed A. to go off without him; but he had given instructions to his orderly to let A. know that he intended to pay him a visit that afternoon. He himself had reached the station at half-past nine in the morning. He had deposited his luggage there and had seen to various things he had to do in the small town, with the intention of afterwards paying his visit to A. The village in which A. was stationed was about an hour's drive from the town of P——. The railway journey to the place where the post office was [Z——] would take three hours. He had calculated, therefore, that the execution of his complicated plan would just leave him

<sup>1</sup> [Freud's Original Record shows that this place was Przemysl.]

<sup>2</sup> [Reference to the sketch-map on p. 212 may make this paragraph easier to follow.]

time to catch the evening train from P—— to Vienna. The ideas that were struggling within him had been, on the one hand, that he was simply being cowardly and was obviously only trying to save himself the unpleasantness of asking A. to make the sacrifice in question and of cutting a foolish figure before him, and that that was why he was disregarding his vow; and, on the other hand, that it would, on the contrary, be cowardly of him to *fulfil* his vow, since he only wanted to do so in order to be left in peace by his obsessions. When in the course of his deliberations, the patient added, he found the arguments so evenly balanced as these, it was his custom to allow his actions to be decided by chance events as though by the hand of God. When, therefore, a porter at the station had addressed him with the words, ‘Ten o’clock train, sir?’ he had answered ‘Yes’, and in fact had gone off by the ten o’clock train. In this way he had produced a *fait accompli* and felt greatly relieved. He had proceeded to book a seat for luncheon in the restaurant car. At the first station they had stopped at it had suddenly struck him that he still had time to get out, wait for the next down train, travel back in it to P——, drive to the place where Lieutenant A. was quartered, from there make the three hours’ train journey with him to the post office, and so forth. It had only been the consideration that he had booked his seat for luncheon with the steward of the restaurant car that had prevented his carrying out this design. He had not abandoned it, however; he had only put off getting out until a later stop. In this way he had struggled through from station to station, till he had reached one at which it had seemed to him impossible to get out because he had relatives living there. He had then determined to travel through to Vienna, to look up his friend there and lay the whole matter before him, and then, after his friend had made his decision, to catch the night train back to P——. When I expressed a doubt whether this would have been feasible, he assured me that he would have had half an hour to spare

between the arrival of the one train and the departure of the other. When he had arrived in Vienna, however, he had failed to find his friend at the restaurant at which he had counted on meeting him, and had not reached his friend's house till eleven o'clock at night. He told him the whole story that very night. His friend had held up his hands in amazement to think that he could still be in doubt whether he was suffering from an obsession, and had calmed him down for the night, so that he had slept excellently. Next morning they had gone together to the post office, to dispatch the 3.80 *kronen* to the post office [Z—] at which the packet containing the pince-nez had arrived.

It was this last statement which provided me with a starting-point from which I could begin straightening out the various distortions involved in his story. After his friend had brought him to his senses he had dispatched the small sum of money in question neither to Lieutenant A. nor to Lieutenant B., but direct to the post office. He must therefore have known that he owed the amount of the charges due upon the packet *to no one but the official at the post office*, and he must have known this before he started on his journey. It turned out that in fact he had known it before the captain made his request and before he himself made his vow; for he now remembered that a few hours *before* meeting the cruel captain he had had occasion to introduce himself to another captain, who had told him how matters actually stood. This officer, on hearing his name, had told him that he had been at the post office a short time before, and that the young lady there had asked him whether he knew a Lieutenant L. (the patient, that is), for whom a packet had arrived, to be paid for on delivery. The officer had replied that he did not, but the young lady had been of opinion that she could trust the unknown lieutenant and had said that in the meantime she would pay the charges herself. It had been in this way that the patient had come into possession of the pince-nez he had ordered.