

ON THE GENESIS OF THE CASTRATION COMPLEX
IN WOMEN¹BY
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Whilst our knowledge of the forms which the castration complex may assume in women has become more and more comprehensive,² our insight into the nature of the complex as a whole has made no corresponding advance. The very abundance of the material collected which is now familiar to us brings to our minds more strongly than ever the remarkable character of the whole phenomenon, so that the phenomenon in itself becomes a problem. A survey of the forms assumed by the castration complex in women that have hitherto been observed and of the inferences tacitly drawn from them shows that, so far, the prevailing conception is based on a certain fundamental notion which may be, briefly formulated as follows (I quote in part *verbatim* from Abraham's work on the subject): Many females, both children and adults, suffer either temporarily or permanently from the fact of their sex. The manifestations in the mental life of women which spring from the objection to being a woman are traceable to their coveting a penis when they were little girls. The unwelcome idea of being fundamentally lacking in this respect gives rise to passive castration phantasies, while active phantasies spring from a revengeful attitude against the favoured male.

In this formulation we have it assumed as an axiomatic fact that females feel at a disadvantage in this respect of their genital organs, without this being regarded as constituting a problem in itself—possibly because to masculine narcissism this has seemed too self-evident to need explanation. Nevertheless, the conclusion so far

¹ Paper delivered at the Seventh International Psycho-Analytical Congress, Berlin, Sept. 1922.

² Cf. in particular Abraham, 'Manifestations of the Female Castration Complex' (1921), *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS*, Vol. III, p. 1.

drawn from the investigations—amounting as it does to an assertion that one-half of the human race is discontented with the sex assigned to it and can overcome this discontent only in favourable circumstances—is decidedly unsatisfying, not only to feminine narcissism but also to biological science. The question arises, therefore: Is it really the case that the forms of the castration complex met with in women, pregnant with consequences as they are, not only for the development of neurosis but also for the character-formation and destiny of women who for all practical purposes are normal, are based solely on a dissatisfaction with the fact of womanhood—a dissatisfaction due to her coveting a penis? Or is this possibly but a pretext (at any rate, for the most part) put forward by other forces, the dynamic power of which we know already from our study of the formation of neurosis?

I think that this problem can be attacked from several sides. Here I merely wish to put forward from the purely ontogenetic standpoint, in the hope that they may contribute to a solution, certain considerations which have gradually forced themselves upon me in the course of a practice extending over many years, amongst patients the great majority of whom were women and in whom on the whole the castration complex was very marked.

According to the prevailing conception the castration complex in females is entirely centred in the 'penis-envy' complex; in fact the term 'masculinity-complex' is used as practically synonymous. The first question which then presents itself is: How is it that we can observe this penis-envy occurring as an almost invariable typical phenomenon, even when the subject has not a masculine way of life, where there is no favoured brother to make envy of this sort comprehensible and where no 'accidental disasters'³ in the woman's experience have caused the masculine rôle to seem the more desirable?

The important point here seems to be the fact of raising the question; once it has been put answers suggest themselves almost spontaneously from the material with which we are sufficiently familiar. For supposing we take as our starting-point the form in which 'penis-envy' probably most frequently directly manifests itself, namely, in the desire to urinate like a man, a critical sifting of the material soon shows that this desire is made up of three component

³ Cf. Freud, 'Tabu der Virginität', *Sammlung kleiner Schriften*, Vierte Folge.

parts, of which sometimes one and sometimes another is the more important.

The part about which I can speak most briefly is that of *urethral erotism* itself, for sufficient stress has already been laid on this factor, being as it is the most obvious one. If we want to appraise in all its intensity the envy springing from this source we must above all make ourselves realize the narcissistic overestimation⁴ in which the excretory processes are held by children. Phantasies of omnipotence, especially such as are of a sadistic character, are as a matter of fact more easily associated with the jet of urine passed by the male. As an instance of this idea—and it is only one instance amongst many—I can quote something I was told of a class in a boys' school: when two boys, they said, urinate to make a cross the person of whom they think at the moment will die.

Now even though it is certain that a strong feeling of being at a disadvantage must arise in little girls in connection with urethral erotism, yet it is exaggerating the part played by this factor if, as has hitherto been done in many quarters, we straightway attribute to it every symptom and every phantasy of which the content is the desire to urinate like a man. On the contrary, the motive force which originates and maintains this wish is often to be found in quite other instinct-components—above all in active and passive scopophilia. This connection is due to the circumstance that it is just in the act of urinating that a boy can display his genital and look at himself and is even permitted to do so, and that he can thus in a certain sense satisfy his sexual curiosity, at least as far as his own body is concerned, every time he passes urine.

This factor, which is rooted in the scopophilic instinct, was particularly evident in a patient of mine in whom the desire to urinate like a male dominated the whole clinical picture for a time. During this period she seldom came to the analysis without declaring that she had seen a man urinating in the street, and once she exclaimed quite spontaneously: 'If I might ask a gift of Providence it would be to be able just for once to urinate like a man.' Her associations completed this thought beyond all possibility of doubt: 'For then I should know how I really am made.' The fact that men can see themselves when urinating, while women cannot, was in this patient,

⁴ Cf. Abraham, 'Zur narzisstischen Überwertung der Excretionsvorgänge in Traum und Neurose', *Internationale Zeitschrift*, 1920.

whose development was to a great extent arrested at a pregenital stage, actually one of the principal roots of her very marked 'penis-envy.'

Just as woman, because her genital organs are hidden, is ever the great riddle for man, so man is an object of lively jealousy for woman precisely on account of the ready visibility of his organ.

The close connection between urethral erotism and the scopophilic instinct was obvious in yet another patient, a woman whom I will call Y. She practised masturbation in a very peculiar way which stood for urinating like her father. In the obsessional neurosis from which this patient suffered, the chief agent was the scopophilic instinct; she had the most acute feelings of anxiety consequent on the idea of being seen by others whilst thus practising masturbation. She was therefore giving expression to the far-back wish of the little girl: I wish I had a genital too, which I could show, like father, every time I pass urine.

I think, moreover, that this factor plays a leading part in every case of exaggerated embarrassment and prudery in girls, and I further conjecture that the difference in the dress of men and women, at least in our civilized races, may be traced to this very circumstance that the girl cannot exhibit her genital organs and that therefore in respect of her exhibitionistic tendencies she regresses to a stage at which this desire to display herself still applied to her whole body. This puts us on the track of the reason of why a woman wears a low neck, while a man wears a dress-coat. I think too that this connection explains to some extent the criterion which is always mentioned first when the points of difference between men and women are under discussion—namely, the greater subjectivity of women as compared with the greater objectivity of men. The explanation would be that the man's impulse to investigate finds satisfaction in the examination of his own body and may, or must, subsequently be directed to external objects; while the woman, on the other hand, can arrive at no clear knowledge about her own person, and therefore finds it far harder to become free of herself.

Finally, the wish which I have assumed to be the prototype of 'penis-envy' has in it a third element, namely, suppressed onanistic wishes, as a rule deeply hidden but none the less important on that account. This element may be traced to a connection of ideas (mostly unconscious) by which the fact that boys are permitted to take hold of their genital when urinating is construed as a permission to masturbate.

Thus a patient who had witnessed a father reproving his little daughter for touching that part of her body with her tiny hands said to me quite indignantly: 'He forbids her to do that and yet does it himself five or six times a day.' You will easily recognize the same connection of ideas in the case of the patient Y., in whom the male way of urinating became the decisive factor in the form of masturbation that she practised. Moreover, in this case it became clear that she could not become completely free from the compulsion to masturbate so long as she unconsciously maintained the claim that she should be a man. The conclusion I drew from my observation of this case is, I think, quite a typical one: girls have a very special difficulty in overcoming masturbation because they feel that they are unjustly forbidden something which boys are allowed to do on account of their different bodily formation. Or, in terms of the problem before us, we may put it in another way and say that the difference in bodily formation may easily give rise to a bitter feeling of injury, so that the argument which is used later to account for the repudiation of womanhood, namely, that men have greater freedom in their sexual life, is really based upon actual experiences to that effect in early childhood. Van Ophuijsen at the conclusion of his work on the masculinity-complex in women lays stress on the strong impression he received in analysis of the existence of an intimate connection between the masculinity-complex, infantile masturbation of the clitoris and urethral erotism. The connecting link would probably be found in the considerations I have just put before you.

These considerations, which constitute the answer to our initial question about the reason why 'penis-envy' is of typical occurrence, may be summarized shortly as follows: The little girl's sense of inferiority is (as Abraham has also pointed out in one passage) by no means primary. But it seems to her that, in comparison with boys, she is subject to restrictions as regards the possibility of gratifying certain instinct-components which are of the greatest importance in the pregenital period. Indeed, I think I should put the matter even more accurately if I said that *as an actual fact*, from the point of view of a child at this stage of development, little girls *are* at a disadvantage compared with boys in respect of certain possibilities of gratification. For unless we are quite clear about the *reality* of this disadvantage we shall not understand that 'penis-envy' is an almost inevitable phenomenon in the life of female children, and one which cannot but complicate female development. The fact that

later when she reaches maturity a great part in sexual life (as regards creative power perhaps even a greater part than that of men) devolves upon a woman—I mean when she becomes a mother—cannot be any compensation to the little girl at this early stage, for it still lies outside her potentialities of direct gratification.

I shall here break off this line of thought, for I now come to the second, more comprehensive, problem: Does the complex we are discussing really rest on 'penis-envy' and is the latter to be regarded as the ultimate force behind it?

Taking this question as our starting-point, we have to consider what factors determine whether the penis-complex is more or less successfully overcome or whether it becomes regressively reinforced so that fixation occurs. A consideration of these possibilities compels us to examine more closely *the form of object-libido* in such cases. We then find that the girls and women whose desire to be men is often so glaringly evident have at the very outset of life passed through a phase of extremely strong father-fixation. In other words: They tried first of all to master the Oedipus complex in the normal way by retaining their original identification with the mother and, like the mother, taking the father as love-object.

We know that at this stage there are two possible ways in which a girl may overcome the 'penis-envy' complex without detriment to herself. She may pass from the auto-erotic narcissistic desire for the penis to the woman's desire for the man (= the father), precisely in virtue of her identification of herself with her mother; or to the material desire for a child (by the father). With regard to the subsequent love-life of healthy as well as abnormal women it is illuminating to reflect that (even in the most favourable instances) the origin, or at any rate one origin, of either attitude was narcissistic in character and of the nature of a desire for possession.

Now in the cases under consideration it is evident that this womanly and maternal development has taken place to a very marked degree. Thus in the patient Y., whose neurosis, like all those which I shall cite here, bore throughout the stamp of the castration complex, many phantasies of rape occurred which were indicative of this phase. The men whom she thought of as committing rape upon her were one and all unmistakably father-images; hence these phantasies had necessarily to be construed as the compulsive repetition of a primal phantasy in which the patient, who till late in life felt herself one with her mother, had experienced with her the father's act of complete

sexual appropriation. It is noteworthy that this patient, who in other respects was perfectly clear in her mind, was at the beginning of the analysis strongly inclined to regard these phantasies of rape as actual fact.

Other cases also manifest—in another form—a similar clinging to the fiction that this primal feminine phantasy is real. From another patient, whom I will call X., I heard innumerable remarks constituting direct proof of how very real this love-relation with the father had seemed to her. Once, for instance, she recollected how her father had sung a love-song to her, and with the recollection there broke from her a cry of disillusion and despair: 'And yet it was all a lie!' The same thought was expressed in one of her symptoms which I should like to cite here as typical of a whole similar group: at times she was under a compulsion to eat quantities of salt. Her mother had been obliged to eat salt on account of hæmorrhages of the lungs, which had occurred in the patient's early childhood; she had unconsciously construed them as the result of her parents' intercourse. This symptom therefore stood for her unconscious claim to have suffered the same experience from her father as her mother had undergone. It was the same claim that made her regard herself as a prostitute (actually she was a virgin) and that made her feel a compelling need to make a confession of some kind to any new love-object.

The numerous unmistakable observations of this kind show us how important it is to realize that at this early stage—as an ontogenetic repetition of a phylogenetic experience—the child constructs, on the basis of a (hostile or loving) identification with its mother, a phantasy that it has suffered full sexual appropriation by the father; and further, that in phantasy this experience presents itself as having actually taken place—as much a fact as it must have been at that distant time when all women were primarily the property of the father.

We know that the natural fate of this love-phantasy is a denial of it by reality. In cases which are subsequently dominated by the castration complex this frustration often changes into a profound *disappointment*, deep traces of which remain in the neurosis. Thus there arises a more or less extensive disturbance in the development of the sense of reality. One often receives the impression that the emotional intensity of this attachment to the father is too strong to admit of a recognition of the essential unreality of the relation; in other cases again it seems as though from the outset there had

been an excessive power of phantasy, making it difficult to grasp actuality correctly; finally the real relations with the parents are often so unhappy as to account for a clinging to phantasy.

These patients feel as if their fathers had actually once been their lovers and had afterwards been false to them or deserted them. Sometimes this again is the starting-point of doubt: Did I only imagine the whole thing, or was it true? In a patient whom I will call Z., of whom I shall have to speak in a moment, this doubting attitude betrayed itself in a repetition-compulsion which took the form of anxiety whenever a man appeared attracted to her, lest she might only be imagining this liking on his part. Even when she was actually engaged to be married she had to be constantly reassuring herself that she had not simply imagined the whole thing. In a day-dream she pictured herself as assailed by a man whom she knocked down with a blow on the nose, treading upon his penis with her foot. Continuing the phantasy, she wished to give him in charge but refrained because she was afraid he might declare she had imagined the scene. When speaking of the patient Y., I mentioned the doubt she felt as to the actuality of her phantasies of rape, and that this doubt had reference to the original experience with the father. In her it was possible to trace out the way in which the doubt from this source extended to every occurrence in her life and so actually became the basis of her obsessional neurosis. In her case, as in many others, the course of the analysis made it probable that this origin of the doubt had deeper roots than that uncertainty, with which we are familiar, about the subject's own sex.⁵

In the patient X., who used to revel in numerous recollections of that earliest period of her life which she called her childhood's paradise, this disappointment was closely connected in her memory with an unjust punishment inflicted on her by her father when she was five or six years old. It transpired that at this time a sister had been born and that she had felt herself supplanted by this sister in her father's affections. As deeper strata were revealed it became clear that behind the jealousy of her sister there lay a furious jealousy of her mother which related in the first instance to her mother's many pregnancies. 'Mother *always* had the babies', she once said indignantly. More strongly repressed were two further roots (by

⁵ Cf. the explanation Freud gives of doubt as doubt of the subject's capacity for love (hate).

no means equally important) of her feeling that her father was faithless to her. The one was sexual jealousy of her mother dating from her witnessing parental coitus at a time when her sense of reality was sufficiently awakened for it to be impossible for her any longer completely to incorporate all that she saw in her phantasy of an experience undergone by herself. It was a mishearing on her part which put me on the track of this last source of her feeling: once as I was speaking of a time '*nach der Enttäuschung*' (after the disappointment), she understood me to say '*Nacht der Enttäuschung*' (the night of the disappointment) and gave the association of Brangäne keeping vigil during Tristan and Isolde's love-night.

A repetition-compulsion in this patient spoke in language no less clear: the typical experience of her love-life was that she first of all fell in love with a father-substitute and then found him faithless. In connection with occurrences of this sort the final root of the complex became plainly evident: I allude to her feelings of guilt. Certainly a great part of these feelings was to be construed as reproaches originally directed against the father and then turned upon herself. But it was possible to trace very clearly the way in which the feelings of guilt, especially those which resulted from strong impulses to do away with her mother (to the patient this identification had the special significance of 'doing away with her' and 'replacing her') had produced in her an expectation of calamity, which of course referred above all to the relation with her father.⁶

I wish especially to emphasize the strong impression I received in this case of the importance of *the desire to have a child* (from the father).⁷ My reason for laying stress upon it is that I think we are inclined to underestimate the unconscious power of this wish and in particular its libidinal character, because it is a wish to which the ego can later more easily assent than to many other sexual impulses. Its relation to the 'penis-envy' complex is twofold. On the one hand it is well known that the maternal instinct receives an 'unconscious libidinal reinforcement'⁸ from the desire for a penis, a

⁶ [While revising the translation of this paragraph I wrote *competition-repulsion* instead of repetition-compulsion!—TRANS. ED.]

⁷ Cf. O. Rank's paper 'Perversion und Neurosis,' published in this JOURNAL, Vol. IV, Part 3.

⁸ Cf. Freud, 'Über Triebumsetzungen insbesondere der Analerotik', *Sammlung kleiner Schriften*. Vierte Folge.

desire which comes earlier in point of time because it belongs to the auto-erotic period. Then when the little girl experiences the disappointment described in relation to her father she renounces not only her claim upon him but also the desire for a child. This is regressively succeeded (in accordance with the familiar equation) by ideas belonging to the anal phase and by the old demand for the penis. When this takes place that demand is not simply revived, but is reinforced with all the energy of the girl-child's desire for a child.

I could see this connection particularly clearly in the case of the patient Z., who, after several symptoms of the obsessional neurosis had vanished, retained as the final and most obstinate symptom a lively dread of pregnancy and childbirth. The experience which had determined this symptom proved to be her mother's pregnancy and the birth of a brother when the patient was two years old, while observations of parental coitus, continued after she was no longer an infant, contributed to the same result. For a long time it seemed that this case was singularly well calculated to illustrate the central importance of the 'penis-envy' complex. Her coveting of the penis (her brother's) and her violent anger against him as the intruder who had ousted her from her position of only child, when once revealed by analysis, entered consciousness heavily charged with affect. The envy was, moreover, accompanied by all the manifestations which we are accustomed to trace to it: first and foremost the attitude of revenge against men, with very intense castration phantasies; repudiation of feminine tasks and functions, especially that of pregnancy; and further, a strong unconscious homosexual tendency. It was only when the analysis penetrated into deeper strata under the greatest resistances imaginable that it became evident that the source of the 'penis-envy' was her envy on account of the child which her mother and not she had received from her father, whereupon by a process of displacement the penis had become the object of envy in place of the child. In the same way her vehement anger against her brother proved really to have reference to her father, who she felt had deceived her, and to her mother who, instead of the patient herself, had received the child. Only when this displacement was cancelled did she really become free from 'penis-envy' and from the longing to be a man, and was she able to be a true woman and even to wish to have children herself.

Now what process had taken place? Quite roughly it may be

outlined as follows: (1) the envy relating to the child was displaced to the brother and his genital; (2) there clearly ensued the mechanism discovered by Freud, by which the father as love-object is given up and the object-relation to him is regressively replaced by an identification with him.

The latter process manifested itself in those pretensions to manhood on her part of which I have already spoken. It was easy to prove that her desire to be a man was by no means to be understood in a general sense, but that the real meaning of her claims was to act her father's part. Thus she adopted the same profession as her father, and after his death her attitude to her mother was that of a husband who makes demands upon his wife and issues orders. Once when a noisy eruption escaped her she could not help thinking with satisfaction: 'Just like Papa'. Yet she did not reach the point of a completely homosexual object-choice; the development of the object-libido seemed rather to be altogether disturbed, and the result was an obvious regression to an auto-erotic narcissistic stage. To sum up: displacement of the envy which had reference to children on to the brother and his penis, identification with the father, and regression to a pregenital phase all operated in the same direction—to stir up a powerful 'penis-envy' which then remained in the foreground and seemed to dominate the whole picture.

Now in my opinion this kind of development of the Oedipus complex is typical of those cases in which the castration complex is predominant. What happens is that a phase of identification with the mother gives way to a very large extent to one of identification with the father, and at the same time there is regression to a pregenital stage. This process of identification with the father I believe to be one root of the castration complex in women.

At this point I should like to answer at once two possible objections. One of them might run like this: such an oscillation between father and mother is surely nothing peculiar. On the contrary, it is to be seen in every child, and we know that, according to Freud, the libido of each one of us oscillates throughout life between male and female objects. The second objection relates to the connection with homosexuality, and may be expressed thus: in his paper on the psychogenesis of a case of homosexuality in a woman Freud has convinced us that such a development in the direction of identification with the father is one of the bases of manifest homosexuality; yet now I am depicting the same process as resulting in the castra-

tion complex. In answer I would emphasize the fact that it was just this paper of Freud's which helped me to understand the castration complex in women. It is exactly in these cases that, on the one hand, the extent to which the libido normally oscillates is considerably exceeded from a quantitative point of view, whilst, on the other hand, the repression of the love-attitude towards the father and the identification with him are not so completely successful as in cases of homosexuality. And so the similarity in the two courses of development is no argument against its significance for the castration complex in women; on the contrary, this view makes homosexuality much less of an isolated phenomenon.

We know that in every case in which the castration complex predominates there is without exception a more or less marked tendency to homosexuality. To play the father's part always amounts also to desiring the mother in some sense. There may be every possible degree of closeness in the relation between narcissistic regression and homosexual object-cathexis, so that we have an unbroken series culminating in manifest homosexuality.

A third criticism which suggests itself here relates to the temporal and causal connection with 'penis-envy' and runs as follows: Is not the relation of the 'penis-envy' complex to the process of identification with the father just the opposite of that depicted here? May it not be that in order to establish this sort of permanent identification with the father there has first to be an unusually strong 'penis-envy'? I think we cannot fail to recognize that a specially powerful 'penis-envy' (whether it is constitutional or the result of personal experience) does help to prepare the way for the change-over by which the patient identifies herself with the father; nevertheless, the history of the cases I have described, and of other cases as well, shows that notwithstanding the 'penis-envy' a strong and wholly womanly love-relation to the father had been formed, and that it was only when this love was disappointed that the feminine rôle was abandoned. This abandonment and the consequent identification with the father then revives the 'penis-envy', and only when it derives nourishment from such powerful sources as these can that feeling operate in its full strength.

For this revulsion to an identification with the father to take place it is essential that the sense of reality should be at least to some extent awakened; hence it is inevitable that the little girl should no longer be able to content herself, as she formerly did, simply with a

phantasied fulfilment of her desire for the penis, but should now begin to brood upon her lack of that organ or ponder over its possible existence. The trend of these speculations is determined by the girl's whole affective disposition; it is characterized by the following typical attitudes: a feminine love-attachment, not yet wholly subdued, to her father, feelings of vehement anger and of revenge directed against him because of the disappointment suffered through him, and last but not least, feelings of guilt (relating to incestuous phantasies concerning him) which are violently aroused under the pressure of the privation. Thus it is that these broodings invariably have reference to the father.

I saw this very clearly in the patient Y., whom I have already mentioned more than once. I told you that this patient produced phantasies of rape—phantasies which she regarded as fact—and that ultimately these related to her father. She too had reached the point of identifying herself to a very great extent with him; for instance, her attitude to her mother was exactly that of a son. Thus she had dreams in which her father was attacked by a snake or wild beasts, whereupon she rescued him.

Her castration phantasies took the familiar form of imagining that she was not normally made in the genital region, and besides this she had a feeling as though she had suffered some injury to the genitals. On both these points she had evolved many ideas, chiefly to the effect that these peculiarities were the result of acts of rape. Indeed, it became plain that her obstinate insistence upon these sensations and ideas in connection with her genital organs was actually designed to prove the reality of these acts of violence, and so, ultimately, the reality of her love-relation with her father. The clearest light is thrown upon the importance of this phantasy and the strength of the repetition-compulsion under which she laboured, by the fact that before analysis she had insisted on undergoing six laparotomy operations, several of which had been performed simply on account of her pains. In another patient, whose coveting of the penis took an absolutely grotesque form, this feeling of having sustained a wound was displaced on to other organs, so that when her obsessional symptoms had been resolved the clinical picture was markedly hypochondriacal. At this point her resistance took the following form: 'It is obviously absurd for me to be analysed, seeing that my heart, my lungs, my stomach, and my intestines are evidently organically diseased.' Here again the insistence on the

reality of her phantasies was so strong that on one occasion she had almost compelled performance of an intestinal operation. Her associations constantly brought the idea that she had been struck down (*geschlagen*) with illness by her father. As a matter of fact, when these hypochondriacal symptoms cleared up, phantasies of being struck (*Schlagephantasien*) became the most prominent feature in her neurosis. It seems to me quite impossible to account satisfactorily for these manifestations simply by the 'penis-envy' complex. But their main features become perfectly clear if we regard them as an effect of the impulse to experience anew after a compulsive fashion the suffering undergone at the hands of the father and to prove to herself the reality of the painful experience.

This array of material might be multiplied indefinitely, but it would only repeatedly go to show that we encounter under totally different guises this basic phantasy of having suffered castration through the love-relation with the father. My observations have led me to believe that this phantasy, whose existence has indeed long been familiar to us in individual cases, is of such typical and fundamental importance that I am inclined to call it the second root of the whole castration complex in women.

The great significance of this combination is that a highly important piece of repressed womanhood is most intimately bound up with the castration phantasies. Or, to look at it from the point of view of succession in time, that it is wounded womanhood which gives rise to the castration complex, and that it is this complex which injures (not *primarily*, however) feminine development.

Here we probably have the most fundamental basis of the revengeful attitude towards men which is so often a prominent feature in women in whom the castration complex is marked; attempts to explain this attitude as resulting from 'penis-envy' and the disappointment of the little girl's expectation that her father would give her the penis as a present, do not satisfactorily account for the mass of facts brought to light by an analysis of deeper strata of the mind. Of course in psycho-analysis the 'penis-envy' is more readily exposed than is the far more deeply repressed phantasy which ascribes the loss of the male genital to a sexual act with the father as partner. That this is so follows from the fact that no feelings of guilt at all are attached to 'penis-envy' in itself.

It is specially frequent for this attitude of revenge against men to be directed with particular vehemence against the man who

performs the act of defloration. The explanation is natural, namely, that it is precisely the father with whom, according to the phantasy, the patient mated for the first time. Hence in the subsequent actual love-life the first mate stands in a quite peculiar way for the father. This idea is expressed in the customs described by Freud in his essay on the taboo of virginity; according to these the performance of the act of defloration is actually entrusted to a father-substitute. To the unconscious mind, defloration is the repetition of the phantasied sexual act performed with the father, and therefore when defloration takes place all those affects which belong to the phantasied act are reproduced—strong feelings of attachment combined with the abhorrence of incest, and finally the attitude described above of revenge on account of disappointed love and of the castration supposedly suffered through this act.

This brings me to the end of my remarks. My problem was the question whether that dissatisfaction with the female sexual rôle which results from 'penis-envy' is really the alpha and omega of the castration complex in women. We have seen that the anatomical structure of the female genitals is indeed of great significance in the mental development of women. Also, it is indisputable that 'penis-envy' does essentially condition the forms in which the castration complex manifests itself in them. But the deduction that therefore their repudiation of their womanhood is based on that envy seems inadmissible. On the contrary we can see that 'penis-envy' by no means precludes a deep and wholly womanly love-attachment to the father and that it is only when this relation comes to grief over the (Edipus complex (exactly as in the corresponding male neuroses) that the envy leads to a revulsion from the subject's own sexual rôle.

The male neurotic who identifies himself with the mother and the female who identifies herself with the father repudiate, both in the same way, their respective sexual rôles. And from this point of view the castration fear of the male neurotic (behind which there lurks a castration wish upon which, to my mind, sufficient stress is never laid) corresponds exactly to the female neurotic's desire for the penis. This symmetry would be much more striking were it not that the man's inner attitude towards identification with the mother is diametrically opposed to that of the woman towards identification with the father. And this in two respects: in a man this wish to be a woman is not merely at variance with his conscious

narcissism, but is rejected for a second reason, namely, because the notion of being a woman implies at the same time the realization of all his fears of punishment, centred as they are in the genital region; in a woman, on the other hand, the identification with the father is confirmed by old wishes tending in the same direction, and it does not carry with it any sort of feelings of guilt but rather a sense of acquittal. For there ensues, from the connection I have described as existing between the ideas of castration and the incest-phantasies relating to the father, the fateful result, opposite to that in men, that being a woman is in itself felt to be culpable.

In his papers entitled 'Trauer und Melancholie'⁹ (Grief and Melancholia) and 'The Psychogenesis of a Case of Female Homosexuality',¹⁰ and in his *Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego*, Freud has shown more and more fully how largely the process of identification bulks in human mentality. It is just this identification with the parent of the opposite sex which seems to me to be the point from which in either sex both homosexuality and the castration complex are evolved.

⁹ *Sammlung kleiner Schriften*. Vierte Folge.

¹⁰ *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS*, Vol. I, p. 125.

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