

## **SOME NEUROTIC MECHANISMS IN JEALOUSY, PARANOIA AND HOMOSEXUALITY - (1922)**

Jealousy is one of those affective states, like grief, that may be described as normal. If anyone appears to be without it, the inference is justified that it has undergone severe repression and consequently plays all the greater part in his unconscious mental life. The instances of abnormally intense jealousy met with in analytic work reveal themselves as constructed of three layers. The three layers or grades of jealousy may be described as (1) competitive or normal, (2) projected, and (3) delusional jealousy.

There is not much to be said from the analytic point of view. It is easy to see that essentially it is compounded of grief, the pain caused by the thought of losing the loved object, and of the narcissistic wound, in so far as this is distinguishable from the other wound; further, of feelings of enmity against the successful rival, and of a greater or lesser amount of self-criticism which tries to hold the subject's own ego accountable for his loss. Although we may call it normal, this jealousy is by no means completely rational, that is, derived from the actual situation, proportionate to the real circumstances and under the complete control of the conscious ego; for it is rooted deep in the unconscious, it is a continuation of the earliest stirrings of the child's affective life, and it originates in the Oedipus or brother-and-sister complex of the first sexual period. Moreover, it is noteworthy that in some people it is experienced bisexually. That is to say, a man will not only feel pain about the woman he loves and hatred of the man who is his rival, but also grief about the man, whom he loves unconsciously, and hatred of the woman as his rival; and this latter set of feelings will add to the intensity of his jealousy. I even know of a man who suffered exceedingly during his attacks of jealousy and who, according to his own account, went through unendurable torments by consciously imagining himself in the position of the faithless woman. The sensation of helplessness which then came over him and the images he used to describe his condition - exposed to the vulture's beak like Prometheus, or thrown bound into a nest of serpents - were referred by him to impressions received during several homosexual acts of aggression to which he had been subjected as a boy.

The jealousy of the second layer, projected jealousy, is derived in both men and women either from their own actual unfaithfulness in real life or from impulses towards it which have succumbed to repression. It is a matter of everyday experience that fidelity, especially that degree of it required in marriage, is only maintained in the face of continual temptations. Anyone who denies these temptations in himself will nevertheless feel their pressure so strongly that he will be glad enough to make use of an unconscious mechanism to alleviate his situation. He can obtain this alleviation - and, indeed, acquittal by his conscience - if he projects his own impulses to faithlessness on to the partner to whom he owes faith. This strong motive can then make use of the perceptual material which betrays unconscious impulses of the same kind in the partner, and the subject can justify himself with the reflection that the other is probably not much better than he is himself.<sup>1</sup>

Social conventions have wisely taken this universal state of things into account, by granting a certain amount of latitude to the married woman's craving to attract and the married man's thirst to make conquests, in the expectation that this inevitable tendency to unfaithfulness will thus find a safety valve and be rendered innocuous. Convention has laid down that neither partner is to hold the other accountable for these little excursions in the direction of unfaithfulness, and they usually result in the desire that has been awakened by the new object finding satisfaction in some kind of return to faithfulness to the original object. A jealous person, however, does not recognize this convention of tolerance; he does not believe in any such thing as a halt or a turning-back once the path has been trodden, nor that a flirtation may be a safeguard against actual infidelity. In the treatment of a jealous person like this, one must refrain from disputing with him the material on which he bases his suspicions; one can only aim at bringing him to regard the matter in a different light.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Desdemona's song:

I called my love false love; but what said he then?

If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men.

The jealousy that arises from such a projection has, it is true, an almost delusional character; it is, however, amenable to the analytic work of exposing the unconscious phantasies of the subject's own infidelity. The position is worse as regards jealousy belonging to the third layer, the true delusional type. It too has its origin in repressed impulses towards unfaithfulness; but the object in these cases is of the same sex as the subject. Delusional jealousy is what is left of a homosexuality that has run its course, and it rightly takes its position among the classical forms of paranoia. As an attempt at defence against an unduly strong homosexual impulse it may, in a man, be described in the formula: 'I do not love him, she loves him!' <sup>1</sup> In a delusional case one will be prepared to find jealousy belonging to all three layers, never to the third alone.B

Paranoia - Cases of paranoia are for well-known reasons not usually amenable to analytic investigation. I have recently been able, nevertheless, by an intensive study of two paranoics, to discover something new to me.

The first case was that of a youngish man with a fully developed paranoia of jealousy, the object of which was his impeccably faithful wife. A stormy period in which the delusion had possessed him uninterruptedly already lay behind him. When I saw him he was only subject to clearly separated attacks, which lasted for several days and which, curiously enough, regularly appeared on the day after he had had sexual intercourse with his wife, which was, incidentally, satisfying to both of them. The inference is justified that after every satiation of the heterosexual libido the homosexual component, likewise stimulated by the act, forced an outlet for itself in the attack of jealousy.

These attacks drew their material from his observation of minute indications, by which his wife's quite unconscious coquetry, unnoticeable to any one else, had

betrayed itself to him. She had unintentionally touched the man sitting next her with her hand; she had turned too much towards him, or she had smiled more pleasantly than when alone with her husband. He was extraordinarily observant of all these manifestations of her unconscious, and always knew how to interpret them correctly, so that he really was always in the right about it, and could furthermore call in analysis to justify his jealousy. His abnormality really reduced itself to this, that he watched his wife's unconscious mind much more closely and then regarded it as far more important than anyone else would have thought of doing.

<sup>1</sup> See the Schreber analysis (1911c).3

We are reminded that sufferers from persecutory paranoia act in just the same way. They, too, cannot regard anything in other people as indifferent, and they, too, take up minute indications with which these other, unknown, people present them, and use them in their delusions of reference. The meaning of their delusion of reference is that they expect from all strangers something like love. But these people show them nothing of the kind; they laugh to themselves, flourish their sticks, even spit on the ground as they go by - and one really does not do such things while a person in whom one takes a friendly interest is near. One does them only when one feels quite indifferent to the passer-by, when one can treat him like air; and, considering, too, the fundamental kinship of the concepts of 'stranger' and 'enemy', the paranoid is not so far wrong in regarding this indifference as hate, in contrast to his claim for love.

We begin to see that we describe the behaviour of both jealous and persecutory paranoids very inadequately by saying that they project outwards on to others what they do not wish to recognize in themselves. Certainly they do this; but they do not project it into the blue, so to speak, where there is nothing of the sort already. They let themselves be guided by their knowledge of the unconscious, and displace to the unconscious minds of others the attention which they have withdrawn from their own. Our jealous husband perceived his wife's unfaithfulness instead of his own; by becoming conscious of hers and magnifying it enormously he succeeded in keeping his own unconscious. If we accept his example as typical, we may infer that the enmity which the persecuted paranoid sees in others is the reflection of his own hostile impulses against them. Since we know that with the paranoid it is precisely the most loved person of his own sex that becomes his persecutor, the question arises where this reversal of affect takes its origin; the answer is not far to seek - the ever-present ambivalence of feeling provides its source and the non-fulfilment of his claim for love strengthens it. This ambivalence thus serves the same purpose for the persecuted paranoid as jealousy served for my patient - that of a defence against homosexuality.

The dreams of my jealous patient presented me with a great surprise. They were not simultaneous with the outbreaks of the attacks, it is true, but they occurred within the period which was under the dominance of the delusion; yet they were completely free from delusion and they revealed the underlying homosexual impulses with no more than the usual degree of disguise. Since I had had little

experience of the dreams of paranoics, it seemed plausible at the time to suppose that it was true in general that paranoia does not penetrate into dreams.

This patient's homosexual position was easily surveyed. He had made no friendships and developed no social interests; one had the impression that only the delusion had carried forward the development of his relations with men, as if it had taken over some of the arrears that had been neglected. The fact that his father was of no great importance in the family, combined with a humiliating homosexual trauma in early boyhood, had forced his homosexuality into repression and barred the way to its sublimation. The whole of his youth was governed by a strong attachment to his mother. Of all her many sons he was her declared favourite, and he developed marked jealousy of the normal type in regard to her. When later he made his choice of a wife - mainly prompted by an impulse to enrich his mother - his longing for a virgin mother expressed itself in obsessive doubts about his fiancée's virginity. The first years of his marriage were free from jealousy. Then he became unfaithful to his wife and entered upon an intimate relationship with another woman that lasted for a considerable time. Frightened by a certain suspicion, he at length made an end of this love affair, and not until then did jealousy of the second, projected type break out, by means of which he was able to assuage his self-reproaches about his own unfaithfulness. It was soon complicated by an accession of homosexual impulses, of which his father-in-law was the object, and became a fully formed jealous paranoia.

My second case would probably not have been classified as persecutory paranoia, apart from analysis; but I had to recognize the young man as a candidate for a terminal illness of that kind. In his attitude to his father there existed an ambivalence which in its range was quite extraordinary. On the one hand, he was the most pronounced rebel imaginable, and had developed manifestly in every direction in opposition to his father's wishes and ideals; on the other hand, at a deeper level he was still the most submissive of sons, who after his father's death denied himself all enjoyment of women out of a tender sense of guilt. His actual relations with men were clearly dominated by suspiciousness; his keen intellect easily rationalized this attitude; and he knew how to bring it about that both friends and acquaintances deceived and exploited him. The new thing I learned from studying him was that classical persecutory ideas may be present without finding belief or acceptance. They flashed up occasionally during the analysis, but he regarded them as unimportant and invariably scoffed at them. This may occur in many cases of paranoia; it may be that the delusions which we regard as new formations when the disease breaks out have already long been in existence.

It seems to me that we have here an important discovery - namely, that the qualitative factor, the presence of certain neurotic formations, has less practical significance than the quantitative factor, the degree of attention or, more correctly, the amount of cathexis that these structures are able to attract to themselves. Our consideration of the first case, the jealous paranoia, led to a similar estimate of the importance of the quantitative factor, by showing that there also the abnormality essentially consisted in the hypercathexis of the interpretations of someone else's unconscious. We have long known of an analogous fact in the analysis of hysteria.

The pathogenic phantasies, derivatives of repressed instinctual impulses, are for a long time tolerated alongside the normal life of the mind, and have no pathogenic effect until by a revolution in the libidinal economy they receive a hypercathexis; not till then does the conflict which leads to the formation of symptoms break out. Thus as our knowledge grows we are increasingly impelled to bring the economic point of view into the foreground. I should also like to throw out the question whether this quantitative factor that I am now dwelling on does not suffice to cover the phenomena which Bleuler and others have lately proposed to name 'switching'. One need only assume that an increase in resistance in the course taken by the psychical current in one direction results in a hypercathexis of another path and thus causes the flow to be switched into that path.

My two cases of paranoia showed an instructive contrast in the behaviour of their dreams. Whereas those of the first case were free from delusion, as has already been said, the other patient produced great numbers of persecutory dreams, which may be regarded as forerunners of or substitutes for the delusional ideas. The pursuer, whom he only managed to escape with great fear, was usually a powerful bull or some other male symbol which even in the dream itself he sometimes recognized as representing his father. One day he produced a very characteristic paranoic transference-dream. He saw me shaving in front of him, and from the scent he realized that I was using the same soap as his father had used. I was doing this in order to oblige him to make a father-transference on to me. The choice of this incident for his dream quite unmistakably betrays the patient's depreciatory attitude to his paranoic phantasies and his disbelief in them; for his own eyes could tell him every day that I was never in a position to make use of shaving-soap and that therefore there was in this respect nothing to which a father-transference could attach itself.

A comparison of the dreams of the two patients shows, however, that the question whether or not paranoia (or any other psychoneurosis) can penetrate into dreams is based on a false conception of dreams. Dreams are distinguished from waking thought by the fact that they can include material (belonging to the region of the repressed) which must not emerge in waking thought. Apart from this, dreams are merely a form of thinking

, a transformation of preconscious material of thought by the dream-work and its conditions. Our terminology of the neuroses is not applicable to repressed material; this cannot be called hysterical, nor obsessional, nor paranoic. As against this, the other part of the material which is subjected to the process of dream-formation - the preconscious thoughts - may be normal or may bear the character of any neurosis; they may be the products of any of the pathogenic processes in which the essence of a neurosis lies. There seems to be no reason why any such pathological idea should not be transformed into a dream. A dream may therefore quite simply represent a hysterical phantasy, an obsessional idea, or a delusion - that is, may reveal one or other of these upon interpretation. Observation of the two paranoics shows that the dreams of the one were quite normal while he was subject to his delusion, and that those of the other were paranoic in content while he was treating his delusional ideas with contempt. In both cases, therefore, the

dream took up the material that was at the time forced into the background in waking life. This too, however, need not necessarily be an invariable rule.

## C

Homosexuality. - Recognition of the organic factor in homosexuality does not relieve us of the obligation of studying the psychical processes connected with its origin. The typical process, already established in innumerable cases, is that a few years after the termination of puberty a young man, who until this time has been strongly fixated to his mother, changes his attitude; he identifies himself with his mother, and looks about for love-objects in whom he can re-discover himself, and whom he might then love as his mother loved him. The characteristic mark of this process is that for several years one of the necessary conditions for his love is usually that the male object shall be of the same age as he himself was when the change took place. We have come to know of various factors contributing to this result, probably in different degrees. First there is the fixation on the mother, which makes it difficult to pass on to another woman. Identification with the mother is an outcome of this attachment, and at the same time in a certain sense it enables the son to keep true to her, his first object. Then there is the inclination towards a narcissistic object-choice, which in general lies readier to hand and is easier to put into effect than a move towards the other sex. Behind this latter factor there lies concealed another of quite exceptional strength, or perhaps it coincides with it: the high value set upon the male organ and the inability to tolerate its absence in a love-object. Depreciation of women, and aversion to them, even horror of them, are generally derived from the early discovery that women have no penis. We subsequently discovered, as another powerful motive urging towards homosexual object-choice, regard for the father or fear of him; for the renunciation of women means that all rivalry with him (or with all men who may take his place) is avoided. The two last motives - the clinging to the condition of a penis in the object, as well as the retiring in favour of the father - may be ascribed to the castration complex. Attachment to the mother, narcissism, fear of castration - these are the factors (which incidentally have nothing specific about them) that we have hitherto found in the psychical aetiology of homosexuality; and with these must be reckoned the effect of seduction, which is responsible for a premature fixation of the libido, as well as the influence of the organic factor which favours the passive role in love.

We have, however, never regarded this analysis of the origin of homosexuality as complete. I can now point to a new mechanism leading to homosexual object-choice, although I cannot say how large a part it plays in the formation of the extreme, manifest and exclusive type of homosexuality. Observation has directed my attention to several cases in which during early childhood impulses of jealousy, derived from the mother-complex and of very great intensity, arose against rivals, usually older brothers. This jealousy led to an exceedingly hostile and aggressive attitude towards these brothers which might sometimes reach the pitch of actual death-wishes, but which could not maintain themselves in the face of the subject's further development. Under the influences of upbringing - and certainly not uninfluenced also by their own continuing powerlessness - these impulses yielded to repression and underwent a transformation, so that the rivals of the earlier

period became the first homosexual love-objects. Such an outcome of the attachment to the mother shows various interesting relations with other processes known to us. First of all it is a complete contrast to the development of persecutory paranoia, in which the person who has before been loved becomes the hated persecutor, whereas here the hated rivals are transformed into love objects. It represents, too, an exaggeration of the process which, according to my view, leads to the birth of social instincts in the individual.<sup>1</sup> In both processes there is first the presence of jealous and hostile impulses which cannot achieve satisfaction; and both the affectionate and the social feelings of identification arise as reactive formations against the repressed aggressive impulses.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my Group psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (1921c).9

This new mechanism of homosexual object-choice - its origin in rivalry which has been overcome and in aggressive impulses which have become repressed - is sometimes combined with the typical conditions already familiar to us. In the history of homosexuals one often hears that the change in them took place after the mother had praised another boy and set him up as a model. The tendency to a narcissistic object-choice was thus stimulated, and after a short phase of keen jealousy the rival became a love-object. As a rule, however, the new mechanism is distinguished by the change taking place at a much earlier period, and the identification with the mother receding into the background. Moreover, in the cases I have observed, it led only to homosexual attitudes which did not exclude heterosexuality and did not involve a horror feminae.

It is well known that a good number of homosexuals are characterized by a special development of their social instinctual impulses and by their devotion to the interests of the community. It would be tempting, as a theoretical explanation of this, to say that the behaviour towards men in general of a man who sees in other men potential love-objects must be different from that of a man who looks upon other men in the first instance as rivals in regard to women. The only objection to this is that jealousy and rivalry play their part in homosexual love as well, and that the community of men also includes these potential rivals. Apart from this speculative explanation, however, the fact that homosexual object-choice not infrequently proceeds from an early overcoming of rivalry with men cannot be without a bearing on the connection between homosexuality and social feeling.

In the light of psycho-analysis we are accustomed to regard social feeling as a sublimation of homosexual attitudes towards objects. In the homosexuals with marked social interests, it would seem that the detachment of social feeling from object choice has not been fully carried through.