

THE TABOO OF VIRGINITY - (CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LOVE III) - (1918)

Few details of the sexual life of primitive peoples are so alien to our own feelings as their estimate of virginity, the state in a woman of being untouched. The high value which her suitor places on a woman's virginity seems to us so firmly rooted, so much a matter of course, that we find ourselves almost at a loss if we have to give reasons for this opinion. The demand that a girl shall not bring to her marriage with a particular man any memory of sexual relations with another is, indeed, nothing other than a logical continuation of the right to exclusive possession of a woman, which forms the essence of monogamy, the extension of this monopoly to cover the past.

From this point we have no trouble in justifying what looked at first like a prejudice, by referring to our views on the erotic life of women. Whoever is the first to satisfy a virgin's desire for love, long and laboriously held in check, and who in doing so overcomes the resistances which have been built up in her through the influences of her milieu and education, that is the man she will take into a lasting relationship, the possibility of which will never again be open to any other man. This experience creates a state of bondage in the woman which guarantees that possession of her shall continue undisturbed and makes her able to resist new impressions and enticements from outside.

The expression 'sexual bondage' was chosen by von Krafft Ebing (1892) to describe the phenomenon of a person's acquiring an unusually high degree of dependence and lack of self-reliance in relation to another person with whom he has a sexual relationship. This bondage can on occasion extend very far, as far as the loss of all independence will and as far as causing a person to suffer the greatest sacrifices of his own interests; the author, however, does not fail to remark that a certain measure of such dependence 'is absolutely necessary, if the tie is to last for any length of time'. Some such measure of sexual bondage is, indeed, indispensable to the maintenance of civilized marriage and to holding at bay the polygamous tendencies which threaten it, and in our social communities this factor is regularly reckoned upon.

Von Krafft-Ebing derives the formation of sexual bondage from a conjunction of an 'uncommon degree of the state of being in love and of weakness of character' in one person and unbounded egoism in the other. Analytic experience, however, will not let us rest satisfied with this simple attempt at explanation. We can see, rather, that the decisive factor is the amount of sexual resistance that is overcome and in addition the fact that the process of overcoming the resistance is concentrated and happens only once. This state of bondage is, accordingly, far more frequent and more intense in women than in men, though it is true it occurs in the latter more often nowadays than it did in ancient times. Wherever we have been able to study sexual bondage in men it has shown itself as resulting from an overcoming of psychical impotence through one particular woman, to whom the man in question has remained subsequently bound. Many strange marriages and not a few tragic

events - even some with far-reaching consequences - seem to owe their explanation to this origin.

Turning to the attitude of primitive peoples, it is incorrect to describe it by declaring that they set no value on virginity and to submit as proof of this the fact that they perform the defloration of girls outside marriage and before the first act of marital intercourse. On the contrary, it appears that for them, too, defloration is a significant act; but it has become the subject of a taboo - of a prohibition which may be described as religious. Instead of reserving it for the girl's bridegroom and future partner in marriage, custom demands that he shall shun the performance of it.¹

It is no part of my purpose to make a full collection of the literary evidence for the existence of this custom of prohibition, to pursue its geographical distribution and to enumerate all the forms in which it is expressed. I shall content myself, therefore, with stating the fact that the practice of rupturing the hymen in this way outside the subsequent marriage is very widespread among primitive races living to-day. As Crawley says 'This marriage ceremony consists in perforation of the hymen by some appointed person other than the husband; it is most common in the lowest stages of culture, especially in Australia.' (Crawley, 1902, 347.)

If, however, defloration is not to result from the first act of marital intercourse, then it must have been carried out beforehand - whatever the way and whoever the agent may have been. I shall quote a few passages from Crawley's book, mentioned above, which provide information on these points but also give grounds for some critical observations.

(Ibid., 191.) 'Thus in the Dieri and neighbouring tribes (in Australia) it is the universal custom when a girl reaches puberty to rupture the hymen (Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 24, 169). In the Portland and Glenelg tribes this is done to the bride by an old woman; and sometimes white men are asked for this reason to deflower maidens (Brough Smith, 2, 319).'

(Ibid., 307.) 'The artificial rupture of the hymen sometimes takes place in infancy, but generally at puberty. . . . It is often combined, as in Australia, with a ceremonial act of intercourse.'

(Ibid., 348.) (Of Australian tribes among which the well known exogamous marriage-restrictions are in force, from communications by Spencer and Gillen:) 'The hymen is artificially perforated, and then the assisting men have access (ceremonial, be it observed) to the girl in a stated order. . . . The act is in two parts, perforation and intercourse.'

(Ibid., 349.) 'An important preliminary of marriage amongst the Masai (in Equatorial Africa) is the performance of this operation on the girl (J. Thomson, 2, 258). This defloration is performed by the father of the bride amongst the Sakais (Malay), Battas (Sumatra), and Alfoers of Celebes (Ploss and Bartels, 2, 490). In

¹ Cf. Crawley (1902), Ploss and Bartels (1891), Frazer (1911) and Havelock Ellis.1

the Philippines there were certain men whose profession it was to deflower brides, in case the hymen had not been ruptured in childhood by an old woman who was sometimes employed for this (Featherman, 2, 474). The defloration of the bride was amongst some Eskimo tribes entrusted to the angekok, or priest (ibid., 3, 406).'

The critical remarks I referred to are concerned with two points. Firstly, it is a pity that in these reports a more careful distinction is not made between simple rupture of the hymen without intercourse, and intercourse for the purpose of effecting this rupture. There is only one passage in which we are told expressly that the procedure falls into two actions: defloration (carried out by hand or with some instrument) and the act of intercourse which follows it. The material in Ploss and Bartels (1891), in other respects so rich, is almost useless for our purpose, because in their presentation of it the psychological importance of the act of defloration is completely displaced in favour of its anatomical results. Secondly, we should be glad to be informed how the 'ceremonial' (purely formal, ritual, or official) coitus, which takes place on these occasions, differs from ordinary sexual intercourse. The authors to whom I have had access either have been too embarrassed to discuss the matter or have once again underestimated the psychological importance of such sexual details. It is to be hoped that the first-hand accounts of travellers and missionaries may be more complete and less ambiguous, but since this literature, which is for the most part foreign, is for the time being inaccessible I cannot say anything definite on the subject. Besides, we may get round the problem arising over this second point if we bear in mind the fact that a ceremonial mock-coitus would after all only represent a substitute for, and perhaps replace altogether, an act that in earlier times would have been carried out completely.¹

There are various factors which can be adduced to explain this taboo of virginity and which I will enumerate and consider briefly. When a virgin is deflowered, her blood is as a rule shed; the first attempt at explanation, then, is based on the horror of blood among primitive races who consider blood as the seat of life. This blood taboo is seen in numerous kinds of observances which have nothing to do with sexuality; it is obviously connected with the prohibition against murder and forms a protective measure against the primal thirst for blood, primaeval man's pleasure in killing. According to this view the taboo of virginity is connected with the taboo of menstruation which is almost universally maintained. Primitive people cannot dissociate the puzzling phenomenon of this monthly flow of blood from sadistic ideas. Menstruation, especially its first appearance, is interpreted as the bite of some spirit-animal, perhaps as a sign of sexual intercourse with this spirit. Occasionally some report gives grounds for recognizing the spirit as that of an

¹ In numerous other examples of marriage ceremonies there can be no doubt that people other than the bridegroom, for example his assistants and companions (our traditional 'groomsmen' ['Kranzelherrn']), are granted full sexual access to the bride.

ancestor and then, supported by other findings,¹ we understand that the menstruating girl is taboo because she is the property of this ancestral spirit.

Other considerations, however, warn us not to over-estimate the influence of a factor such as the horror of blood. It has not, after all, been strong enough to suppress practices like the circumcision of boys and the still more cruel equivalent with girls (excision of the clitoris and labia minora) which are to some extent the custom in these same races, nor to abolish the prevalence of other ceremonies involving bloodshed. It would not therefore be surprising, either, if this horror were overcome for the benefit of the husband on the occasion of the first cohabitation.

There is a second explanation, also unconcerned with sexuality, which has, however, a much more general scope than the first. It suggests that primitive man is prey to a perpetual lurking apprehensiveness, just as in the psycho-analytic theory of the neuroses we claim to be the case with people suffering from anxiety neurosis. This apprehensiveness will appear most strongly on all occasions which differ in any way from the usual, which involve something new or unexpected, something not understood or uncanny. This is also the origin of the ceremonial practices, widely adopted in later religions, which are connected with the beginning of every new undertaking, the start of every new period of time, the first-fruits of human, animal and plant life. The dangers which the anxious man believes to be threatening him never appear more vivid in his expectation than on the threshold of a dangerous situation, and then, too, is the only time when protecting himself against them is of any use. The first act of intercourse in marriage can certainly claim, on grounds of importance, to be preceded by such precautionary measures. These two attempts at explanation, based on horror of blood and on fear of first occurrences, do not contradict but rather reinforce each other. The first occasion of sexual intercourse is certainly a critical action, all the more so if it is to involve a flow of blood.

A third explanation - the one which Crawley prefers - draws attention to the fact that the taboo of virginity is part of a large totality which embraces the whole of sexual life. It is not only the first coitus with a woman which is taboo but sexual intercourse in general; one might almost say that women are altogether taboo. A woman is not only taboo in particular situations arising from her sexual life such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and lying-in; apart from these situations, intercourse with women is subject to such solemn and numerous restrictions that we have every reason to doubt the reputed sexual freedom of savages. It is true that, on particular occasions, primitive man's sexuality will override all inhibitions; but for the most part it seems to be more strongly held in check by prohibitions than it is at higher levels of civilization. Whenever the man undertakes some special enterprise, like setting out on an expedition, a hunt or a campaign, he is obliged to keep away from his wife and especially from sexual intercourse with her; otherwise she will paralyse his strength and bring him bad luck. In the usages of daily life as well there is an unmistakable tendency to keep the sexes apart.

¹ Cf. Totem and Taboo (1912-13).3

Women live with women, men with men; family life, in our sense, seems scarcely to exist in many primitive tribes. This separation sometimes goes so far that one sex is not allowed to say aloud the personal names of members of the other sex, and that the women develop a language with a special vocabulary. Sexual needs will from time to time break through these barriers of separation afresh, but in some tribes even the encounters of husband and wife have to take place outside the house and in secret.

Wherever primitive man has set up a taboo he fears some danger and it cannot be disputed that a generalized dread of women is expressed in all these rules of avoidance. Perhaps this dread is based on the fact that woman is different from man, forever incomprehensible and mysterious, strange and therefore apparently hostile. The man is afraid of being weakened by the woman, infected with her femininity and of then showing himself incapable. The effect which coitus has on discharging tensions and causing flaccidity may be the prototype of what the man fears; and realization of the influence which the woman gains over him through sexual intercourse, the consideration she thereby forces from him, may justify the extension of this fear. In all this there is nothing obsolete, nothing which is not still alive among ourselves.

Many observers of primitive races living to-day have put forward the view that their impulses in love are relatively weak and never reach the degree of intensity which we are accustomed to meet with in civilized men. Other observers have contradicted this opinion, but in any case the practice of the taboos we have described testifies to the existence of a force which opposes love by rejecting women as strange and hostile.

Crawley, in language which differs only slightly from the current terminology of psycho-analysis, declares that each individual is separated from the others by a 'taboo of personal isolation', and that it is precisely the minor differences in people who are otherwise alike that form the basis of feelings of strangeness and hostility between them. It would be tempting to pursue this idea and to derive from this 'narcissism of minor differences' the hostility which in every human relation we see fighting successfully against feelings of fellowship and overpowering the commandment that all men should love one another. Psycho-analysis believes that it has discovered a large part of what underlies the narcissistic rejection of women by men, which is so much mixed up with despising them, in drawing attention to the castration complex and its influence on the opinion in which women are held.

We can see, however, that these latter considerations have led us to range far beyond our subject. The general taboo of women throws no light on the particular rules concerning the first sexual act with a virgin. As far as they are concerned, we have not got beyond the first two explanations, based on horror of blood and fear of first occurrences, and even these, we must point out, do not touch the core of the taboo in question. It is quite clear that the intention underlying this taboo is that of denying or sparing precisely the future husband something which cannot be dissociated from the first sexual act, although according to our introductory

observations this very relation would lead to the woman becoming specially bound to this one man.

It is not our task on this occasion to discuss the origin and ultimate significance of taboo observances. I have done this in my book *Totem and Taboo*, where I have given due consideration to the part played by primal ambivalence in determining the formation of taboo and have traced the genesis of the latter from the prehistoric events which led to the founding of the human family. We can no longer recognize an original meaning of this kind in taboos observed among primitive tribes to-day. We forget all too easily, in expecting to find any such thing, that even the most primitive peoples exist in a culture far removed from that of primaeval days, which is just as old as our own from the point of view of time and like ours corresponds to a later, if different, stage of development.

To-day we find taboos among primitive peoples already elaborated into an intricate system of just the sort that neurotics among ourselves develop in their phobias, and we find old motifs replaced by new ones that fit together harmoniously. Leaving aside these genetic problems, then, we will go back to the idea that primitive man institutes a taboo where he fears some danger. Taking it generally this danger is a psychical one, for primitive man is not impelled at this point to make two distinctions, which to us it seems cannot be disregarded. He does not separate material from psychical danger, nor real from imaginary. In his consistently applied animistic view of the universe, every danger springs from the hostile intention of some being with a soul like himself, and this is as much the case with dangers which threaten him from some natural force as it is with those from other human beings or animals. But on the other hand he is accustomed to project his own internal impulses of hostility on to the external world, to ascribe them, that is, to the objects which he feels to be disagreeable or even merely strange. In this way women also are regarded as being a source of such dangers, and the first act of sexual intercourse with a woman stands out as a danger of particular intensity.

Now I believe that we shall receive some indication as to what this heightened danger is and why it threatens precisely the future husband, if we examine more closely the behaviour under the same circumstances of women of our own stage of civilization to-day. I will submit in advance, as the result of this examination, that such a danger really exists, so that with the taboo of virginity primitive man is defending himself against a correctly sensed, although psychical, danger.

We consider it to be the normal reaction for a woman after intercourse to embrace the man, pressing him to her at the climax of satisfaction, and we see this as an expression of her gratitude and a token of lasting bondage. But we know it is by no means the rule that the first occasion of intercourse should lead to this behaviour; very frequently it means only disappointment for the woman, who remains cold and unsatisfied, and it usually requires quite a long time and frequent repetition of the sexual act before she too begins to find satisfaction in it. There is an unbroken series from these cases of mere initial frigidity which soon vanishes, up to the cheerless phenomenon of permanent and obstinate frigidity which no tender efforts

on the part of the husband can overcome. I believe this frigidity in women is not yet sufficiently understood and, except for those cases which must be blamed on the man's insufficient potency, calls for elucidation, possibly through allied phenomena.

I do not want to introduce at this point the attempts - which are so frequent - to take flight from the first occasion of sexual intercourse, because they are open to several interpretations and are in the main, although not altogether, to be understood as an expression of the general female tendency to take a defensive line. As against this, I do believe that light is thrown on the riddle of female frigidity by certain pathological cases in which, after the first and indeed after each repeated instance of sexual intercourse, the woman gives unconcealed expression to her hostility towards the man by abusing him, raising her hand against him or actually striking him. In one very clear case of this kind, which I was able to submit to a thorough analysis, this happened although the woman loved the man very much, used to demand intercourse herself and unmistakably found great satisfaction in it. I think that this strange, contradictory reaction is the result of the very same impulses which ordinarily can only find expression as frigidity - which, that is, can hold back the tender reaction without at the same time being able to put themselves into effect. In the pathological case we find separated so to speak into its two components what in the far more common instance of frigidity is united to produce an inhibiting effect, just like the process we have long recognized in the so-called 'diphasic symptoms' of obsessional neurosis. The danger which is thus aroused through the defloration of a woman would consist in drawing her hostility down upon oneself, and the prospective husband is just the person who would have every reason to avoid such enmity.

Now analysis enables us to infer without difficulty which impulses in women take part in bringing about this paradoxical behaviour, in which I expect to find the explanation of frigidity. The first act of intercourse mobilizes a number of impulses which are out of place in the desired feminine attitude, some of which, incidentally, need not recur during subsequent intercourse. In the first place we think of the pain which defloration causes a virgin, and we are perhaps even inclined to consider this factor as decisive and to give up the search for any others. But we cannot well ascribe such importance to this pain; we must rather substitute for it the narcissistic injury which proceeds from the destruction of an organ and which is even represented in a rationalized form in the knowledge that loss of virginity brings a diminution of sexual value. The marriage customs of primitive peoples, however, contain a warning against over-estimating this. We have heard that in some cases the rite falls into two phases: after the hymen has been ruptured (by hand or with some instrument) there follows a ceremonial act of coitus or mock-intercourse with the representatives of the husband, and this proves to us that the purpose of the taboo observance is not fulfilled by avoiding anatomical defloration, that the husband is to be spared something else as well as the woman's reaction to the painful injury.

We find a further reason for the disappointment experienced in the first act of intercourse in the fact that, with civilized women at least, fulfilment cannot be in accordance with expectations. Before this, sexual intercourse has been associated

in the strongest possible way with prohibitions; lawful and permissible intercourse is not, therefore, felt to be the same thing. Just how close this association can be is demonstrated in an almost comic fashion by the efforts of so many girls about to be married to keep their new love-relationship secret from everyone outside, and indeed even from their parents, where there is no real necessity to do so and no objection can be looked for. Girls often say openly that their love loses value for them if other people know of it. On occasion this feeling can become dominating and can completely prevent the development of any capacity for love in a marriage. The woman only recovers her susceptibility to tender feelings in an illicit relationship which has to be kept secret, and in which alone she knows for certain that her own will is uninfluenced.

However, this motive does not go deep enough either; besides, being bound up with civilized conditions, it fails to provide a satisfactory connection with the state of affairs among primitive people. All the more important, therefore, is the next factor, which is based on the evolution of the libido. We have learnt from analytic researches how universal and how powerful the earliest allocations of libido are. In these we are concerned with infantile sexual wishes which are clung to (in women usually a fixation of the libido on the father or a brother who takes his place) - wishes which frequently enough were directed towards other things than intercourse, or included it only as a dimly perceived goal. The husband is almost always so to speak only a substitute, never the right man; it is another man - in typical cases the father - who has first claim to a woman's love, the husband at most takes second place. It depends on how intense this fixation is and on how obstinately it is maintained whether the substitute is rejected as unsatisfying. Frigidity is thus among the genetic determinants of neuroses. The more powerful the psychical element in a woman's sexual life is, the greater will be the capacity for resistance shown by her distribution of libido to the upheaval of the first sexual act, and the less overpowering will be the effect which bodily possession of her can produce. Frigidity may then become established as a neurotic inhibition or provide the foundation for the development of other neuroses and even a moderate diminution of potency in the man will greatly contribute to help this process.

The customs of primitive peoples seem to take account of this motif of the early sexual wish by handing over the task of defloration to an elder, priest or holy man, that is, to a substitute for the father (see above). There seems to me to be a direct path leading from this custom to the highly vexed question of the *jus primae noctis* of the mediaeval lord of the manor. A. J. Storfer (1911) has put forward the same view and has in addition, as Jung (1909) had already done before him, interpreted the widespread tradition of the 'Tobias nights' (the custom of continence during the first three nights of marriage) as an acknowledgement of the privilege of the patriarch. It agrees with our expectations, therefore, when we find the images of gods included among the father-surrogates entrusted with defloration. In some districts of India, the newly-married woman was obliged to sacrifice her hymen to the wooden lingam, and, according to St. Augustine's account, the same custom

existed in the Roman marriage ceremony (of his time?), but modified so that the young wife only had to seat herself on the gigantic stone phallus of Priapus.¹

There is another motive, reaching down into still deeper layers, which can be shown to bear the chief blame for the paradoxical reaction towards the man, and which, in my view, further makes its influence felt in female frigidity. The first act of intercourse activates in a woman other impulses of long standing as well as those already described, and these are in complete opposition to her womanly role and function.

We have learnt from the analysis of many neurotic women that they go through an early age in which they envy their brothers their sign of masculinity and feel at a disadvantage and humiliated because of the lack of it (actually because of its diminished size) in themselves. We include this 'envy for the penis' in the 'castration complex'. If we understand 'masculine' as including the idea of wishing to be masculine, then the designation 'masculine protest' fits this behaviour; the phrase was coined by Adler with the intention of proclaiming this factor as being responsible for neurosis in general. During this phase, little girls often make no secret of their envy, nor of the hostility towards their favoured brothers which arises from it. They even try to urinate standing upright like their brothers in order to prove the equality which they lay claim to. In the case already described in which the woman used to show uncontrolled aggression after intercourse towards her husband, whom otherwise she loved, I was able to establish that this phase had existed before that of object-choice. Only later was the little girl's libido directed towards her father, and then, instead of wanting to have a penis, she wanted - a child.²

I should not be surprised if in other cases the order in which these impulses occurred were reversed and this part of the castration complex only became effective after a choice of object had been successfully made. But the masculine phase in the girl in which she envies the boy for his penis is in any case developmentally the earlier, and it is closer to the original narcissism than it is to object-love.

Some time ago I chanced to have an opportunity of obtaining insight into a dream of a newly-married woman which was recognizable as a reaction to the loss of her virginity. It betrayed spontaneously the woman's wish to castrate her young husband and to keep his penis for herself. Certainly there was also room for the more innocent interpretation that what she wished for was the prolongation and repetition of the act, but several details of the dream did not fit into this meaning and the character as well as the subsequent behaviour of the woman who had the dream gave evidence in favour of the more serious view. Behind this envy for the penis, there comes to light the woman's hostile bitterness against the man, which never completely disappears in the relations between the sexes, and which is

¹ Ploss and Bartels (1891, 1, xii) and Dulaure (1905, 142)

² Cf. 'On Transformations of Instinct as Exemplified in Anal Erotism' (1917c).0

clearly indicated in the strivings and in the literary productions of 'emancipated' women. In a palaeo-biological speculation, Ferenczi has traced back this hostility of women - I do not know if he is the first to do so - to the period in time when the sexes became differentiated. At first, in his opinion, copulation took place between two similar individuals, one of which, however, developed into the stronger and forced the weaker one to submit to sexual union. The feelings of bitterness arising from this subjection still persist in the present-day disposition of women. I do not think there is any harm in employing such speculations, so long as one avoids setting too much value on them.

After this enumeration of the motives for the paradoxical reaction of women to defloration, traces of which persist in frigidity, we may sum up by saying that a woman's immature sexuality, is discharged on to the man who first makes her acquainted with the sexual act. This being so, the taboo of virginity is reasonable enough and we can understand the rule which decrees that precisely the man who is to enter upon a life shared with this woman shall avoid these dangers. At higher stages of civilization the importance attributed to this danger diminishes in face of her promise of bondage and no doubt of other motives and inducements; virginity is looked upon as a possession which the husband is not called upon to renounce. But analysis of disturbed marriages teaches us that the motives which seek to drive a woman to take vengeance for her defloration are not completely extinguished even in the mental life of civilized women. I think it must strike the observer in how uncommonly large a number of cases the woman remains frigid and feels unhappy in a first marriage, whereas after it has been dissolved she becomes a tender wife, able to make her second husband happy. The archaic reaction has, so to speak, exhausted itself on the first object.

The taboo of virginity, however, even apart from this has not died out in our civilized existence. It is known to the popular mind and writers have on occasion made use of this material. A comedy by Anzengruber shows how a simple peasant lad is deterred from marrying his intended bride because she is 'a wench who'll cost her first his life'. For this reason he agrees to her marrying another man and is ready to take her when she is a widow and no longer dangerous. The title of the play, *Das Jungferngift* ['Virgin's Venom'], reminds us of the habit of snake-charmers, who make poisonous snakes first bite a piece of cloth in order to handle them afterwards without danger.¹

¹ A masterly short story by Arthur Schnitzler (*Das Schicksal des Freiherrn von Leisenbogh*) ['The Fate of Freiherr von Leisenbogh'] deserves to be included here, in spite of the rather different situation. The lover of an actress who is very experienced in love is dying as the result of an accident. He creates a sort of new virginity for her, by putting a curse of death on the man who is the first to possess her after himself. For a time the woman with this taboo upon her does not venture on any love-affair. However, after she has fallen in love with a singer, she hits on the solution of first granting a night to the Freiherr von Leisenbogh, who has been pursuing her for years. And the curse falls on him: he has a stroke as soon as he learns the motive behind his unexpected good fortune in love.

The taboo of virginity and something of its motivation has been depicted most powerfully of all in a well-known dramatic character, that of Judith in Hebbel's tragedy *Judith und Holofernes*. Judith is one of those women whose virginity is protected by a taboo. Her first husband was paralysed on the bridal night by a mysterious anxiety, and never again dared to touch her, 'My beauty is like belladonna,' she says. 'Enjoyment of it brings madness and death.' When the Assyrian general is besieging her city, she conceives the plan of seducing him by her beauty and of destroying him, thus employing a patriotic motive to conceal a sexual one. After she has been deflowered by this powerful man, who boasts of his strength and ruthlessness, she finds the strength in her fury to strike off his head, and thus becomes the liberator of her people. Beheading is well known to us as a symbolic substitute for castrating; Judith is accordingly the woman who castrates the man who has deflowered her, which was just the wish of the newly-married woman expressed in the dream I reported. It is clear that Hebbel has intentionally sexualized the patriotic narrative from the Apocrypha of the Old Testament, for there Judith is able to boast after her return that she has not been defiled, nor is there in the Biblical text any mention of her uncanny wedding night. But probably, with the fine perception of a poet, he sensed the ancient motive, which had been lost in the tendentious narrative, and has merely restored its earlier content to the material.

Sadger (1912) has shown in a penetrating analysis how Hebbel was determined in his choice of material by his own parental complex, and how he came to take the part of the woman so regularly in the struggle between the sexes, and to feel his way into the most hidden impulses of her mind. He also quotes the motives which the poet himself gives for the alteration he has made in the material, and he rightly finds them artificial and as though intended to justify outwardly something the poet himself is unconscious of, while at bottom concealing it. I will not dispute Sadger's explanation of why Judith, who according to the Biblical narrative is a widow, has to become a virgin widow. He refers to the purpose found in childish phantasies of denying the sexual intercourse of the parents and of turning the mother into an untouched virgin. But I will add: after the poet has established his heroine's virginity, his sensitive imagination dwells on the hostile reaction released by the violation of her maidenhood.

We may say, then, in conclusion that defloration has not only the one, civilized consequence of binding the woman lastingly to the man; it also unleashes an archaic reaction of hostility towards him, which can assume pathological forms that are frequently enough expressed in the appearance of inhibitions in the erotic side of married life, and to which we may ascribe the fact that second marriages so often turn out better than first. The taboo of virginity, which seems so strange to us, the horror with which, among primitive peoples, the husband avoids the act of defloration, are fully justified by this hostile reaction.

It is interesting that in one's capacity as analyst one can meet with women in whom the opposed reactions of bondage and hostility both find expression and remain intimately associated with each other. There are women of this kind who seem to have fallen out with their husbands completely and who all the same can

only make vain efforts to free themselves. As often as they try to direct their love towards some other man, the image of the first, although he is no longer loved, intervenes with inhibiting effect. Analysis then teaches us that these women, it is true, still cling to their first husbands in a state of bondage, but no longer through affection. They cannot get away from them, because they have not completed their revenge upon them, and in pronounced cases they have not even brought the impulses for vengeance to consciousness.