THE STANDARD EDITION
OF THE COMPLETE PSYCHOLOGICAL WORKS OF
SIGMUND FREUD
Translated from the German under the General Editorship of
JAMES STRACHEY
In Collaboration with
ANNA FREUD
Assisted by
ALIX STRACHEY and ALAN TYSON

VOLUME VIII
(1905)

Jokes and their Relation to
the Unconscious

LONDON
THE HOGARTH PRESS
AND THE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

DER WITZ
UND SEINE BEZIEHUNG
ZUM UNBEWUSSTEN

VON
PROF. DR. SIGM. FREUD
IN WIEN.

LEIPZIG UND WIEN
FRANZ DEUTICKE
1905
A few notes on the creation of this bi-lingual text

First, I dedicate this bi-lingual edition to a few persons that with reference to this book have influenced me greatly: Joseph Klein, Mandel Berlinger, Mottl Steinberg, Moyshe Shualy-Fuchs, Richard Goldstein, and Alex Greenspan.

Secondly, I have divided this introduction into 3 parts: Freud’s text, Jewishness, and the significance of this text for me.

FREUD’S TEXT:

I have used Vol. VIII of the Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud for the English text, and Band IV of the Studienausgabe of Freud for the German text. I would have liked to have used the Gesammelte Werke edition of Freud for the German text for certain aesthetic reasons, the Sperrdruck or double-spacing used in German for italics, for instance. However, because of the greater accuracy of the Studienausgabe, coupled with the fact that some of the Standard Edition’s footnotes have been translated into German made it seem like a better text to work with.

The Strachey translation of this book happens to be the second translation of this work. The first was translated in 1916 by Abraham A. Brill as ‘Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious. The third translation of this book was published in 2003 by the retired London Germanicist, Joyce Crick, as The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious, as part of a series of new translations of Freud under the general editorship of Adam Phillips. The fourth translation, is supposedly being done right now and will be part of the entire New Standard Edition under the general editorship of Mark Solms and is not published yet.

This bi-lingual edition puts the reader in an interesting position. One can, for instance, take the recent translation of Joyce Crick and compare it page by page with the original German text and the Strachey translation. I myself have not done this yet, but I have done it with Joyce Crick’s recent translation of the Interpretation of Dreams and found that in many instances the Strachey translation was adequate, if not better. Also, the footnotes in the Strachey translation are at the bottom of the page, not at the end of each chapter like she has done. And her translation unfortunately has no index.
I would definitely recommend the Translator’s Preface to her new translation, concerning translation issues and problems such as how to deal with the theoretical language that Freud has uneasily adopted from the discourse of idealist aesthetics and how to deal with the jokes, of which only the Jewish jokes have stood the test of time. However, one of the things that she did not mention at all is Freud’s use of the German word ‘Verblüffung’ meaning bewilderment (perhaps related to étourdi or sideration in French). (Joyce Crick has translated it as ‘bafflement’) To show you that I’m not bluffing you can look this term up in the Konkordanz zu den Gesammelten Werken von Sigmund Freud. He used this term in his entire opus, only twenty-one times. Twenty of which are in this book and one in his Leonardo book of 1910. What conclusion can one draw from this? Perhaps, that the bewildering, stunning, shocking aspect of the Unconscious revelation has been repressed, suppressed, or just plain neglected. As has been pointed out by Paola Mieli and Alain Didier-Weill, it’s this stunning surprise element that gives a possibility to free oneself from the automatism of repetition.

Other problems of the Strachey translation are his arbitrarily making new paragraphs in the English translation and not conforming to the original text’s paragraphs. This is done quite frequently and one can see that I have had to cut and reposition the German text to conform to this. (New paragraphs in the Studienausgabe edition are not indented and if you see an indented paragraph, it’s a sign that I have had to change the beginning of a paragraph to conform with Strachey’s transgression of altering the paragraphs so that it will be easier to read the two texts together.) An example of this is on page 112 of the English translation. Out of fairness to the new Joyce Crick translation, I see that she has not made new paragraphs and has conformed to the German text’s paragraphs. Another glaring example of this is on page 234 where Strachey has packed three different sentences from the German into one paragraph in English! Again, Joyce Crick’s translation has conformed to the German text’s paragraphs.

On the bottom of page 163 of the Strachey translation, the last paragraph, Strachey has changed the order of the sentence so drastically that it was almost impossible to follow it from the original German. The German sentence is “Dieselbe äußert sich darin, daß im manifesten Traum zentral steht und mit großer sinnlicher Intensität auftritt, was in den Traumgedanken peripherisch lag und nebensächlich war; und ebenso umgekehrt.” The Strachey translation reads “This is exhibited in the fact that things lie on the periphery of the dream-thoughts and are of minor importance occupy a central position and appear with great sensory intensity in the manifest dream, and vice versa.” In the Joyce Crick translation, page 159, reads: “It shows itself in this way: taking centre-stage in the manifest dream and appearing with great sensory intensity is what lay on the periphery of the dream-thoughts and was quite unimportant: and likewise vice-versa.” Here, I find that the Joyce Crick translation is less confusing.
One last thing that has always bothered me about the paperback editions of Freud, especially the Norton paperback edition, is that terrible photograph of Freud when he was older (when he was about sixty-five). Why couldn't Norton have used a photograph of Freud that was taken from the same time as the book was originally published? The new Adam Phillips editions in paperback are also a bit strange-looking. The cover of The Joke and Its Relation to the Unconscious has a Magritte looking balloon with a little face on it. It’s more worthy for a cover of Frank Herbert’s Dune in my opinion. (Adam Phillips might say about this introduction, “tu quoque Herr K.!”) Now, if you take a magnifying glass and look at the reproduction of the cover of the original edition of Der Witz, that I have used for the cover of this bi-lingual edition, you will see three loops or non-knots above and an interesting topological figure below. I have not been able to identify it yet, but it is interesting to note that approximately seventy years later, Jacques Lacan will be speaking about such a topological figure, perhaps this very one!

JEWISHNESS:

As a collector of books on Jewish humor, I am amazed at the amount of Jewish jokes in this book. It could stand by itself as a book of Jewish jokes, as mentioned in letters 65 and 69 to Fliess. More than once I have been tempted to trace the history of each Jewish joke in this book. Even though each joke is written in German, each of these jokes was probably originally in Yiddish. The title itself, Der Witz... has led me to consider the number of Witz’s that Freud was acquainted with: Darkescheitsch, Horowitz, Kassowitz and Plowitz.

Perhaps we should keep in mind that according to Ernest Jones, in 1905 Freud was writing Jokes and Their Relationship to the Unconscious at the same time (simultaneously) he was writing the Three Essays on Infantile Sexuality and kept the manuscripts on adjoining tables. How strange it is that the first book has over 100 jokes in it and in a way, is quite serious, and the other book, on sexuality, has absolutely no jokes. But as philosophers have often pointed out, what could be funnier than the topic of sexuality anyway? It’s as if there were a Moebius strip between these two books. Or could we say that one book is the anamorphosis of the other?

I have taken the liberty, or shall I say chutzpah, to include a joke in Yiddish that I think Freud would have liked:
Az me dartseylt a maysse a poyer, lacht er dray mol. Dem ershtn molacht er, ven men dartseylt em di maysse, dem tsveytn mol, ven men darklert em, un dem dritn mol, ven er färsteyt di maysse.
A porets lacht tsvey mol. Eyn mol lacht er, ven men dartseylt em un a tsveytn mol, ven men darklert em, vorem farsheteyt er zi say-vi-say nit.
An ofitser lacht nor eyn mol, b’shas me dartseylt em, vorem darklern losst er zach nit, un farsheteyn farsheteyt er nit.

It goes something like this: When you tell a story to a farmer, he laughs three times. The first time he laughs when you tell him the story, the second time, when you explain it to him and the third time, when he understands the story.

A Gentile landowner laughs two times. One time he laughs when you tell him and a second time when you explain it to him, he wouldn’t understand it anyway.

An officer laughs only once, when you tell him, he won’t let you explain it to him and he won’t understand it anyway.

A Jew, when you tell him a story, he says “You know what, it’s an old story!” and he can tell the story better.

Actually, I myself have heard a better version where the four characters are an Englishman, a Scotchman, a German, and Jew.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS BOOK TO ME

Although you may find this story a bit too personal, I will proceed anyway. On January 24, 1949 when I was three and a half years old, my mother suddenly died. In addition to this I grew up in the Midwest, a depressing place and in the 1950’s, a depressing time.

Some of the best moments at that time for me were watching the Milton Berle show on television together with my father. He would always point out to me how Milton Berle would push the other people away from the television camera and explained to me that Milton Berle would do anything for a laugh. So, naturally, taking up the desire of the Other, I wanted to be a comedian. I progressed through pretty much all of my life trying to make people laugh. My father gave me Freud’s book on jokes when I was sixteen. I think I stole, just like Milton Berle, the ‘thief of bad-gag’, every joke in that book. After I would tell a joke or two, or more I would always follow it with Milton Berle’s phrase “those are the jokes folks, I’ve got a million of them!” Well, after several years of repeating “those are the jokes folks” and after several years of analysis and having become just a bit more reflective, it suddenly occurred to me, that another way of saying “those are the jokes folks” is “those are the joke lines!” In other words, I was sustaining or creating a version of the Name of the Father, literally, because, my father’s name was Joe Klein. Those are the joke lines folks!

Richard G. Klein
January 1, 2004
New York City
Cross-reference Table for Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious from the Studienausgabe's Konkordanz und Gesamtbibliographie (Gesammelte Werke-Studienausgabe-Standard Edition)

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The notes by which Freud wrote his way toward the many works that did come to fruition record a number of stages in the process of genesis of each. Seed from which his book *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* sprang can be found on the back of one of those pieces of paper that Freud cut out of earlier notes and pasted onto a new sheet. He was concerned only with the front, which contains a fresh vignette from a session with a woman suffering from obsessional symptoms. For this reason, the text on the reverse, which did not seem to him to be worth preserving and to whose line sequence he paid no heed when he cut it out, survives solely as a fragment. Truncated lines indicate that Freud, perhaps inspired by his research on dreams, was engaged in reflections on the techniques of the riddle, taking as his example the daldal riddles thought up by his former philosophy teacher Franz Brentano, and that it was only from this base that he began to contemplate a contrasting comparison with the techniques of the joke. The situation is thus the exact opposite from that in the eventual book on jokes itself, in which this comparison is relegated virtually to the status of a footnote, very much to the detriment of the riddle. Still concerned with riddles, Freud continues in the note: "Pleasure gain connected with the work of solving. Originally nontendentious nature of riddle. — Conditions of convertibility. [.] But ideas won't go any further today. It is an uninspired day." Could it be that what follows on this sheet was written down the next day? For it already contains, in a veritable explosion of ideas, the fundamentals of the structure and main theses of the book on jokes:

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Two more of those pasted slips merit our interest in connection with the book on jokes. One of them is headed "A true children's story," and reads: "Three children, an older girl, two small boys (age to be inserted later)[.] The older boy warns the younger of an inadvertency of dress. If you do not behave, you will get ill and have to take Bubizin. Bubizin is not a new alkaloid, but came about as follows. When his sister was ill, the boy heard that she had to take Medizin (Madizin) [that is, for a Mädi—little girl]; he therefore assumed, since the difference between the sexes already pervades this world for him, that a little boy [Bube] would by analogy have to take Bubizin.—The events in this story happened a few weeks ago at Strakowitz in Bohemia." The other slip of paper, on which Freud later added the child's age, probably after inquiring about it, reads: "The hero of Bubizin is 2½ y. old." He probably remembered this old true story when he came to write the seventh chapter of the book on jokes, on the species of the comic, while seeking an example of the irresistible effect of the naïve, especially in children's comments. He may have written the episode down in the form in which it was impressed on his memory without even consulting the text of the earlier note, as the published version shows some characteristic discrepancies, even if the verbal joke "Madizin/Bubizin," which arose from the child's honest attempt to draw a serious conclusion, has been preserved.
a). Technique of joke. 

b). Psychogenesis of joke 

c). Tendency of joke. 

d). Joke & comic, humor 

e). Joke & riddle. 


Important aspect of characterization of diff. kinds of pleasure gain through psychic localization.

Book of riddles by Mises, Polle.—Aspects:

Joke lies in technique—de-joking [the joke] 

Psych. localization. 

Economy theory 

Laughing with oversaturation 

Preliminary stage of jesting. 

a) Lifting of inhibitions. 

b). Original sources of pleasure.

BACK TO FREUD'S TEXTS
Making Silent Documents Speak

ILSE GRUBRICH-SIMITIS
Translated by Philip Slatkin
Yale University Press New Haven and London
Die Freud-Studienausgabe erschien ursprünglich (1969–1979) im Rahmen der S. Fischer-Reihe
CONDITO HUMANA
ERGEBNISSE AUS DEN WISSENSCHAFTEN VOM MENSCHEN
(Herausgeber: Thure von Uexküll und Ilse Grubrich-Simitis;
Berater: Johannes Cremerius, Hans J. Eggers, Thomas Luckmann).
Der vorliegende Abdruck übernimmt unverändert den Text
der fünften, korrigierten Auflage von Band IV.

Ungekürzte Ausgabe
Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag
April 1982
Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt am Main
Lizenzausgabe mit freundlicher Genehmigung
des S. Fischer Verlages GmbH, Frankfurt am Main
Für sämtliche Freud-Texte:
© S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt am Main, 1970
Für das aus der Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of
Sigmund Freud entnommene editorische Material:
© The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, London, und Angela Richards, Eynsham, 1970
Für zusätzliches editorisches Material:
© Angela Richards, Eynsham, 1970
Alle Rechte, auch die des Abdrucks im Auszug
und der photomechanischen Wiedergabe, vorbehalten.
Umschlaggestaltung: Mendell & Oberer
Satz: Buchdruckerei Eugen Göbel, Tübingen
Druck und Bindung: Clausen & Bosse, Leck
Printed in Germany
2480-ISBN 3-596-27304-8
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**FRONTISPIECE:** Sigmund Freud in 1906 (Age 50)  
*By Permission of Sigmund Freud Copyrights*
JOKES AND THEIR RELATION TO THE UNCONSCIOUS (1905)

Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten (1905)
EDITOR’S PREFACE

DER WITZ UND SEINE BEZIEHUNG
ZUM UNBEWUSSTEN

(a) GERMAN EDITIONS:
1912 2nd ed. Same publishers. (With a few small additions.) Pp. iv + 207.
1921 3rd ed. Same publishers. (Unchanged.) Pp. iv + 207.
1925 G.S., 9, 1–269. (Unchanged.)
1940 G.W., 6, 1–285. (Unchanged.)

(b) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:
Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious
1917 London: T. Fisher Unwin. Pp. ix + 388. (Same as above.)
1922 London: Kegan Paul. (Reprint of above.)
New York: Random House. (Same translation.)

The present, entirely new, translation, with the title Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious, is by James Strachey.

In the course of discussing the relation between jokes and dreams, Freud mentions his own 'subjective reason for taking up the problem of jokes' (p. 173, below). This was, put briefly, the fact that when Wilhelm Fliess was reading the proofs of The Interpretation of Dreams in the autumn of 1899, he complained that the dreams were too full of jokes. The episode had already been reported in a footnote to the first edition of The Interpretation of Dreams itself (1900a), Standard Ed., 4, 297–8 n.; but we can now date it exactly, for we have the letter in which Freud

EDITORISCHE VORBEMERKUNG

Deutsche Ausgaben:
1905 Leipzig und Wien, Deuticke. II + 206 Seiten.
1912 2. Aufl. im gleichen Verlag. (Mit einigen kleinen Zusätzen.) IV + 207 Seiten.
1921 3. unveränderte Aufl. im gleichen Verlag. IV + 207 Seiten.
1925 4. unveränderte Aufl. im gleichen Verlag. IV + 207 Seiten.
1925 G. S., Bd. 9, 1–269. (Unverändert.)
1940 G. W., Bd. 6, 1–285. (Unverändert.)

replied to Fliess’s complaint. It was written on September 11, 1899, from Berchtesgaden, where the finishing touches were being put to the book, and announces that Freud intends to insert an explanation in it of the curious fact of the presence in dreams of what appear to be jokes (Freud, 1950a, Letter 118).

The episode acted, no doubt, as a precipitating factor, and led to Freud’s giving closer attention to the subject; but it cannot possibly have been the origin of his interest in it. There is ample evidence that it had been in his mind for several years earlier. The very fact that he was ready with an immediate answer to Fliess’s criticism shows that this must have been so; and it is confirmed by the reference to the mechanism of ‘comic’ effects, which appears on a later page of The Interpretation of Dreams (Standard Ed., 5, 605) and which forestalls on~ of the main points in the final chapter of the present work. But it was inevitable that as soon as Freud began his close investigation of dreams he would be struck by the frequency with which humorous structures resembling jokes figure in the dreams themselves or their associations. The Interpretation of Dreams is full of examples of this, but perhaps the earliest one recorded is the punning dream of Frau Cäcilie M., reported in a footnote at the end of the case history of Fraulein Elisabeth von R. in the Studies on Hysteria (1895d), Standard Ed., 2, 181 n.

But, quite apart from dreams, there is evidence of Freud’s early theoretical interest in jokes. In a letter to Fliess of June 12, 1897 (Freud, 1950a, Letter 65), after quoting a joke about two Schnorrer, Freud wrote: ‘I must confess that for some time past I have been putting together a collection of Jewish anecdotes of deep significance.’ A few months later, on September 21, 1897, he quotes another Jewish story as being ‘from my collection’ (ibid., Letter 69), and a number of others appear in the Fliess correspondence and also in The Interpretation of Dreams. (See, in particular, a comment on these stories in Chapter V, Section B, Standard Ed., 4, 194–5.) It was from this collection, of course, that he derived the many examples of such anecdotes on which his theories are so largely based.

Another influence which was of some importance to Freud at about this time was that of Theodor Lipps. Lipps (1851–1914) was a Munich professor who wrote on psychology and aesthetics, and who is accredited with having introduced the effect of ‘suggestion’ into psychological research. Lipps’s ideas were highly influential, and Freud was deeply impressed by them. In a letter to Fliess of June 12, 1897 (Freud, 1950a, Letter 65), after quoting a joke about two Schnorrer, Freud wrote: ‘I must confess that for some time past I have been putting together a collection of Jewish anecdotes of deep significance.’ A few months later, on September 21, 1897, he quotes another Jewish story as being ‘from my collection’ (ibid., Letter 69), and a number of others appear in the Fliess correspondence and also in The Interpretation of Dreams. (See, in particular, a comment on these stories in Chapter V, Section B, Standard Ed., 4, 194–5.) It was from this collection, of course, that he derived the many examples of such anecdotes on which his theories are so largely based.

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Ferner übte in jener Zeit Theodor Lipps einen gewissen Einfluß auf Freuds Denken aus. Lipps (1851–1914) war ein Münchener Professor, der über psychologische und ästhetische Themen gearbeitet hat und dem der Begriff «Ein-
term ‘Einbildung’ (‘empathy’). Freud’s interest in him was probably first attracted by a paper on the unconscious which he read at a psychological congress in 1897. It is the basis of a long discussion in the last chapter of The Interpretation of Dreams (Standard Ed., 5, 611 ff). We know from the Fliess letters that in August and September, 1898, Freud was reading an earlier book by Lipps on The Basic Facts of Mental Life (1883) and was again struck by his remarks on the unconscious (Freud, 1950a, Letters 94, 95 and 97). But in 1898 there appeared yet another work from Lipps and this time on a more specialized subject—Komik und Humor. And it was this work, as Freud tells us at the very beginning of the present study, which encouraged him to embark upon it.

It was on ground thus prepared that the seed of Fliess’s critical comment fell, but even so several more years were to elapse before the moment of fruition.

Freud published three major works in 1905: the ‘Dora’ case history, which appeared in the autumn though it was written for the most part four years earlier, the Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious. Work on the last two books proceeded simultaneously: Ernest Jones (1955, 13) tells us that Freud kept the two manuscripts on adjoining tables and added to one or the other according to his mood. The books were published almost simultaneously, and it is not entirely certain which was the earlier. The publisher’s issue-number for the Three Essays is 1124 and for the Jokes 1128; but Jones (ibid., 375 n.) reports that this last number was ‘wrong’,¹ which might imply that the order should be reversed. In the same passage, however, Jones definitely asserts that the Jokes ‘appeared just after the other book’. The actual date of publication must have been before the beginning of June, for a long and favourable review appeared in the Vienna daily paper Die Zeit on June 4.

The later history of the book was very different from that of Freud’s other major works of this period. The Interpretation of Dreams, The Psychopathology of Everyday Life and the Three Essays were all of them expanded and modified almost out of recognition in their later editions. Half-a-dozen small additions were

¹ In a private communication he ascribed this statement to Freud himself.

fühlungs zugeschrieben wird. Freuds Interesse wurde wahrscheinlich zunächst von Lipps’ Ansichten über das Unbewußte geweckt (s. Lipps, 1883 und 1897). 1898 erschien jedoch ein weiteres Werk von Lipps, diesmal über einen spezielleren Gegenstand — Komik und Humor. Und diese Arbeit war es, die Freud zu seiner vorliegenden Studie anregte, wie er uns gleich am Anfang mitteilte:

Auf den so vorbereiteten Boden fiel dann die Saat der kritischen Bemerkung von Fließ; es dauerte jedoch noch einige Jahre, bevor sie Frucht brachte.


Sein späteres Schicksal unterscheidet sich erheblich von dem der anderen größeren Werke Freuds aus jener Zeit. Die Traumdeutung, Zur Psychopathologie des Alltagslebens und die Drei Abhandlungen sind alle in den späteren Ausgaben stark erweitert und so verändert worden, daß sie fast nicht wiederzuerkennen sind. An seinem Buch über den Witz nahm Freud, als es 1912 in
made to the *Jokes* when it reached its second edition in 1912, but no further changes were ever made in it.¹

It seems possible that this is related to the fact that this book lies somewhat apart from the rest of Freud's writings. He himself may have taken this view of it. His references to it in other works are comparatively few;² in the *Introductory Lectures* (1916–1917, Lecture XV) he speaks of its having temporarily led him aside from his path; and in the *Autobiographical Study* (1925d), *Standard Ed.*, 20, 65–6, there is even what looks like a slightly depreciatory reference to it. Then, unexpectedly, after an interval of more than twenty years, he picked up the thread again with his short paper on 'Humour' (1927d), in which he used his newly propounded structural view of the mind to throw a fresh light on an obscure problem.

Ernest Jones describes this as the least known of Freud's works, and that is certainly, and not surprisingly, true of non-German readers.

'Traduttore—Traditore!' The words—one of the jokes discussed by Freud below (p. 34)—might appropriately be emblazoned on the title-page of the present volume. Many of Freud's works raise acute difficulties for the translator, but this presents a special case. Here, as with *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* and perhaps to a greater extent, we are faced by large numbers of examples involving a play upon words that is untranslatable. And here, as in these other cases, we can do no more than explain the rather uncompromising policy adopted in this edition. There are two methods one or other of which has usually been adopted in dealing with such intractable examples—either to drop them out altogether or to replace them by examples of the translator's own. Neither of these methods seems suitable to an edition which is intended to present English readers with Freud's own ideas as accurately as possible. Here, therefore, we have to be contented with giving the critical words in the original German and explaining them as shortly as possible in square brackets or footnotes.

¹ In the present edition the sections into which the author divided the long chapters have been numbered for convenience of reference.

² A small exception will be found in a paragraph on obscene jokes in Freud's open letter to Dr. F. S. Krauss (1910f), *Standard Ed.*, 11, 294.
Inevitably, of course, the joke disappears in the process. But it must be remembered that, by either of the alternative methods, what disappears are portions, and sometimes most interesting portions, of Freud’s arguments. And, presumably, these, and not a moment’s amusement, are what the reader has in view.

There is, however, a much more serious difficulty in translating this particular work—a terminological difficulty which runs through the whole of it. By a strange fatality (into whose causes it would be interesting to enquire) the German and English terms covering the phenomena discussed in these pages seem never to coincide: they seem always too narrow or too wide—to leave gaps between them or to overlap. A major problem faces us with the very title of the book, ‘Der Witz’. To translate it ‘Wit’ opens the door to unfortunate misapprehensions. In ordinary English usage ‘wit’ and ‘witty’ have a highly restricted meaning and are applied only to the most refined and intellectual kind of jokes. The briefest inspection of the examples in these pages will show that ‘Witz’ and ‘witzig’ have a far wider connotation. ‘Joke’ on the other hand seems itself to be too wide and to cover the German ‘Scherz’ as well. The only solution in this and similar dilemmas has seemed to be to adopt one English word for some corresponding German one, and to keep to it quite consistently and invariably even if in some particular context it seems the wrong one. In this way the reader will at least be able to form his own conclusion as to the sense in which Freud is using the word. Thus, throughout the book ‘Witz’ has been rendered ‘joke’ and ‘Scherz’ ‘jest’. There is great trouble with the adjective ‘witzig’, which is used here in most cases simply as the qualifying adjective to ‘Witz’. The Concise Oxford Dictionary actually gives, without comment, an adjective ‘joky’. The word would have saved the translator innumerable clumsy periphrases, but he confesses that he had not the nerve to use it. The only places in which ‘Witz’ has been translated ‘wit’ are two or three (e.g. on p. 140) in which

1 ‘Der Witz’, incidentally, is used both for the mental faculty and for its product—for ‘wittiness’ and ‘the Witticism’, to use renderings that have been rejected here. The German word can be used besides in a much vaguer sense, for ‘ingenuity’; but the English ‘wit’, for the matter of that, also has its wider usages.
the German word is used (as explained in the last footnote) for the mental function and not for the product, and where there seemed no possible English alternative.

There are other, though less severe, difficulties over the German 'das Komische' and 'die Komik'. An attempt to differentiate between these, and to use 'the comic' for the first and 'comicality' for the second, was abandoned in view of the passage at the end of the paragraph on p. 144, where the two different words are used in successive sentences, quite evidently in the same sense and merely for the purpose of 'elegant variation'. So that the very stilted English 'the comic' has been systematically adopted for both German words.

Lastly, it may be remarked that the English word 'humour', which is of course used for the German 'Humor', sounds here decidedly unnatural to English ears in some of its contexts. The fact is that the word seems to be rarely used by itself to-day: it hardly occurs except in the phrase 'sense of humour'. But here again the reader will be in a position to decide for himself the meaning which Freud attaches to the word.

It is much to be hoped that these difficulties, which are after all only superficial ones, will not deter readers at the outset. The book is full of fascinating material, much of which reappears in no other of Freud's writings. The detailed accounts it contains of complicated psychological processes have no rivals outside The Interpretation of Dreams, and it is indeed a product of the same burst of genius which gave us that great work.

Das Werk enthält gleichwohl eine Fülle hochinteressanten Materials, große Teile davon erscheinen in keiner der anderen Arbeiten Freuds, und abgesehen von der Traumdeutung finden sich nirgends so detaillierte Darstellungen komplizierter psychischer Vorgänge wie gerade hier.
JOKES AND THEIR RELATION TO THE UNCONSCIOUS
A. ANALYTIC PART
I
INTRODUCTION

[1]

Anyone who has at any time had occasion to enquire from the literature of aesthetics and psychology what light can be thrown on the nature of jokes and on the position they occupy will probably have to admit that jokes have not received nearly as much philosophical consideration as they deserve in view of the part they play in our mental life. Only a small number of thinkers can be named who have entered at all deeply into the problems of jokes. Among those who have discussed jokes, however, are such famous names as those of the novelist Jean Paul (Richter) and of the philosophers Theodor Vischer, Kuno Fischer and Theodor Lipps. But even with these writers the subject of jokes lies in the background, while the main interest of their enquiry is turned to the more comprehensive and attractive problem of the comic.

The first impression one derives from the literature is that it is quite impracticable to deal with jokes otherwise than in connection with the comic.

According to Lipps (1898),¹ a joke is 'something comic which is entirely subjective'—that is, something comic 'which we produce, which is attached to action of ours as such, to which we invariably stand in the relation of subject and never of object, not even of voluntary object' (ibid., 80). This is explained further by a remark to the effect that in general we call a joke 'any conscious and successful evocation of what is comic, whether the comic of observation or of situation' (ibid., 78).

¹ It is this book that has given me the courage to undertake this attempt as well as the possibility of doing so.

Der Witz
und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten
A. Analytischer Teil
I
EINLEITUNG

[1]

Wer einmal Anlaß gehabt hat, sich in der Literatur bei Ästhetikern und Psychologen zu erkundigen, welche Aufklärung über Wesen und Beziehungen des Witzes gegeben werden kann, der wird wohl zugestehen müssen, daß die philosophische Bemühung dem Witz lange nicht in dem Maße zuteil geworden ist, welches er durch seine Rolle in unserem Geistesleben verdient. Man kann nur eine geringe Anzahl von Denkern nennen, die sich eingehender mit den Problemen des Witzes beschäftigt haben. Allerdings finden sich unter den Bearbeitern des Witzes die glänzenden Namen des Dichters Jean Paul (Fr. Richter) und der Philosophen Th. Vischer, Kuno Fischer und Th. Lipps; aber auch bei diesen Autoren steht das Thema des Witzes im Hintergrunde, während das Hauptinteresse der Untersuchung dem umfassenderen und anziehenden Problem des Komischen zugewendet ist.

Man gewinnt aus der Literatur zunächst den Eindruck, als sei es völlig unternicht, den Witz anders als im Zusammenhang mit dem Komischen zu behandeln.

Nach Th. Lipps (Komik und Humor, 1898)¹ ist der Witz »die durchaus subjektive Komik«, d. h. die Komik, »die wir hervorbringen, die an unserem Tun als solchem haftet, zu der wir uns durchwegs als darüberstehendes Subjekt, niemals als Objekt, auch nicht als freiwilliges Objekt verhalten« (S. 80). Erläuternd hierzu die Bemerkung: Witz heisse überhaupt »jedes bewußte und geschickte Hervorrufen der Komik, sei es der Komik der Anschauung oder der Situation« (S. 78).

¹ Beiträge zur Ästhetik, herausgegeben von Theodor Lipps und Richard Maria Werner, VI. ~ Ein Buch, dem ich den Mut und die Möglichkeit verdanke, diesen Versuch zu unternehmen.
Fischer (1889) illustrates the relation of jokes to the comic with the help of caricature, which in his account he places between them. The comic is concerned with the ugly in one of its manifestations: "If it [what is ugly] is concealed, it must be uncovered in the light of the comic way of looking at things; if it is noticed only a little or scarcely at all, it must be brought forward and made obvious, so that it lies clear and open to the gaze of external observation, it cannot be directly imagined pictorially and visibly; and yet it too contains its inhibitions, its weaknesses and its deformities—a wealth of ridiculous and comic contrasts. In order to emphasize these and make them accessible to aesthetic consideration, a force is necessary which is able not merely to imagine objects directly but itself to reflect on these images and to clarify them: a force that can illuminate thoughts. The only such force is judgement. A joke is a judgement which produces a comic contrast; it has already played a silent part in caricature, but only in judgement does it attain its peculiar form and the free sphere of its unfolding." (Ibid., 49-50.)

It will be seen that the characteristic which distinguishes the joke within the class of the comic is attributed by Lipps to action, to the active behaviour of the subject, but by Fischer to its relation to its object, which he considers is the concealed ugliness of the world of thoughts. It is impossible to test the validity of these definitions of the joke—indeed, they are scarcely intelligible—unless they are considered in the context from which they have been torn. It would therefore be necessary to work through these authors' accounts of the comic before anything could be learnt from them about jokes. Other passages, however, show us that these same authors are able to describe essential and generally valid characteristics of the joke without any regard to its connection with the comic.

The characterization of jokes which seems best to satisfy Fischer himself is as follows: 'A joke is a playful judgement.' (Ibid., 51.) By way of illustration of this, we are given an analogy: 'Just as aesthetic freedom lies in the playful contemplation of things' (ibid., 50). Elsewhere (ibid., 20) the aesthetic attitude towards an object is characterized by the condition K. Fischer erläutert die Beziehung des Witzes zum Komischen mit Beihilfe der in seiner Darstellung zwischen beide eingeschobenen Karikatur. (Über den Witz, 1889.) Gegenstand der Komik ist das Häßliche in irgendeiner seiner Erscheinungsformen: »Wo es verdeckt ist, muß es im Licht der komischen Betrachtung entdeckt, wo es wenig oder kaum bemerkt wird, muß es hervorgeholt und so verdeutlicht werden, daß es klar und offen am Tage liegt... So entsteht die Karikatur« (S. 45). »Unsere ganze geistige Welt, das intellektuelle Reich unserer Gedanken und Vorstellungen, entfaltet sich nicht vor dem Blicke der äußeren Betrachtung, läßt sich nicht unmittelbar bildlich und anschaulich vorstellen und enthält doch auch seine Hemmungen, Gebrechen, Verunstaltungen, eine Fülle des Lacherlichen und der komischen Kontraste. Diese hervorzuheben und der ästhetischen Betrachtung zugänglich zu machen, wird eine Kraft nötig sein, welche imstande ist, nicht bloß Objekte unmittelbar vorzustellen, sondern auf diese Vorstellungen selbst zu reflektieren und sie zu verdeutlichen: eine gedankenerhellende Kraft. Diese Kraft ist allein das Urteil. Das Urteil, welches den komischen Kontrast erzeugt, ist der Witz, er hat im stillen schon in der Karikatur mitgespielt, aber erst im Urteil erreicht er seine eigentümliche Form und das freie Gebiet seiner Entfaltung« (S. 49-50).

Die Kennzeichnung des Witzes bei K. Fischer, die den Autor selbst am besten zu befriedigen scheint, lautet: »Der Witz ist ein spielerisches Urteil« (S. 51). Zur Erläuterung dieses Ausdruckes werden wir auf die Analogie verwiesen: »wie die ästhetische Freiheit in der spielenden Betrachtung der Dinge bestand« (S. 50). An anderer Stelle (S. 20) wird das ästhetische Verhalten gegen ein Objekt durch die Bedingung charak-
I. INTRODUCTION

that we do not ask anything of the object, especially no satisfaction of our serious needs, but content ourselves with the enjoyment of contemplating it. The aesthetic attitude is playful in contrast to work.—'It might be that from aesthetic freedom there might spring too a sort of judging released from its usual rules and regulations, which, on account of its origin, I will call a "playful judgement", and that in this concept is contained the first determinant, if not the whole formula, that will solve our problem. "Freedom produces jokes and jokes produce freedom", wrote Jean Paul. "Joking is merely playing with ideas."' (Ibid., 24.)

A favourite definition of joking has long been the ability to find similarity between dissimilar things—that is, hidden similarities. Jean Paul has expressed this thought itself in a joking form: 'Joking is the disguised priest who weds every couple.' Vischer [1846–57, 1, 422] carries this further: 'He likes best to wed couples whose union their relatives frown upon.' Vischer objects, however, that there are jokes where there is no question of comparing—no question, therefore, of finding a similarity. So he, slightly diverging from Jean Paul, defines joking as the ability to bind into a unity, with surprising rapidity, several ideas which are in fact alien to one another both in their internal content and in the nexus to which they belong. Fischer, again, stresses the fact that in a large number of joking judgements differences rather than similarities are found, and Lipps points out that these definitions relate to joking as an ability possessed by the joker and not to the jokes which he makes.

Other more or less interrelated ideas which have been brought up as defining or describing jokes are: 'a contrast of ideas', 'sense in nonsense', 'bewilderment and illumination'.

Definitions such as that of Kraepelin lay stress on contrasting ideas. A joke is 'the arbitrary connecting or linking, usually by means of a verbal association, of two ideas which in some way contrast with each other'. A critic like Lipps had no difficulty in showing the total inadequacy of this formula; but he does not himself exclude the factor of contrast, but merely displaces it elsewhere. 'The contrast remains, but it is not some contrast

\[1\] [Jean Paul Richter, 1804, Part II, Paragraph 51.]
\[2\] [Kraepelin, 1885, 143.]

15
between the ideas attached to the words, but a contrast or contradiction between the meaning and the meaningless of the words. (Lipps, 1898, 87.) He gives examples to show how this is to be understood. 'A contrast arises only because we grant its words a meaning which, again, we nevertheless cannot grant them.' (Ibid., 90.) If this last point is developed further, the contrast between 'sense and nonsense' becomes significant. 'What at one moment has seemed to us to have a meaning, we now see is completely meaningless. That is what, in this case, constitutes the comic process... A remark seems to us to be a joke, if we attribute a significance to it that has psychological necessity and, as soon as we have done so, deny it again. Various things can be understood by this "significance". We attach sense to a remark and know that logically it cannot have any. We discover truth in it, which nevertheless, according to the laws of experience or our general habits of thought, we cannot find in it. We grant it logical or practical consequences in excess of its true content, only to deny these consequences as soon as we have clearly recognized the nature of the remark. In every instance, the psychological process which the joking remark provokes in us, and on which the feeling of the comic rests, consists in the immediate transition, from this attaching of sense, from this discovering of truth, and from this granting of consequences, to the consciousness or impression of relative nothingness.' (Ibid., 85.)

However penetrating this discussion may sound, the question may be raised here whether the contrast between what has meaning and what is meaningless, on which the feeling of the comic is said to rest, also contributes to defining the concept of the joke in so far as it differs from that of the comic. The factor of 'bewilderment and illumination', too, leads us deep into the problem of the relation of the joke to the comic. Kant¹ says of the comic in general that it has the remarkable characteristic of being able to deceive us only for a moment. Heymans (1896) explains how the effect of a joke comes about through bewilderment being succeeded by illumination. He illustrates his meaning by a brilliant joke of Heine's, who makes one of his characters, Hirsch-Hyacinth, the poor lottery-agent, So eindringlich diese Auseinandersetzung klingt, so möchte man hier doch die Frage aufwerfen, ob der Gegensatz des Sinnvollen und Sinnlosen, auf dem das Gefühl der Komik beruht, auch zur Begriffsbestimmung des Witzes, insofern er vom Komischen unterschieden ist, beiträgt.


¹ [Kant, Kritik der Urteilskraft, Part I, Section I, 54.]
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boast that the great Baron Rothschild had treated him quite as his equal—quite 'famillionaire'. Here the word that is the vehicle of the joke appears at first simply to be a wrongly constructed word, something unintelligible, incomprehensible, puzzling. It accordingly bewilders. The comic effect is produced by the solution of this bewilderment, by understanding the word. Lipps (1898, 95) adds to this that this first stage of enlightenment—that the bewildering word means this or that—is followed by a second stage, in which we realize that this meaningless word has bewildered us and has then shown us its true meaning. It is only this second illumination, this discovery that a word which is meaningless by normal linguistic usage has been responsible for the whole thing—this resolution of the problem into nothing—it is only this second illumination that produces the comic effect.

Whether the one or the other of these two views seems to us to throw more light on the question, the discussion of bewilderment and enlightenment brings us closer to a particular discovery. For if the comic effect of Heine's 'famillionaire' depends on the solution of the apparently meaningless word, the 'joke' must no doubt be ascribed to the formation of that word and to the characteristics of the word thus formed.

Another peculiarity of jokes, quite unrelated to what we have just been considering, is recognized by all the authorities as essential to them. 'Brevity is the body and the soul of wit, it is its very self,' says Jean Paul (1804, Part II, Paragraph 42), merely modifying what the old chatterbox Polonius says in Shakespeare's Hamlet (II, 2):

> 'Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit
> And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
> I will be brief.'

In this connection the account given by Lipps (1898, 90) of the brevity of jokes is significant: 'A joke says what it has to say, not always in few words, but in few few words—that is, in words that are insufficient by strict logic or by common modes of thought and speech. It may even actually say what it has to say by not saying it.'

We have already learnt from the connection of jokes with caricature that they 'must bring forward something that is
I am well aware that these scanty extracts from the works of writers upon jokes cannot do them justice. In view of the difficulties standing in the way of my giving an unmistakably correct account of such complicated and subtle trains of thought, I cannot spare curious enquirers the labour of obtaining the information they desire from the original sources. But I am not sure that they will come back fully satisfied. The criteria and characteristics of jokes brought up by these authors and collected above—activity, relation to the content of our thoughts, the characteristic of playful judgement, the coupling of dissimilar things, contrasting ideas, 'sense in nonsense', the succession of bewilderment and enlightenment, the bringing forward of what is hidden, and the peculiar brevity of wit—all this, it is true, seems to us at first sight so very much to the point and so easily confirmed by instances that we cannot be in any danger of underrating such views. But they are *disjecta membra*, which we should like to see combined into an organic whole. When all is said and done, they contribute to our knowledge of jokes no more than would a series of anecdotes to the description of some personality of whom we have a right to ask for a biography. We are entirely without insight into the connection that presumably exists between the separate determinants—what, for instance, the brevity of a joke can have to do with its characteristic of being a playful judgement. We need to be told, further, whether a joke must satisfy *all* these determinants in order to be a proper joke, or need only satisfy *some*, and if so which can be replaced by others and which are indispensable. We should also wish to have a grouping and classification of jokes on the basis of the characteristics considered essential. The classification that we find in the literature rests on the one hand on the technical methods employed in them (e.g. punning or play upon words) and on the other hand on the use made of them in speech (e.g. jokes used for the purposes of caricature or of characterization, or joking snubs).
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We should thus find no difficulty in indicating the aims of any new attempt to throw light on jokes. To be able to count on success, we should have either to approach the work from new angles or to endeavour to penetrate further by increased attention and deeper interest. We can resolve that we will at least not fail in this last respect. It is striking with what a small number of instances of jokes recognized as such the authorities are satisfied for the purposes of their enquiries, and how each of them takes the same ones over from his predecessors. We must not shirk the duty of analysing the same instances that have already served the classical authorities on jokes. But it is our intention to turn besides to fresh material so as to obtain a broader foundation for our conclusions. It is natural then that we should choose as the subjects of our investigation examples of jokes by which we ourselves have been most struck in the course of our lives and which have made us laugh the most.

Is the subject of jokes worth so much trouble? There can, I think, be no doubt of it. Leaving on one side the personal motives which make me wish to gain an insight into the problems of jokes and which will come to light in the course of these studies, I can appeal to the fact that there is an intimate connection between all mental happenings—a fact which guarantees that a psychological discovery even in a remote field will be of an unpredictable value in other fields. We may also bear in mind the peculiar and even fascinating charm exercised by jokes in our society. A new joke acts almost like an event of universal interest; it is passed from one person to another like the news of the latest victory. Even men of eminence who have visited the important cities and countries they have associated, are not ashamed in their autobiographies to report their having heard some excellent joke.

1 Von Falke's Memoirs, 1897.
II

THE TECHNIQUE OF JOKES

[1]

Let us follow up a lead presented to us by chance and consider the first example of a joke that we came across in the preceding chapter.

In the part of his Reisebilder entitled ‘Die Bäder von Lucca [The Baths of Lucca]’ Heine introduces the delightful figure of the lottery-agent and extractor of corns, Hirsch-Hyacinth of Hamburg, who boasts to the poet of his relations with the wealthy Baron Rothschild, and finally says: ‘And, as true as God shall grant me all good things, Doctor, I sat beside Salomon Rothschild and he treated me quite as his equal—quite famillionairely.’

Heymans and Lipps used this joke (which is admittedly an excellent and most amusing one) to illustrate their view that the comic effect of jokes is derived from ‘bewilderment and illumination’ (see above [p. 12]).

We, however, will leave that question on one side and ask another: ‘What is it that makes Hirsch-Hyacinth’s remark into a joke?’ There can be only two possible answers: either the thought expressed in the sentence possesses in itself the character of being a joke or the joke resides in the expression which the thought has been given in the sentence. In whichever of these directions the character of being a joke may lie, we will pursue it further and try to lay hands on it.

A thought can in general be expressed in various linguistic forms—in various words, that is—which can represent it with equal aptness. Hirsch-Hyacinth’s remark presents his thought in a particular form of expression and, as it seems to us, a specially odd form and not the one which is most easily intelligible. Let us try to express the same thought as accurately as possible in other words. Lipps has already done so, and in that way has to some extent explained the poet’s intention. He writes (1898, 87): ‘Heine, as we understand it, means to say

[Reisebilder III, Part II, Chapter VIII.]

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that his [Hyacinth's] reception was on familiar terms— of the not uncommon kind, which does not as a rule gain in agreeableness from having a flavour of millionairedom about it.' We shall not be altering the sense of this if we give it another shape which perhaps fits better into Hirsch-Hyacinth's speech: 'Rothschild treated me quite as his equal, quite familiarly—that is, so far as a millionaire can.' 'A rich man's condescension,' we should add, 'always involves something not quite pleasant for whoever experiences it.'

Whether, now, we keep to the one or the other of the two equally valid texts of the thought, we can see that the question we asked ourselves is already decided. In this example the character of being a joke does not reside in the thought. What Heine has put into Hirsch-Hyacinth's mouth is a correct and acute observation, an observation of unmistakable bitterness, which is understandable in a poor man faced by such great wealth; but we should not venture to describe it as in the nature of a joke. If anyone is unable in considering the translation to get away from his recollection of the shape given to the thought by the poet, and thus feels that nevertheless the thought in itself is also in the nature of a joke, we can point to a sure criterion of the joking character having been lost in the translation. Hirsch-Hyacinth's remark made us laugh aloud, whereas its accurate translation by Lipps or our own version has taken as its starting-point. This, however, will not affect the discussion that follows here. [It may be remarked that 'familiar' can also have the meaning of 'belonging to the family'.]

1 We shall return to this same joke later on [p. 140]; and we shall then have occasion to make a correction in the translation of it given by Lipps which our own version has taken as its starting-point. This, however, will not affect the discussion that follows here. [It may be remarked that 'familiar' can also have the meaning of 'belonging to the family'.]

II. Die Technik des Witzes

nahm sei eine familiäre gewesen, nämlich von der bekannten Art, die durch den Beigeschmack des Millionärtums an Annehmlichkeiten nicht zu gewinnen pflegt. Wir verändern nichts an diesem Sinn, wenn wir eine andere Fassung annehmen, die sich vielleicht besser in die Rede des Hirsch-Hyacinth einfügt: »Rothschild behandelte mich ganz wie seine gleichen, ganz familiär, d. h. soweit ein Millionär das zustande bringt.« »Die Herablassung eines reichen Mannes hat immer etwas Mißliches für den, der sie an sich erfährt«, würden wir noch hinzu setzen.


Wenn aber der Witzcharakter unseres Beispiels nicht dem Gedanken anhaftet, so ist er in der Form, im Wortlaut seines Ausdruckes zu suchen. Wir brauchen nur die Besonderheit dieser Ausdrucksweise zu studieren, um zu erfassen, was man als die Wort- oder Ausdruckstechnik dieses Witzes bezeichnen kann und was in inniger Beziehung zu dem Wesen des Witzes stehen muß, da Charakter und Wirkung des Witzes mit dessen Ersetzung durch anderes verschwinden. Wir befinden uns...
much importance to the verbal form of jokes we are in complete agreement with the authorities. Thus Fischer (1889, 72) writes: 'It is in the first place its sheer form that makes a judgement into a joke, and we are reminded of a saying of Jean Paul’s which, in a single aphorism, explains and exemplifies this precise characteristic of jokes—“Such is the victorious power of sheer position, whether among warriors or words.”'

In what, then, does the ‘technique’ of this joke consist? What has happened to the thought, as expressed, for instance, in our version, in order to turn it into a joke that made us laugh so heartily? Two things—as we learn by comparing our version with the poet’s text. First, a considerable abbreviation has occurred. In order to express fully the thought contained in the joke, we were obliged to add to the words ‘R. treated me quite as his equal—quite familiarly’ a postscript which, reduced to its shortest terms, ran ‘that is, so far as a millionaire can’. And even so we felt the need for a further explanatory sentence. The poet puts it far more shortly: ‘R. treated me quite like his equal, quite familiarly’ a postscript which, reduced to its familiar treatment, has disappeared.

But not quite without leaving a substitute from which we can reconstruct it. For a second change has also been made. The word ‘familiar [familiarly]’ in the unjoking expression of the thought has been transformed in the text of the joke into ‘famillionär [famillionairely]’; and there can be no doubt that it is precisely on this verbal structure that the joke’s character as a joke and its power to cause a laugh depend. The newly constructed word coincides in its earlier portion with the ‘familliär’ of the first sentence, and in its final syllables with the ‘Millionär [millionaire]’ of the second sentence. It stands, as it were, for the ‘Millionär’ portion of the second sentence and thus for the whole second sentence, and so puts us in a position to infer the second sentence that has been omitted in the text of

1 This is equally true of Lipps’s translation.

2 [Although this example has so far borne translation into English comparatively well, what follows can only make its precise effect if the German words are given. The main point of difference is that in German the a verbal form does not require the addition of ’ly’ to the adjective.]
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the joke. It can be described as a 'composite structure' made up of the two components 'familiär' and 'Millionär', and it is tempting to give a diagrammatic picture of the way in which it is derived from those two words:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{FAMILIÄR} \\
\text{MILLIONÄR} \\
\text{FAMILIONÄR}
\end{array}
\]

The process which has converted the thought into a joke can then be represented in the following manner, which may at first sight seem fantastic, but nevertheless produces precisely the outcome that is really before us:

'R. treated me quite familiär,
that is, so far as a Millionär can.'

Let us now imagine that a compressing force is brought to bear on these sentences and that for some reason the second is the less resistant one. It is thereby made to disappear, while its most important constituent, the word 'Millionär', which has succeeded in rebelling against being suppressed, is, as it were, pushed up against the first sentence, and fused with the element of that sentence which is so much like it—'familiär'. And the chance possibility, which thus arises, of saving the essential part of the second sentence actually favours the dissolution of its other, less important, constituents. The joke is thus generated:

'R. treated me quite famili on är.'

If we leave out of account any such compressing force, which indeed is unknown to us, the process by which the joke is formed—that is, the joke-technique—in this instance might be described as 'condensation accompanied by the formation of a substitute'; and in the present example the formation of the

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1 The two words are printed one in Roman and the other in Italic type, and the syllables common to them both are printed in thick type. The second 'l', which is scarcely pronounced, could of course be left out of account. It seems probable that the fact of the two words having several syllables in common offered the joke-technique the occasion for constructing the composite word.
substitute consists in the making of a ‘composite word’. This composite word ‘famillionär’, which is unintelligible in itself but is immediately understood in its context and recognized as being full of meaning, is the vehicle of the joke’s laughter-compelling effect—the mechanism of which, however, is not made in any way clearer by our discovery of the joke-technique. In what way can a linguistic process of condensation, accompanied by the formation of a substitute by means of a composite word, give us pleasure and make us laugh? This is evidently a different problem, whose treatment we may postpone till we have found a way of approaching it. For the present we will keep to the technique of jokes.

Our expectation that the technique of jokes cannot be a matter of indifference from the point of view of discovering their essence leads us at once to enquire whether there are other examples of jokes constructed like Heine’s ‘famillionär’. There are not very many of them, but nevertheless enough to make up a small group which are characterized by the formation of composite words. Heine himself has derived a second joke from the word ‘Millionär”—copying from himself, as it were. In Chapter XIV of his ‘Ideen’¹ he speaks of a ‘Millionär’, which is an obvious combination of ‘Millionär’ and ‘Narr’² and, just as in the first example, brings out a suppressed subsidiary thought.

Here are some other examples I have come upon.—There is a certain fountain [Brunnen] in Berlin, the erection of which brought the Chief Burgomaster Forckenbeck into much disfavour. The Berliners call it the ‘Forckenbecken’, and there is certainly a joke in this description, even though it was necessary to replace the word ‘Brunnen’ by its obsolete equivalent ‘Becken’ in order to combine it into a whole with the name of the Burgomaster.—The voice of Europe once made the cruel joke of changing a potentate’s name from Leopold to Cleopold, on account of the relations he had at one time with a lady with the first name of Cleo. This undoubted product of condensation keeps alive an annoying allusion at the cost of a single letter.—Proper names in general fall easy victims to this kind of treatment by the joke-technique. There were in Vienna two brothers named Salinger, one of whom was a Börsensensal [stockbroker;¹² [Reisebilder II.]² [The German for ‘fool’].]

¹ [Reisebilder II.] ² [The German for ‘fool’]
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Sensal = broker]. This provided a handle for calling him 'Sensalinger', while his brother, to distinguish him, was given the unflattering name of 'Scheusalsinger'. This was convenient, and certainly a joke; I cannot say whether it was justified. But jokes do not as a rule enquire much into that.

I have been told the following condensation joke. A young man who had hitherto led a gay life abroad paid a call, after a considerable absence, on a friend living here. The latter was surprised to see an 'Sensalinger', while his brother, to distinguish him, was given the unflattering name of 'Scheusalsinger'.

'Sensalinger', while his brother, to distinguish him, was given the unflattering name of 'Scheusalsinger'.

While his brother, to distinguish him, was given the unflattering name of 'Scheusalsinger'.

The effect of the joke is not interfered with by the fact that here the composite word is not, like 'famillionär', an unintelligible and otherwise non-existent structure, but one which coincides entirely with one of the two elements represented.

In the course of conversation I myself once unintentionally provided the material for a joke that is once again quite analogous to 'famillionär'. I was talking to a lady about the great services that had been rendered by a man of science who I considered had been unjustly neglected. 'Why,' she said, 'the man deserves a monument.' 'Perhaps he will get one some day.' proceeded to unite them: 'Well, let us wish him a monumentan success.'

I owe a few examples in foreign languages, which show the same mechanism of condensation as our 'famillionär', to an excellent discussion of the same subject in English by A. A. Brill (1911).

The English author De Quincey, Brill tells us, somewhere remarked that old people are inclined to fall into their 'anec-

1 ['Scheusal' means 'monstrous creature'.]
2 ['Traurig' means 'sad'. 'Trauring' is a synonym for 'Ehering'.]
3 [A non-existing word. 'Monumental' (as in English) would have been expected.]
4 [This paragraph and the three examples that follow were added in 1912.]
dotage'. This word is a fusion of the partly overlapping words **ANECDOTE** and **DOTAGE**.

In an anonymous short story Brill once found the Christmas season described as 'the alcoholidays'—a similar fusing of **ALCOHOL** and **HOLIDAYS**.

After Flaubert had published his celebrated novel *Salammbô*, the scene of which is laid in ancient Carthage, Sainte-Beuve laughed at it, on account of its elaboration of detail, as being 'Carthaginoiserie';

**CARTHAGINOIS CHINOISERIE.**

But the best example of a joke of this group originated from one of the leading men in Austria, who, after important scientific and public work, now fills one of the highest offices in the State. I have ventured to make use of the jokes which are ascribed to him, and all of which in fact bear the same impress, as material for these researches, above all because it would have been hard to find any better.

Herr N.'s attention was drawn one day to the figure of a writer who had become well-known from a series of undeniably boring essays which he had contributed to a Vienna daily paper. All of these essays dealt with small episodes in the relations of the first Napoleon with Austria. The author had red hair. As soon as Herr N. heard his name mentioned he asked: 'Is not that the roter Fadian' that runs through the story of the Napoleonids?'

1 Have I the right to do so? At least I have not obtained my knowledge of these jokes through an indiscretion. They are generally known in this city (Vienna) and are to be found in everyone's mouth. A number of them have been given publicity by Eduard Hanslick [the famous musical critic] in the *Neue Freie Presse* and in his autobiography. As regards the others, I must offer my apologies for any possible distortions, which, in the case of oral tradition, are scarcely to be avoided. [It seems likely that Herr N. was Josef Unger (1828-1913), Professor of Jurisprudence and from 1881 President of the Supreme Court.]

2 ['Roter' means 'red', 'scarlet'. 'Fadian' means 'dull fellow'. The

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*Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten*

fallen. Das Wort ist zusammengeschmolzen aus den sich teilweise überdeckenden

*anecdote*

und

*dotage* (kindisches Gefasel).

In einer anonymen kurzen Geschichte fand Brill einmal die Weihnachtszeit bezeichnet als *the alcoholidays*. Die gleiche Verschmelzung aus

*alcohol*

und

*holidays* (Festtage).

Als Flaubert seinen berühmten Roman *Salammbô*, der im alten Karchago spielt, veröffentlicht hatte, verspottete ihn Sainte-Beuve als *Carthaginoiserie* wegen seiner peinlichen Detailmalerei:

**Carthaginois chinoiserie.**

Das vorzüglichste Witzbeispiel dieser Gruppe hat einen der ersten Männer Österreichs zum Urheber, der nach bedeutender wissenschaftlicher und öffentlicher Tätigkeit nun ein oberstes Amt im Staate bekleidet. Ich habe mir die Freiheit genommen, die Witze, die dieser Person zugeschrieben werden und in der Tat alle gleiche Gepräge tragen, als Material für diese Untersuchungen zu verwenden, vor allem darum, weil es schwergehalten hätte, sich ein besseres zu verschaffen.


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In order to discover the technique of this joke, we must apply to it the process of reduction¹ which gets rid of the joke by changing the mode of expression and instead introducing the original complete meaning, which can be inferred with certainty from a good joke. Herr N.'s joke about the 'roter Faden' proceeds from two components—a depreciatory judgement on the writer and a recollection of the famous simile with which Goethe introduces the extracts 'From Ottilie's Diary' in the Wahlverwandtschaften.² The ill-tempered criticism may have run: 'So this is the person who is for ever and ever writing nothing but boring stories about Napoleon in Austria!' Now this remark is not in the least a joke. Nor is Goethe's pretty analogy a joke, and it is certainly not calculated to make us laugh. It is only when the two are brought into connection with each other and submitted to the peculiar process of condensation and fusion that a joke emerges—and a joke of the first order.³

The linking of the disparaging judgement upon the boring historian with the pretty analogy in the Wahlverwandtschaften must have taken place (for reasons which I cannot make intelligible) in a less simple manner than in many similar cases.

termination 'ian' is occasionally added to an adjective, giving the somewhat contemptuous sense of 'fellow'. Thus 'grob' means 'coarse', 'Grobian' means 'coarse fellow'; 'dumm' means 'stupid', 'Dummian' means 'stupid fellow'. The adjective 'fide' or 'fad' means (like its French equivalent) 'insipid', 'dull'. Finally, 'Faden' means 'thread'. If all this is borne in mind, what follows will be intelligible.[¹]

¹ [Here and elsewhere in this work Freud uses the word 'reduction' in the sense of taking something back to its original form. He had already carried out this process in the case of the Heine joke above, p. 16f. Similarly with the verb 'to reduce'; see, for instance, p. 26.]

² 'We hear of a peculiar practice in the English Navy. Every rope in the king's fleet, from the strongest to the weakest, is woven in such a way that a roter Faden [scarlet thread] runs through its whole length. It cannot be extracted without undoing the whole rope, and it proves that even the smallest piece is crown property. In just the same way a thread of affection and dependence runs through Ottilie's diary, binding it all together and characterizing the whole of it.' Goethe [Elective Affinities], Sophienausgabe, 20, 212.)


Die Verknüpfung zwischen dem spöttischen Urteil über den langweiligen Geschichtsschreiber und dem schönen Gleichnis in den Wahlverwandtschaften muß sich aus Gründen, die ich hier noch nicht verständlich machen kann, auf weniger einfache Weise hergestellt haben als in vielen ähnlichen Fällen.


² Wie wenig diese regelmäßig zu wiederholende Beobachtung mit der Behauptung stimmt, der Witz sei ein spielendes Urteil [vgl. S. 14], brauche ich nur anzudeuten.
I shall try to represent what was probably the actual course of events by the following construction. First, the element of the constant recurrence of the same theme in the stories may have awoken a faint recollection in Herr N. of the familiar passage in the Wahlverwandtschaften, which is as a rule wrongly quoted: 'It runs like a roter Faden [scarlet thread].' The 'roter Faden' of the analogy now exercised a modifying influence on the expression of the first sentence, as a result of the chance circumstance that the person insulted was also rot [red]—that is to say had red hair. It may then have run: 'So it is that red person who writes the boring stories about Napoleon!' And now the process began which brought about the condensation of the two pieces. Under its pressure, which had found its first fulcrum in the sameness of the element 'rot', the 'boring' was assimilated to the 'Faden [thread]' and was changed into 'fad [dull]'; after this the two components were able to fuse together into the actual text of the joke, in which, in this case, the quotation has an almost greater share than the derogatory judgement, which was undoubtedly present alone to begin with.

'So it is that red person who writes this fade stuff about Napoleon.' The red Faden that runs through everything.'

'Is not that the red Fadian that runs through the story of the Napoleonids?'

In a later chapter [p. 104] I shall add a justification, but also a correction, to this account, when I come to analyse this joke from points of view other than purely formal ones. But whatever else it may be in doubt, there can be no question that a condensation has taken place. The result of the condensation is, on the one hand, once again a considerable abbreviation; but on the other hand, instead of the formation of a striking composite word, there is an interpenetration of the constituents of the two components. It is true that 'roter Fadian' would be capable of existing as a mere term of abuse; but in our instance it is certainly a product of condensation.

If at this point a reader should become indignant at a method of approach which threatens to ruin his enjoyment of jokes without being able to throw any light on the source of that

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Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten


> Also dieser rote Mensch ist es, der das fade Zeug über N. schreibt.

Der rote Faden, der sich durch alles hindurchzieht.


Wenn nun an dieser Stelle zuerst ein Leser unwillig würde über eine Betrachtungsweise, die ihm das Vergnügen am Witz zu zerstören droht, ohne ihn aber die Quelle dieses Vergnügens aufklären zu können, so
enough, I would beg him to be patient for the moment. At present we are only dealing with the technique of jokes; and the investigation even of this promises results, if we pursue it sufficiently far.

The analysis of the last example has prepared us to find that, if we meet with the process of condensation in still other examples, the substitute for what is suppressed may be not a composite structure, but some other alteration of the form of expression. We can learn what this other form of substitute may be from another of Herr N.'s jokes.

'I drove with him tête-à-tête.' Nothing can be easier than the reduction of this joke. Clearly it can only mean: 'I drove with X tête-à-tête, and X is a stupid ass.'

Neither of these sentences is a joke. They could be put together: 'I drove with that stupid ass X tête-à-tête', and that is not a joke either. The joke only arises if the 'stupid ass' is left out, and, as a substitute for it, the 't' in one 'tête' is turned into a 'b'. With this slight modification the suppressed 'ass' has nevertheless once more found expression. The technique of this group of jokes can be described as 'condensation accompanied by slight modification', and it may be suspected that the slighter the modification the better the joke.

The technique of another joke is similar, though not without its complication. In the course of a conversation about someone in whom there was much to praise, but much to find fault with, Herr N. remarked: 'Yes, vanity is one of his four Achilles heels.' In this case the slight modification consists in the fact that, instead of the one Achilles heel which the hero himself must have possessed, four are here in question. Four heels—but only an ass has four heels. Thus the two thoughts that are condensed in the joke ran: 'Apart from his vanity, Y is an eminent man; all the same I don't like him—he's an ass rather than a man.'

1 [In the editions before 1925, this read 'substitutive modification'.]
2 [Footnote added 1912:] It seems that this joke was applied earlier by Heine to Alfred de Musset.
3 [In this and in the previous example the actual term of abuse in German is 'Vieh', whose literal meaning is more generally 'animal'.]
4 One of the complications in the technique of this example lies in the fact that the modification by which the omitted insult is replaced must be described as an allusion to the latter, since it only leads to it by

würde ich ihn zunächst um Geduld bitten. Wir stehen erst bei der Technik des Witzes, deren Untersuchung ja auch Aufschlüsse verspricht, wenn wir sie erst weit genug ausgedehnt haben.


'Ich bin tête-à-tête mit ihm gefahren.« Nichts leichter als diesen Witz zu reduzieren. Offenbar kann es dann nur heißen: Ich bin tête-à-tête mit dem X. gefahren, und der X. ist ein dummes Vieh.

Keiner der beiden Sätze ist witzig. Oder in einen Satz zusammengezogen: Ich bin tête-à-tête mit dem dummen Vieh von X. gefahren, was ebensowenig witzig ist. Der Witz stellt sich erst her, wenn das »dumme Vieh« weggelassen wird und zum Ersatz dafür das eine tête sein t in b verwandelt, mit welcher geringen Modifikation das erst unterdrückte »Vieh« doch wieder zum Ausdruck gelangt. Man kann die Technik dieser Gruppe von Witzen beschreiben als Verdichtung mit leichter Modifikation und ahnt, daß der Witz um so besser sein wird, je geringfügiger die Modifikation ausfällt.

Ganz ähnlich, obwohl nicht unkompliziert, ist die Technik eines anderen Witzes. Herr N. sagt im Wechselgespräch über eine Person, an der manches zu rühmen und vieles auszusetzen ist: »Ja, die Eitelkeit ist eine seiner vier Achillessferse.« Die leichte Modifikation besteht hier darin, daß anstatt der einen Achillessferse, die man ja auch beim Helden zugestehen muß, deren vier behauptet werden. Vier Fersen, also vier Füße hat aber nur das Vieh. Somit haben die beiden im Witz verdichteten Gedanken gelaufen: »Y. ist bis auf seine Eitelkeit ein hervorragender Mensch; aber ich mag ihn doch nicht, er ist doch eher ein Vieh als ein Mensch.«
I happened to hear another similar, but much simpler, joke in *in statu nascendi* in a family circle. Of two brothers at school, one was an excellent and the other a most indifferent scholar. Now it happened once that the exemplary boy too came to grief at going backwards on all fours.

The boy who had hitherto been overshadowed by brother readily grasped the opportunity. 'Yes', he said, 'Karl's going backwards on all fours.'

The modification here consists in a short addition to the assurance that he too was of the opinion that the other boy was going backwards. But this modification represented and replaced a passionate plea on his own behalf: 'You mustn't think he's so much cleverer than I am simply because he's more successful at school. After all he's only a stupid ass—that's to say, much stupider than I am.'

Another, very well-known joke of Herr N.'s offers a neat example of condensation with slight modification. He remarked of a personage in public life: 'He has a great future behind him.' The man to whom this joke referred was comparatively young, and he had seemed destined by his birth, education and personal qualities to succeed in the future to the leadership of a great political party and to enter the government at its head. But times changed; the party became inadmissible as a government, and it could be foreseen that the man who had been predestined to be its leader would come to nothing as well. The greatest reduction of this joke could be replaced by a passionate plea for the other boy's behalf: 'You mustn't think he's so much cleverer than I am simply because he's more successful at school. After all he's only a stupid ass—that's to say, much stupider than I am.'

Herr N. made use of almost the same modification in the a process of inference. For another factor that complicates the technique here, see below [p. 103].


Fast der nämlichen Modifikation bediente sich Herr N. im Falle eines

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1 An der Technik dieses Witzes wirkt noch ein anderes Moment mit, welches ich mir später anzuführen aufspare. Es betreift den inhaltlichen Charakter der Modifikation (Darstellung durch das Gegenteil [S. 68 ff.], Widerrufs [S. 55 ff.]). Die Witztechnik ist durch nichts behindert, sich mehrerer Mittel gleichzeitig zu bedienen, die wir aber nur der Reihe nach kennenlernen können.
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case of a gentleman who became Minister for Agriculture with the sole qualification of being himself a farmer. Public opinion had occasion to recognize that he was the least gifted holder of the office that there had ever been. When he had resigned his office and retired to his farming interests, Herr N. said of him, 'Like Cincinnatus, he has gone back to his place before the plough.'

The Roman, however, who had also been called away to office from the plough, returned to his place behind the plough. What went before the plough, both then and to-day, was only—an ox.¹

Karl Kraus² was responsible for another successful condensation with slight modification. He wrote of a certain yellow-press journalist that he had travelled to one of the Balkan States by 'Orientexpresszug'.³ There is no doubt that this word combines two others: 'Orientexpresszug [Orient Express]' and 'Erpressung [blackmail]'. Owing to the context, the element 'Erpressung' emerges only as a modification of the 'Orientexpresszug'—a word called for by the verb ['travelled']. This joke, which presents itself in the guise of a misprint, has yet another claim on our interest.⁴

This series of examples could easily be further increased; but I do not think we require any fresh instances to enable us to grasp clearly the characteristics of the technique in this second group—condensation with modification. If we compare the second group with the first, whose technique consisted in condensation with the formation of composite words, we shall easily see that the difference between them is not an essential one and that the transitions between them are fluid. Both the formation of composite words and modification can be subsumed under the concept of the formation of substitutes; and, if we care to, we can also describe the formation of a composite word as a modification of the basic word by a second element.

¹ ['Ochs' in German has much the same meaning as 'ass' in English.]
² [In the 1905 edition only, this read 'A witty writer'. Karl Kraus was a celebrated Viennese journalist and editor. See also below, p. 78 ff.]
³ [A non-existent word, explained by what follows.]
⁴ [As being on the borderline between a joke and a parapraxis. Cf. The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901b), Chapter VI (B), Examples 19 ff.]

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II. Die Technik des Witzes

Kavaliers, der Ackerbauminister geworden war ohne anderes Anredut, als daß er selbst Landwirtschaft betrieb. Die öffentliche Meinung hatte Gelegenheit, ihn als den mindest begabten, der je mit diesem Amt betracht gewesen, zu erkennen. Als er aber das Amt niedergelegt und sich auf seine landwirtschaftlichen Interessen zurückgezogen hatte, sagte Herr N. von ihm:

*Er ist, wie Cincinnatus, auf seinen Platz vor dem Pflug zurückgekehrt.*

Der Römer, den man auch von der Landwirtschaft weg zum Amt be­rufen hatte, nahm seinen Platz hinter dem Pflug wieder ein. Vor dem Pflug ging damals wie heute nur — der Ochs.


Wir könnten die Reihe dieser Beispiele leicht um weitere vermehren, aber ich meine, wir bedürfen keiner neuen Falle, um die Charaktere der Technik in dieser zweiten Gruppe, Verdichtung mit Modifikation, sicher zu erfassen. Vergleichen wir nun die zweite Gruppe mit der ersten, deren Technik in Verdichtung mit Mischwortbildung bestand, so sehen wir leicht ein, daß die Unterschiede nicht wesentliche und die Übergänge fließend sind. Die Mischwortbildung wie die Modifikation unterordnen sich dem Begriff der Ersatzbildung, und, wenn wir wollen, können wir die Mischwortbildung auch als Modifikation des Grund­wortes durch das zweite Element beschreiben.

¹ [S. auch weiter unten, S. 75.]
² [Weil er auf der Grenze zwischen einem Witz und einer Fehlleistung steht.]
But here we may make a first step and ask ourselves with what factor known to us from the literature of the subject this first finding of ours coincides, wholly or in part. Evidently with the factor of brevity, which Jean Paul describes as ‘the soul of wit’ (p. 13 above). But brevity does not in itself constitute a joke, or otherwise every laconic remark would be one. The joke’s brevity must be of a particular kind. It will be recalled that Lipps has tried to describe this particular brevity of jokes more precisely (p. 13). Here our investigation contributes something and shows that the brevity of jokes is often the outcome of a particular process which has left behind in the wording of the joke a second trace—the formation of a substitute. By making use of the procedure of reduction, which seeks to undo the peculiar process of condensation, we also find, however, that the joke depends entirely on its verbal expression as established by the process of condensation. Our whole interest now turns, of course, to this strange process, which has hitherto scarcely been examined. Nor can we in the least understand how all that is valuable in a joke, the yield of pleasure that the joke brings us, can originate from that process.

Are processes similar to those which we have described here as the technique of jokes known already in any other field of mental events? They are—in a single field, and an apparently very remote one. In 1900 I published a book which, as its title (The Interpretation of Dreams) indicates, attempted to throw light on what is puzzling in dreams and to establish them as derivatives of our normal mental functioning. I found occasion there to contrast the manifest, and often strange, content of the dream with the latent, but perfectly logical, dream-thoughts from which the dream is derived; and I entered into an investigation of the processes which make the dream out of the latent dream-thoughts, as well as of the psychical forces which are involved in that transformation. To the totality of these transforming processes I gave the name of the ‘dream-work’; and I have described as a part of this dream-work a process of condensation which shows the greatest similarity to the one found in the technique of jokes—which, like it, leads to abbreviation, and creates substitute-formations of the same character. Everyone


The first thing that we want to learn is whether the process of condensation with substitute-formation is to be discovered as a universal characteristic of the technique of jokes.

Here I recall a joke which has remained in my memory owing to the special circumstances in which I heard it. One of the great teachers of my young days, whom we thought incapable of appreciating a joke and from whom we had never heard a joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood. 'I have just read an excellent joke of his own, came into the Institute one day laughing, and, more readily than usual, explained to us what it was that had caused his cheerful mood.

[3]

The first thing that we want to learn is whether the process of condensation with substitute-formation is to be discovered in every joke, and can therefore be regarded as a universal characteristic of the technique of jokes.

Das nächste, was wir erfahren wollen, ist, ob der Vorgang der Verdichtung mit Ersatzbildung bei allen Witzten nachweisbar ist, so daß er als der allgemeine Charakter der Witztechnik bezeichnet werden kann.

Ich erinnere mich da an einen Witz, der mir infolge besonderer Umstände im Gedächtnis geblieben ist. Einer der großen Lehrer meiner jungen Jahre, den wir für unfähig hielten, einen Witz zu schätzen, wie wir auch nie einen eigenen Witz von ihm gehört hatten, kam eines Tages lachend in das Institut und gab bereitwilliger als sonst Bescheid über den Anlaß seiner heiteren Stimmung. »Ich habe da einen vorzüg-
A young man was introduced into a Paris salon, who was a relative of the great Jean-Jacques Rousseau and bore his name. Moreover he was red-haired. But he behaved so awkwardly that the hostess remarked critically to the gentleman who had introduced him: "Vous m’avez fait connaître un jeune homme roux et sot, mais non pas un Rousseau." And he laughed again.

By the nomenclature of the authorities this would be classed as a 'Klangwitz', and one of an inferior sort, with a play upon a proper name—not unlike the joke, for instance, in the Capuchin monk's sermon in Wallensteins Lager, which, as is well known, is modelled on the style of Abraham a Santa Clara:

>Pourriez-vous me dire, monsieur, pourquoi vous appelez-vous Wallenstein? — Parce qu'au commencement de Hitler, je suis venu de Rouen.

—but no, not quite in that way. The lady herself says straight out in the joke almost everything that the characteristic that we may have hoped to be able to prove we can attribute to her thoughts. 'You had raised my expectations about a relative of Jean-Jacques Rousseau—perhaps a spiritual relative—and here he is: a red-haired silly young man, a roux et sot.' It is true that I have been able to make an interpolation; but this attempt at a reduction has not got rid of the joke. It remains, and is attached to the identity of sound of the words ROUSSEAU / ROUX SOT. It is thus proved that condensation with substitute-formation has no share in the production of this joke.

What besides? Fresh attempts at reduction can teach me that

>Die Dame des Hauses zu dem Herrn, der ihn eingeführt, als Kritik äußerte: »Vous m'avez fait connaître un jeune homme roux et sot, mais non pas un Rousseau.« Und er lachte von neuem.

This is due to the nomenclature of the authorities; but it is not a new experience. It is true that I have been able to make an attempt at a reduction has not got rid of the joke. It remains, and is attached to the identity of sound of the words ROUSSEAU / ROUX SOT. It is thus proved that condensation with substitute-formation has no share in the production of this joke.

What besides? Fresh attempts at reduction can teach me that

1 ['You have made me acquainted with a young man who is roux (red-haired) and sot (silly), but not a Rousseau.' 'Roux-sot' would be pronounced exactly like 'Rousseau'.]

2 ['Sound-joke. A joke depending on sound. See below p. 45.]

3 [Schiller's Wallenstein's Lager, Scene 8. Literally: 'He gets himself called Wallenstein, and indeed he is for an Stein (stone) of offence and trouble.'—Abraham a Santa Clara was a celebrated Austrian popular preacher and satirist (1644-1709).] Nevertheless, as a result of another factor, this joke [the Rousseau joke] deserves to be more highly thought of. But this can only be indicated later on [p. 75].

Welches ist aber die Technik dieses Witzes? Da zeigt es sich, daß der Charakter, welchen wir vielleicht hofften allgemein nachzuweisen, schon bei dem ersten neuen Fall versagt. Es liegt hier keine Auslassung, kaum eine Verkürzung vor. Die Dame sagt im Witze selbst fast alles aus, was wir ihren Gedanken unterlegen können.


Was aber sonst? Neue Versuche zur Reduktion können mich belehren,


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the joke remains resistant until the name 'Rousseau' is replaced by another. If, for instance, I put 'Racine' instead of it, the lady's criticism, which remains just as possible as before, loses every trace of being a joke. I now know where I have to look for the technique of this joke, though I may still hesitate over lady's criticism, which remains just as possible as before, loses it separate syllables like a charade.

I can bring up a few examples which have an identical technique.

An Italian lady1 is said to have revenged herself for a tactless remark of the first Napoleon's with a joke having this same technique of the double use of a word. At a court ball, he said to her, pointing to her fellow countrymen: 'Tutti gli Italiani danzano si male.' To which she made the quick repartee: 'Non tutti, ma buona parte.'

Once when the Antigone [of Sophocles] was produced in Berlin, the critics complained that the production was lacking in the proper character of antiquity. Berlin wit made the criticism its own in the following words: 'Antik? Oh, nee.'

An analogous dividing-up joke is at home in medical circles. If one enquires from a youthful patient whether he has ever brought up a few examples which have an identical technique for 'masturbation'.

I can bring up a few examples which have an identical technique. An Italian lady1 is said to have revenged herself for a tactless remark of the first Napoleon's with a joke having this same technique of the double use of a word. At a court ball, he said to her, pointing to her fellow countrymen: 'Tutti gli Italiani danzano si male.' To which she made the quick repartee: 'Non tutti, ma buona parte.'2

Once when the Antigone [of Sophocles] was produced in Berlin, the critics complained that the production was lacking in the proper character of antiquity. Berlin wit made the criticism its own in the following words: 'Antik? Oh, nee.'2 (Vischer, 1846-57, Bd. I, 429, and Fischer, 1889 [75].)

An analogous dividing-up joke is at home in medical circles. If one enquires from a youthful patient whether he has ever had anything to do with masturbation, the answer is sure to be: 'O na, nie!'4

In all three5 of these examples, which should suffice for this species, we see the same joke-technique: in each of them a name is used twice, once as a whole and again divided up into its separate syllables, which, when they are thus separated, give another sense.6

1 [This example was added in 1912.]
2 [All Italians dance so badly! 'Not all, but buona parte (a good part)']—the original, Italian version of Napoleon's surname.
3 ['Antique? Oh, no.' The words, in Berlin dialect, approximate in pronunciation to 'Antigone'.]
4 ['Oh, no, never!' 'Onanie (onanism)' is the common German word for 'masturbation'.]
5 [This should by rights have been changed to 'four' in 1912, but was left unaltered.]
6 The goodness of these jokes depends on the fact that another
The multiple use of the same word, once as a whole and again in the syllables into which it falls, is the first instance we have come across of a technique differing from that of condensation. But the profusion of examples that have met us must convince us after a little reflection that the newly-discovered technique can scarcely be limited to this one method. There are a number of possible ways—how many it is as yet quite impossible to guess—in which the same word or the same verbatim repetition can possibly be regarded as technical methods of making jokes? It seems to be so. And the examples of jokes which follow will prove it.

In the first place, one can take the same verbal material and merely make some alteration in its arrangement. The slighter the alteration—the more one has to make of something technical of a far higher order is simultaneously brought into use (see below [p. 75]).—At this point I may also draw attention to a connection between jokes and riddles. The philosopher Brentano composed a kind of riddle in which a small number of syllables had to be guessed which when they were put together into words gave a different sense according as they were grouped in one way or another. For instance: '... liess mich das Platanenblatt abnehmen' ['the plane-tree leaf (Platanenblatt) led me to think (abnehmen)', where 'Platanen' and 'blatt abnehmen' sound almost the same]. Or 'wie du dem Inder hast verschrieben, in der Hast verschrieben' ['when you wrote a prescription for the Indian, in your haste you made a slip of the pen', where 'Inder hast (have to the Indian) and 'in der Hast (in your haste) sound the same. An English parallel may perhaps make the point clearer: 'he said he would solicit her solicitor.]

The syllables to be guessed were inserted into the appropriate place in the sentence under the disguise of the repeated sound 'dal'. [Thus the English example would be stated: 'he said he would daldaldaldal daldaldaldal.'] A colleague of the philosopher's took a witty revenge on him when he heard of the elderly man's engagement. He asked: 'Daldaldal daldaldal?'—Brentano brennt-a-no? ['Brentano—does he still burn?']

What is the difference between these daldal riddles and the jokes in the text above? In the former the technique is given as a precondition and the wording has to be guessed; while in the jokes the wording is given and the technique is disguised.

[The Brentano in question was Franz Brentano (1838–1917) whose lectures on philosophy Freud had attended during his first year as a student at the University of Vienna. A fuller explanation of these riddles is given below in an appendix, p. 297.]


Man kann zunächst dasselbe Material von Worten nehmen und nur etwas an der Anordnung derselben ändern. Je geringer die Abänderung ist, je eher man den Eindruck empfägt,

Die zu erratenden Silben werden im Zusammenhang des Satzes durch das entsprechend oft wiederholende Füllwort dal ersetzet. Ein Kollege des Philosophen übte eine geistreiche Rache, als er von der Verlobung des in reiferen Jahren stehenden Mannes hörte, indem er fragte: Daldaldal daldaldal (Brentano brennt-a-no?)

Was macht den Unterschied zwischen diesen Daldal-Rätseln und den obenstehenden Witzen? Daß in ersteren die Technik als Bedingung angegeben ist und der Wortlaut erraten werden soll, während in den Witzen der Wortlaut mitgeteilt und die Technik versteckt ist.

[Es handelt-sich um Franz Brentano (1838–1917), dessen philosophische Vorlesungen Freud in seinem ersten Studienjahr an der Wiener Universität gehört hatte.]
different being said in the same words—the better is the joke technically.

'Mr. and Mrs. X live in fairly grand style. Some people think that the husband has earned a lot and so has been able to lay by a bit [sich etwas zurückgelegt]; others again think that the wife has lain back a bit [sich etwas zurückgelegt] and so has been able to earn a lot.'

A really diabolically ingenious joke! And achieved with such an economy of means! 'Earned a lot—lay by a bit [sich etwas zurückgelegt]; lain back a bit [sich etwas zurückgelegt]—earned a lot.' It is merely the inversion of these two phrases that distinguishes what is said about the husband from what is hinted about the wife. Here again, by the way, this is not the whole technique of the joke. [See below, pp. 40 and 75.]

A wide field of play lies open to the technique of jokes if we extend the 'multiple use of the same material' to cover cases in which the word (or words) in which the joke resides may occur once unaltered but the second time with a slight modification. Here, for instance, is another of Herr N.'s jokes:

He heard a gentleman who was himself born a Jew make a spiteful remark about the Jewish character. 'Herr Hofrat', he said, 'your antisemitism was well-known to me; your antisemitism is new to me.'

Here only a single letter is altered, whose modification could scarcely be noticed in careless speech. The example reminds us of Herr N.'s other modification jokes (on p. 25 ff.), but the difference is that here there is no condensation; everything that has to be said is said in the joke itself: 'I know that earlier you were yourself a Jew; so I am surprised that you should speak ill of Jews.'

An admirable example of a modification joke of this kind

1 Daniel Spitzer, 1912, 1, 280. [Spitzer, Viennese journalist, 1835-1893.]

2 [Footnote added 1912:] This is also true of the excellent joke reported by Brill [1911] from Oliver Wendell Holmes: 'Put not your trust in money, but put your money in trust.' Here there is promise of an antithesis but it does not materialize. The second part of the sentence cancels the antithesis. Incidentally, this is a good instance of the untranslatability of jokes with this technique.

3 [The page reference is given wrongly in all the German editions except the first.]

II. THE TECHNIQUE OF JOKES

II. Die Technik des Witzes

denselben Worten gesagt worden, desto besser ist in technischer Hinsicht der Witz.

D. Spitzer (Wiener Spaziergänge):

>Das Ehepaar X lebt auf ziemlich großem Fuße. Nach der Ansicht der einen soll der Mann viel verdient und sich dabei etwas zurückgelegt haben, nach anderen wieder soll sich die Frau etwas zurückgelegt und dabei viel verdient haben.<

Ein geradezu diabolisch guter Witz! Und mit wie geringen Mitteln er hergestellt ist! Viel verdient – sich etwas zurückgelegt, sich etwas zurückgelegt – viel verdient; es ist eigentlich nichts als eine Umstellung dieser beiden Phrasen, wodurch sich das vom Manne Ausgesagte von dem über die Frau Angedeutete unterscheidet. Allerdings ist dies auch hier wiederum nicht die ganze Technik dieses Witzes. [Vgl. S. 41 und S. 73.]

Ein reicher Spielraum öffnet sich der Witztechnik, wenn man die mehrfache Verwendung des gleichen Materials dahin ausdehnt, daß das Wort – oder die Worte – an denen der Witz haftet, das eine Mal unverändert, das andere Mal mit einer kleinen Modifikation gebraucht werden dürfte.

Z. B. ein anderer Witz des Herrn N.:
Er hört von einem Herrn, der selbst als Jude geboren ist, eine gehässige Äußerung über jüdisches Wesen. »Herr Hofrat«, meint er, »Ihr Antisemitismus war mir bekannt, Ihr Antisemitismus ist mir neu.«

Hier ist nur ein einziger Buchstabe verändert, dessen Modifikation bei sorgloser Aussprache kaum bemerkt wird. Das Beispiel erinnert an die anderen Modifikationswitze des Herrn N. (s. S. 28 f.), aber zum Unterschiede von ihnen fehlt ihm die Verdichtung; es ist im Witz selbst alles gesagt, was gesagt werden soll. »Ich weiß, daß Sie früher selbst Jude waren; es wundert mich also, daß gerade Sie über Juden schimpfen.«

Ein vortreffliches Beispiel eines solchen Modifikationswitze ist auch

is the well-known cry: ‘Traduttore—Traditore!’ 1 The similarity, amounting almost to identity, of the two words represents most impressively the necessity which forces a translator into crimes against his original. 2

The variety of possible slight modifications in such jokes is so great that none of them exactly resembles another.

Here is a joke that is said to have been made during an examination in jurisprudence. The candidate had to translate a passage in the Corpus Juris: ‘“Labeo ait... I fall, says he... You fail, say I’, replied the examiner, and the examination was at an end. 3 Anyone who mistakes the name of the great jurist for a verbal form, and moreover one wrongly recalled, no doubt deserves nothing better. But the technique of the joke lies in the fact that almost the same words which proved the ignorance of the candidate were used to pronounce his punishment by the examiner. The joke is, moreover, an example of ‘ready repartee’, the technique of which, as we shall see [p. 68], does not differ greatly from what we are illustrating here.

Words are a plastic material with which one can do all kinds of things. There are words which, when used in certain connections, have lost their original full meaning, but which regain it in other connections. A joke of Lichtenberg’s carefully singles out circumstances in which the watered-down words are bound to regain their full meaning:

‘“How are you getting along?”’ 4 the blind man asked the lame man. ‘As you see’, the lame man replied to the blind man.

There are, too, words in German that can be taken, according as they are ‘full’ or ‘empty’, in a different sense, and, indeed, in more than one. For there can be two different derivatives from the same stem, one of which has developed into a word with a full meaning and the other into a watered-down final syllable

1 [Translator—traitor!]
2 [Footnote added 1912:] Brill [ibid.] quotes a quite analogous modification joke: Amantes amantes (lovers are fools).
3 [This is nearer in German, since exactly the same word ‘fallen’ is used for both ‘to fall’ and ‘to fail in an examination’. Labeo is in fact the name of a famous Roman jurist (c. 50 b.c.—A.D. 18), and the Latin words should really have been translated ‘Labeo says’. The candidate took ‘labour’ for ‘labour’, a Latin word which does mean ‘I fall’.]
4 [‘Wie geht’s?’ Literally, ‘how do you walk?’]
or suffix, both of which, however, are pronounced exactly the same. The identity of sound between a full word and a watered-down syllable may also be a chance one. In both cases the joke-technique can take advantage of the conditions thus prevailing in the linguistic material.

A joke, for instance, which is attributed to Schleiermacher, is of importance to us as being an almost pure example of these technical methods:¹ 'Eifersucht [jealousy] is a Leidenschaft [passion] which mit Eifer sucht [with eagerness seeks] what Leidschaft [causes pain].'

This is undeniably in the nature of a joke, though not particularly effective as one. A quantity of factors are absent here which might mislead us in analysing other jokes so long as we examined each of those factors separately. The thought expressed in the wording is worthless; the definition it gives of jealousy is in any case thoroughly unsatisfactory. There is not a trace of 'sense in nonsense', of 'hidden meaning' or of 'bewilderment and illumination'. No efforts will reveal a 'contrast of ideas': a contrast between the words and what they mean can be found only with great difficulty. There is no sign of abbreviation; on the contrary, the wording gives an impression of prolixity. And yet it is a joke, and even a very perfect one. At the same time, its only striking characteristic is the one in the absence of which the joke disappears: the fact that here the same words are put to multiple uses. We can then choose whether to include this joke in the sub-class of those in which words are used first as a whole and then divided up (e.g. Rousseau or Antigone) or in the other sub-class in which the multiplicity is produced by the full or the watered-down meaning of the verbal constituents. Apart from this, only one other factor deserves notice from the point of view of the technique of jokes. We find here an unusual state of things established: a kind of 'unification' has taken place, since 'Eifersucht [jealousy]' is defined by means of its own name—by means of itself, as it were. This, as we shall see [p. 66 ff.], is also a technique of jokes. These two factors, therefore, must in themselves be sufficient to give a remark the character of a joke.

If now we enter still further into the variety of forms of the

¹[Jokes of this type are necessarily more than usually untranslatable.]
multiple use of the same word, we suddenly notice that we have before us examples of ‘double meaning’ or ‘play upon words’—forms which have long been generally known and recognized as a technique of jokes. Why have we taken the trouble to discover afresh what we might have gathered from the most superficial essay on jokes? To begin with, we can only plead in our own justification that we have nevertheless brought out another aspect of the same phenomenon of linguistic expression. What is supposed by the authorities to show the character of jokes as a kind of ‘play’ has been classified by us under the title of ‘double meaning’ as a new, third group, can easily be divided into sub-classes, which, it is true, cannot be separated from one another by essential distinctions any more than can the third group as a whole from the second. We find:

(a) Cases of the double meaning of a name and of a thing denoted by it. For instance: ‘Discharge thyself of our company, Pistol!’ (Shakespeare [II Henry IV, ii, 4].)

'More Hof [courting] than Freiung [marriage]’ said a witty Viennese about a number of pretty girls who had been admired for many years but had never found a husband. 'Hof' and 'Freiung' are the names of two neighbouring squares in the centre of Vienna.

'Vile Macbeth does not rule here in Hamburg: the ruler here is Banko [bank-money].’ (Heine, [Schnabelewopski, Chap. III].)

Where the name cannot be used (we should perhaps say 'misused') unaltered, a double meaning can be got out of it by one of the slight modifications we are familiar with:

'Why', it was asked, in times that are now past, 'have the French rejected Lohengrin?’ ‘On Elsa’s (Elsass [Alsace]) account.’

(b) Double meaning arising from the literal and metaphorical meanings of a word. This is one of the most fertile sources for the technique of jokes. I will quote only one example:

A medical friend well-known for his jokes once said to Arthur Schnitzler the dramatist:¹ ‘I’m not surprised that you’ve become a great writer. After all your father held a mirror up to his contemporaries.’ The mirror which was handled by the

¹ [Who was himself a doctor of medicine.]

¹ [Heinrich IV, II. Teil, II. Akt, 4. Szene.]
² [Schnabelewopski, Kapitel III.]
³ [Dieser war selbst Arzt.]
II. THE TECHNIQUE OF JOKES

Dramatist’s father, the famous Dr. Schnitzler, was the laryngoscope. A well-known remark of Hamlet’s tells us that the purpose of a play, and so also of the dramatist who creates it, is ‘to hold, as ‘twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.’ (III, 2.)

(c) Double meaning proper, or play upon words. This may be described as the ideal case of ‘multiple use’. Here no violence is done to the word; it is not cut up into its separate syllables, it does not need to be subjected to any modification, it does not have to be transferred from the sphere it belongs to (the sphere of proper names, for instance) to another one. Exactly as it is and as it stands in the sentence, it is able, thanks to certain favourable circumstances, to express two different meanings.

Examples of this are at our disposal in plenty:

One of Napoleon III’s first acts when he assumed power was to seize the property of the House of Orleans. This excellent play upon words was current at the time: ‘C’est le premier vol de l’aigle.’ (‘It is the eagle’s first vol.’) ‘Vol’ means ‘flight’ but also ‘theft’. (Quoted by Fischer, 1889 [80].)

Louis XV wanted to test the wit of one of his courtiers, of whose talent he had been told. At the first opportunity he commanded the gentleman to make a joke of which he, the king, should be the ‘sujet [subject]’. The courtier at once made the clever reply: ‘Le roi n’est pas sujet.’ (‘The King is not a subject.’ Also in Fischer, loc. cit.)

A doctor, as he came away from a lady’s bedside, said to her husband with a shake of his head: ‘I don’t like her looks.’ ‘I’ve not liked her looks for a long time’, the husband hastened to agree.

The doctor was of course referring to the lady’s condition; but he expressed his anxiety about the patient in words which the husband could interpret as a confirmation of his own marital aversion.

Heine said of a satirical comedy: ‘This satire would not have been so biting if its author had had more to bite.’ This joke is more an example of metaphorical and literal double meaning than of a play upon words proper. But what is to be gained by drawing a sharp distinction here?

1 [Of which he was the inventor. The German word is ‘Kehlkopfspiegel’, literally, ‘larynx mirror’.

2 [und selbst erfunden hat]
Another good example of play upon words is told by the authorities (Heymans and Lipps) in a form which makes it unintelligible.\(^1\) Not long ago I came upon the correct version and setting of the anecdote in a collection of jokes which has not proved of much use apart from this.\(^2\)

One day Saphir and Rothschild met each other. After they had chatted for a little while, Saphir said: "Listen, Rothschild, my funds have got low, you might lend me a hundred ducats." "Oh well!" said Rothschild, "that'll suit me all right—but only on condition that you make a joke." "That'll suit me all right too," replied Saphir. "Good. Then come to my office tomorrow," Saphir appeared punctually. "Ah!" said Rothschild, when he saw him come in, "Sie kommen um Ihre 100 Dukaten [You've come about your hundred ducats]." "No!" answered Saphir, "Sie kommen um Ihre 100 Dukaten [You're going to lose your hundred ducats] because I shan't dream of paying you back before the Day of Judgement."*\(^3\)

"What do these statues vorstellen [represent or put forward]?"

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\(^1\) In the original this unsatisfactory form of the anecdote is inserted by Freud as a footnote at this point. It will, we believe, be easier for English readers if this footnote is transferred to the end of the correct version of the story as told by Freud in the text.

\(^2\) Hermann, 1904.

\(^3\) ["Sie kommen um . . ."] may mean equally 'You are coming about' or 'You are losing'.—'Saphir', so Heymans tells us, 'was asked by a rich creditor whom he had come to visit: 'Sie kommen wohl um die 300 Gulden' [No doubt you've come about the 300 florins?] and he replied: 'Nein, Sie kommen um die 300 Gulden [No, you're going to lose the 300 florins]. In giving this answer he was expressing his meaning in a perfectly correct and by no means unusual form.' That is in fact the case. Saphir's answer, considered in itself, is in perfect order. We understand, too, what he means to say—namely that he has no intention of paying his debt. But Saphir makes use of the same words that had previously been used by his creditor. We therefore cannot avoid also taking them in the sense in which they had been used by the latter. And in that case Saphir's answer no longer has any meaning whatever. The creditor is not "coming" at all. Nor can he be coming "about the 300 florins"—that is, he cannot be coming to bring 300 florins. Moreover, as a creditor, it is not his business to bring but to demand. Since Saphir's words are in this way recognized as being at once sense and nonsense, a comic situation arises.' (Lipps, 1898, S. 97.)

The version which I have given in full in the text above for the sake of clarity shows that the technique of the joke is far simpler than Lipps...
asked a stranger to Berlin of a native Berliner, looking at a row of monuments in a public square. ‘Oh, well,’ was the reply, ‘either their right leg or their left leg.’

‘At this moment I cannot recall all the students’ names, and of the professors there are some who still have no name at all.’ (Heine, Harzreise.)

We shall be giving ourselves practice, perhaps, in diagnostic differentiation if at this point we insert another well-known joke about professors. ‘The distinction between Professors Ordinary [ordentlich] and Professors Extraordinary [ausserordentlich] is that the ordinary ones do nothing extraordinary and the extraordinary ones do nothing properly [ordentlich].’ This, of course, is a play on the two meanings of the words ‘ordentlich’ and ‘ausserordentlich’: viz. on the one hand ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the ‘ordo’ (the Establishment) and on the other hand ‘efficient’ and ‘outstanding’. But the conformity between this joke and some others we have already met reminds us that here the ‘multiple use’ is far more noticeable than the ‘double meaning’. All through the sentence we hear nothing but a constantly recurring ‘ordentlich’, sometimes in that form and sometimes modified in a negative sense. (Cf. p. 33.) Moreover, the feat is again achieved here of defining a concept by means of its own wording (cf. the example of ‘Eifersucht’ [jealousy], p. 35), or, more precisely, of defining (even if only negatively) two correlative concepts by means of one another, which produces an ingenious interlacement. Finally, the aspect of ‘unification’ can also be stressed here—the eliciting of a more intimate connection between the elements of the statement than one would have had a right to expect from their nature.

‘The beadle’ Sch[ä]fer greeted me quite as a colleague, for he too is a writer, and has often mentioned me in his half-yearly supposes. Saphir does not come to bring the 300 florins but to fetch them from the rich man. Accordingly the discussions of ‘sense and nonsense’ in this joke become irrelevant.

This play upon words is further discussed below. [There is no trace of any such further discussion, and it seems probable that this footnote should be attached at the end of the preceding paragraph, as the Saphir-Rothschild joke is in fact discussed again, on p. 43 below.]

* I.e. full professors and assistant professors.

* A university officer (at Göttingen) in charge of undergraduate discipline.

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II. The Technique of Jokes

Heine in the Harzreise: ‘The beadle Schäfer greeted me quite as a colleague, for he too is a writer, and has often mentioned me in his half-yearly supposes. Saphir does not come to bring the 300 florins but to fetch them from the rich man. Accordingly the discussions of ‘sense and nonsense’ in this joke become irrelevant.

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II. Die Technik des Witzes

fragt ein Fremder einen einheimischen Berliner angesichts einer Front von Denkmälern auf einem öffentlichen Platz. »Ja nein,« antwortet dieser, »entweder das rechte oder das linke Bein.«

Heine in der Harzreise: »Auch sind mir in diesem Augenblicke nicht alle Studentennamen im Gedächtnis, und unter den Professoren sind manche, die noch gar keinen Namen haben.«


Heine in der Harzreise: »Der Pedell Sch. grüßte mich sehr kollegialisch, denn er ist ebenfalls Schriftsteller und hat meiner in seinen halbjährigen..."
writings; and apart from that, he has often cited me, and if he did not find me at home he was always kind enough to write the
citation in chalk on my study door. (Heine, Harzreise.)

Daniel Spitzer [p. 33, n. 1], in his Wiener Spaziergänge, pro-
duced a laconic biographical description, which is certainly also a
good joke, of a social type which flourished at the time of the
outbreak of speculation [following the Franco-Prussian War]: 'Iron front—iron cash-box—Iron Crown.' (This last
was an order which carried noble rank with it.) A striking
example of 'unification'—everything, as it were, made of iron!
The various, but not very markedly contrasting, meanings of
the epithet 'iron' make these 'multiple uses' possible.

Another example of a play upon words may make the
transition to a fresh sub-species of the technique of double
meaning easier. The joking medical colleague already mentioned
above (on p. 36) was responsible for this joke at the time of the
Dreyfus case: 'This girl reminds me of Dreyfus. The army
doesn't believe in her innocence.'

The word 'innocence', on the double meaning of which the
joke is constructed, has in the one context its usual meaning,
with 'fault' or 'crime' as its opposite; but in the other context it
has a 'sexual' meaning, of which the opposite is 'sexual experi-
ence'. Now there are a very large number of similar examples
of double meaning, in all of which the effect of the joke depends
quite specially on the sexual meaning. For this group we may
reserve the name of 'double entendre [Zweideutigkeit]'.

An excellent example of a double entendre of this kind is
Spitzer's joke which has already been recorded on p. 33:
'Some people think that the husband has earned a lot and so
has been able to lay by a bit [sich etwas zurückgelegt]; others
again think that the wife has lain back a bit [sich etwas zurück-
gelegt] and so has been able to earn a lot.'

But if we compare this example of double meaning accom-
panied by double entendre with other examples, a distinction
becomes evident which is not without its interest from the point
of view of technique. In the 'innocence' joke, the one meaning
of the word was just as obvious as the other; it would really
be hard to decide whether its sexual or non-sexual meaning was

1 [For breaches of discipline.]
2 [i.e. of a 'hard-faced' business man.]
II. THE TECHNIQUE OF JOKES

the more usual and familiar. But it is otherwise with Spitzer's example. In this the commonplace meaning of the words 'sich etwas zurückgelegt' is by far the more prominent, whereas their sexual meaning is, as it were, covered and hidden and might even escape the notice of an unsuspecting person altogether. By way of a sharp contrast let us take another example of double meaning, in which no attempt is made at thus concealing the sexual meaning: for instance, Heine's description of the character of a complaisant lady: 'She could abschlagen nothing except her own water.' This sounds like a piece of obscenity and hardly gives the impression of a joke. This peculiarity, however, where in a case of double meaning the two meanings are not equally obvious, can also occur in jokes with no sexual reference—whether because one meaning is more usual than the other or because it is brought to the front by a connection with the other parts of the sentence. (Cf., for instance, 'C'est le premier vol de l'aigle' [p. 37].) I propose to describe all these as 'double meaning with an allusion.'

We have already made the acquaintance of such a large number of different joke-techniques that I fear there is some danger of losing our grasp of them. Let us therefore try to summarize them:

I. Condensation:
   (a) with formation of composite word,
   (b) with modification.

II. Multiple use of the same material:
   (c) as a whole and in parts,
   (d) in a different order,
   (e) with slight modification,
   (f) of the same words full and empty.

1 ['To refuse'; vulgarly 'to urinate'.]
2 Cf. on this Fischer (1889, 86). He gives the name of 'Zweideutigkeit', which I have applied differently in the text, to jokes with a double meaning in which the two meanings are not equally prominent but in which one lies behind the other. Nomenclature of this kind is a matter of convention; linguistic usage has arrived at no firm decision.

II. Die Technik des Witzes

I. Die Verdichtung:
   a) mit Mischwortbildung,
   b) mit Modifikation.

II. Die Verwendung des nämlichen Materials:
   c) Ganzes und Teile,
   d) Umordnung,
   e) leichte Modifikation,
   f) dieselben Worte voll und leer.

III. Double meaning:
   (g) meaning as a name and as a thing,
   (h) metaphorical and literal meanings,
   (i) double meaning proper (play upon words),
   (j) double entendre,
   (k) double meaning with an allusion.

This variety and number of techniques has a confusing effect.
It might make us feel annoyed at having devoted ourselves to
a consideration of the technical methods of jokes, and might
make us suspect that after all we have exaggerated their
importance as a means for discovering the essential nature of jokes.
If only this convenient suspicion were not contradicted by the
one incontestable fact that the joke invariably disappears as
soon as we eliminate the operation of these techniques from its
form of expression! So, in spite of everything, we are led to
look for the unity in this multiplicity. It ought to be possible to
bring all these techniques under a single heading. As we have
already said [p. 36], it is not difficult to unite the second and
third groups. Double meaning (play upon words) is indeed only
the ideal case of the multiple use of the same material. Of these
the latter is evidently the more inclusive concept. The examples
of dividing up, of re-arrangement of the same material and of
multiple use with slight modification (c, d and e) might—though
only with some difficulty—be brought under the concept of
double meaning. But what is there in common between the
 técnica of the first group (condensation with substitute-
formation) and that of the two others (multiple use of the same
material)?

Well, something very simple and obvious, I should have
thought. The multiple use of the same material is, after all,
only a special case of condensation; play upon words is nothing
other than a condensation without substitute-formation; con-
densation remains the wider category. All these techniques are
dominated by a tendency to compression, or rather to saving.
It all seems to be a question of economy. In Hamlet's words:
'Thrift, thrift, Horatio!

Let us test this economy on the different examples. 'C'est le
premier vol de l'aigle [p. 37].' It is the eagle's first flight. Yes,
but it is a thieving flight. Luckily for the existence of this joke,

Nun, eine sehr einfache und deutliche, soll' ich meinen. Die Verwen-
dung des nämlichen Materials ist ja nur ein Spezialfall der Verdichtung;
das Wortspiel ist nichts anderes als eine Verdichtung ohne Ersatz-
bildung; die Verdichtung bleibt die übergeordnete Kategorie. Eine zu-
sammendrängende oder richtiger ersparende Tendenz beherrscht alle
diese Techniken. Es scheint alles Sache der Ökonomie zu sein, wie Prinz
Hamlet sagt (Thr aft, thr aft, Horatio) [I. Akt, 2. Szene].

Machen wir die Probe auf diese Ersparnis an den einzelnen Beispielen.
'C'est le premier vol de l'aigle' [S. 38]. Das ist der erste Flug des
Adlers. Ja, aber es ist ein Raubausflug. Vol bedeutet zum Glück für die
of the word
substitute for the suppressed thought without any addition or
sation and economy been made? Most certainly. There has
been a saving of the whole of the second thought and it has
been dropped without leaving a substitute. The double meaning
of the word 'vol' has made such a substitute unnecessary; or it
would be equally true to say that the word 'vol' contains the
substitute for the suppressed thought without any addition or
change having to be made to the first one. That is the advantage
of a double meaning.

Another example: 'Iron front—iron cash-box—Iron Crown'
[p. 40]. What an extraordinary saving compared with an
expression of the same thought in which 'iron' finds no place:
'With the help of the necessary boldness and lack of conscience
we can manage without difficulty. It is easy to point out
what we save in the case of Rousseau, Antigone, etc. We
save having to express a criticism or give shape to a judgement;
both are already there in the name itself. In the example of
'Leidenschaft—Eifersucht' [passion—jealousy] [p. 35] we save our­selves the trouble of laboriously constructing a definition:
'Eifersucht, Leidenschaft'—'Eifer sucht' ['eagerness seeks'], 'Leiden
schafft' ['causes pain']. We have only to add the linking words
and there we have our definition ready made. The case is
similar in all the other examples that have so far been analysed.
Where there is least saving, as in Saphir's play upon words
'Sie kommen um Ihre 100 Dukaten' [p. 38], there is at any rate a
saving of the necessity for framing a new wording for the reply;
the wording of the question is sufficient for the answer. The
saving is not much, but in it the joke lies. The multiple use
of the same words for question and answer is certainly an

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'vol' means not only 'flight' but 'theft' as well. Has no conden-

sation, and therefore economy been made? Most certainly. There has

been a saving of the whole of the second thought and it has

been dropped without leaving a substitute. The double meaning

of the word 'vol' has made such a substitute unnecessary; or it

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II. Die Technik des Witzes

Existenz dieses Witzes sowohl »Flug« als auch »Raub«. Ist dabei nichts
verdichtet und erspart worden? Gewiß der ganze zweite Gedanke, und
zwar ist er ohne Ersatz fallengelassen worden. Der Doppelsinn des
Wortes vol macht solchen Ersatz überflüssig, oder ebenso richtig: Das
Wort vol enthält den Ersatz für den unterdrückten Gedanken, ohne daß
der erste Satz darum einen Zusatz oder eine Abänderung brauchte. Das
eben ist die Wohltat des Doppelsinnes.

Ein anderes Beispiel: Eiserne Stirne — eiserne Kasse — eiserne Krone
[S. 41]. Welch außerordentliche Ersparnis gegen eine Ausführung des
Gedankens, in welcher der Ausdruck das »eisern« nicht gefunden hätte!
»Mit der nötigen Frechheit und Gewissenlosigkeit ist es nicht schwer,
ein großes Vermögen zu erwerben, und zur Belohnung für solche Ver-
dienste bleibt natürlich der Adel nicht aus.«
Ja, in diesen Beispielen ist die Verdichtung, also die Ersparnis, unver-
kenbar. Sie soll aber in allen nachweisbar sein. Wo steckt nun die
Ersparnis in solchen Witzten wie Rousseau — roux et sot [S. 32], Anti-
gone — antik? oh nee [S. 33], in denen wir zuerst die Verdichtung
vermifß haben, die uns vor allem bewogen haben, die Technik der
mehrfachen Verwendung des nämlichen Materials aufzustellen? Hier
würden wir allerdings mit der Verdichtung nicht durchkommen, aber
wenn wir diese mit dem ihr übergeordneten Begriff der »Ersparnis«
terassen, geht es ohne Schwierigkeit. Was wir in den Beispielen
Rousseau, Antigone usw. ersparen, ist leicht zu sagen. Wir ersparen es,
eine Kritik zu äußern, ein Urteil zu bilden, beides ist im Namen selbst
schon gegeben. Im Beispiel der Leidenschaft — Eifersucht [S. 36] er-
sparen wir es uns, eine Definition mühsam zusammenzustellen: Eifer-
sucht, Leidenschaft und — Eifer sucht, Leiden schafft; die Füllworte dazu,
und die Definition ist fertig. Ähnliches gilt für alle anderen bisher ana-
lysierten Beispiele. Wo am wenigsten erspart wird, wie in dem Wort-
spiel von Saphir: »Sie kommen um Ihre 100 Dukaten« [S. 39 f.], da
wird wenigstens erspart, den Wortlaut der Antwort neu zu bilden; der
Wortlaut der Anrede genügt auch zur Antwort. Es ist wenig, aber nur in
diesem Wenigen liegt der Witz. Die mehrfache Verwendung der näm-
lchen Worte zur Anrede wie zur Antwort gehört gewiß zum »Sparen«.
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' economy'. Like Hamlet's view of the rapid sequence of his father's death and his mother's marriage:

The funeral baked-meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables. [I. 2.]

But before we accept the 'tendency to economy' as the most general characteristic of the technique of jokes and ask such questions as where it comes from, what it signifies and how the joke's yield of pleasure arises from it, we must find space for an 'economy'. Like Hamlet's view of the rapid sequence of questions as where it comes from, what it signifies and how the doubt which has a right to be heard. It may be that every joke-technique shows the tendency to save something in expression; but the relation is not reversible. Not every economy of expression, not every abbreviation, is on that account a joke as well. We reached this point once before, when we were still hoping to find the process of condensation in every joke, and raised the justifiable objection that a laconic remark is not enough to constitute a joke [p. 28]. There must therefore be some peculiar kind of abbreviation and economy on which the characteristic of being a joke depends; and until we know the nature of that peculiarity our discovery of the common element in the techniques of jokes brings us no nearer to a solution of our problem. And let us, further, have the courage to admit that the economies made by the joke-technique do not greatly impress us. They may remind us, perhaps, of the way in which some housewives economize when they spend time and money on a journey to a distant market because vegetables are to be had there a few farthings cheaper. What does a joke save by its technique? The putting together of a few new words, which would mostly have emerged without any trouble. Instead of that, it has to take the trouble to search out the one word which covers the two thoughts. Indeed, it must often first transform one of the thoughts into an unusual form which will provide a basis for its combination with the second thought. Would it not have been simpler, easier, and, in fact, more economical to have expressed the two thoughts as they happened to come, even if this involved no common form of expression? Is not the economy in words uttered more than balanced by the expenditure on intellectual effort? And who saves by that? Who gains by it?

We can evade these doubts provisionally if we transpose them to another place. Have we really already discovered all the

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Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten

Ganz, wie Hamlet die rasche Aufeinanderfolge des Todes seines Vaters und der Hochzeit seiner Mutter aufgefaßt sehen will:

»Das Gebakene

Vom Leichenschmaus gab kälte Hochzeitsschüsseln.« [I. Akt, 2. Szene.]

Ehe wir aber die »Tendenz zur Ersparnis« als den allgemeinsten Charakter der Witztechnik annehmen und die Fragen stellen, woher sie stammt, was sie bedeutet und wieso der Lustgewinn des Witzes aus ihr entspringt, wollen wir einem Zweifel Raum gönnen, der ein Recht hat, angehört zu werden. Mag es sein, daß jede Witztechnik die Tendenz zeigt, mit dem Ausdruck zu sparen, aber die Beziehung ist nicht umkehrbar. Nicht jede Ersparung am Ausdruck, jede Kürzung, ist darum auch witzig. Wir standen schon einmal an dieser Stelle, damals als wir noch bei jedem Witz den Verdiutschungsvorgang nachzuweisen hofften, und damals machten wir uns den berechtigten Einwand, ein Lakonis mus sei noch kein Witz [vgl. S. 30]. Es mußte also eine besondere Art von Verkürzung und von Ersparnis sein, an welcher der Charakter des Witzes hing, und solange wir diese Besonderheit nicht kennen, bringt uns die Auffindung des Gemeinsamen in der Witztechnik der Lösung unserer Aufgabe nicht näher. Außerdem finden wir den Mut zu bekennen, daß die Ersparungen, welche die Witztechnik macht, uns nicht zu impor nieren vermögen. Sie erinnern vielleicht an die Art, wie manche Hausfrauen sparen, wenn sie, um einen entlegenen Markt aufzusuchen, Zeit und Geld für die Fahrt aufwenden, weil dort das Gemüse um einige Heller wohlfeiler zu haben ist. Was erspart sich der Witz durch seine Technik? Einige neue Worte zusammenzufügen, die sich meist mühelos ergeben hätten; anstatt dessen muß er sich die Mühe geben, das eine Wort aufzusuchen, welches ihm beide Gedanken deckt; ja, er muß oft erst den Ausdruck des einen Gedankens in eine nicht gebrächliche Form umwandeln, bis diese ihm den Anhalt zur Zusammenfassung mit dem zweiten Gedanken ergeben kann. Wäre es nicht einfacher, leichter und eigentlich sparsamer gewesen, die beiden Gedanken so auszudrücken, wie es sich eben trifft, auch wenn dabei keine Gemeinsamkeit des Ausdruckes zustande kommt? Wird die Ersparnis an geäußerten Worten nicht durch den Aufwand an intellektueller Leistung mehr als auf gehoben? Und wer macht dabei die Ersparung, wen kommt sie zugute?

Wir können diesen Zweifeln vorläufig entgehen, wenn wir den Zweifel selbst an eine andere Stelle versetzen. Kennen wir wirklich bereits alle
kinds of joke-technique? It will certainly be more prudent to collect fresh examples and subject them to analysis.

We have in fact not yet considered a large—perhaps the most numerous—group of jokes, influenced, perhaps, by the contempt with which they are regarded. They are the kind which are generally known as ‘Kalauer’ (‘calembourgs’) ['puns']¹ and which pass as the lowest form of verbal joke, probably because they are the ‘cheapest’—can be made with the least trouble. And they do in fact make the least demand on the technique of expression, just as the play upon words proper makes the highest. While in the latter the two meanings should find their expression in identically the same word, which on that account is usually said only once, it is enough for a pun if the two words expressing the two meanings recall each other by some vague similarity, whether they have a general similarity of structure or a rhyming assonance, or whether they share the same first few letters, and so on. A quantity of examples like this of what are not very appropriately described as ‘Klangwitze’ [sound-jokes] occur in the Capuchin monk’s sermon in Wallensteins Lager:²

 gyrmt sich mehr um den Krug als den Krieg,
Wetzt lieber den Schnabel als den Sabel,

Frisst den Ochsen lieber als den Oxenstirn,’

Der Rheinstrom ist worden zu einem Peinstrom,
Die Klöster sind ausgenommene Nester,
Die Bistümer sind verwandelt in Wüsttümmer,

Und alle die gesegneten deutschen Länder
Sind verkehrt worden in Elender.³

¹ [The German ‘Kalauer’ is here throughout translated by ‘pun’ though as will be seen Freud uses the word in a much wider sense than the English will bear.]
² [One of these has already been quoted on p. 30 above.]
³ [Literally—
He cares more for the bottle than the battle,
Would rather whet his nose than his sword]
Jokes are particularly apt to change one of the vowels in a word. Thus Hevesi (1888, 87) writes of an anti-Imperial Italian poet who was nevertheless obliged later to eulogize a German emperor in hexameters: 'Since he could not exterminate the Clásaren [Caesars], he at least eliminated the Clásaren [caesuras].

Out of the profusion of puns at our disposal, it will perhaps be of special interest to bring up a really bad example, of which Heine is guilty.\(^1\) Having for a long time represented himself to his lady as an 'Indian prince', he throws off the mask and confesses: 'Madame, I have deceived you ... I have no more ever been in Kalkutta [Calcutta] than the Kalkutenbraten [roast Calcutta fowl] that I ate for luncheon yesterday.' The mistake in this joke clearly lies in the fact that the two similar words in it are not merely similar but actually identical. The bird which he had eaten roast is so called, because it comes, or is supposed to come, from the same Calcutta.

Fischer (1889, 78) has devoted much attention to these forms of joke, and tries to distinguish them sharply from 'play upon words'. 'A pun however, 'passes from the sound of the word to the word itself.' [Ibid., 79.] On the other hand, he classes such jokes as famillionar', Antigone (antik? oh nee), etc. among the 'sound jokes'. I see no necessity for following him in this. In a play upon words, in our view, the word is also only a sound-image, to which one meaning or another is attached. But here, too, linguistic usage makes no sharp distinctions; and if it treats 'puns' with contempt and 'play upon words' with a certain respect, these judgements of value seem to be determined by considerations other than technical ones. It is worth while

Would rather eat oxen than Oxenstim',

[i.e. the General]

The Rhine stream has become a pain stream,
The monasteries are robbed bird's nests, The bishoprics are transformed into desertrics.

And all the blessed German lands Have been turned into wretched places.\(^1\)

\(^1\) [Reliebilder II] 'Ideen', Chapter V.

Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewuβten

Besonders gern modifiziert der Witz einen der Vokale des Wortes, z. B.: Von einem kaiserfeindlichen italienischen Dichter, der dann doch genötigt war, einen deutschen Kaiser in Hexametern zu besingen, sagt Hevesi (Almanacco, [Bilder aus Italien])\(^3\), S. 87): Da er die Clásaren nicht auszurotten vermacht, merzt er wenigstens die Clásaren aus. Bei der Fülle von Kalauer, die uns zur Verfügung stünde, hat es vielleicht noch ein besonderes Interesse, ein wirklich schlechtes Beispiel heranzuziehen, das Heine zur Last bürdete, wißt er dann die Maske ab und gesteht: 'Madame! Ich habe Sie belogen ... Ich war ebensowenig jemals in Kalkutta, wie der Kalkutenbraten, den ich gestern mittag gegessen.« Offenbar liegt der Fehler dieses Witzes darin, daß die beiden ähnlichen Worte nicht mehr bloß ähnlich, sondern eigentlich identisch sind. Der Vogel, dessen Braten er gegessen, gehört so, weil er aus dem nämlichen Kalkutta stammt oder stammt soll.


\(^1\) [Ein solcher ist schon auf S. 32 angeführt.]

\(^2\) [Das Buch von Hevesi (1888) wird in G. W. inkorrekt mit dem Untertitel »Reisen in Italien« genannt.]

\(^3\) [Reliebilder II] 'Ideen', Kapitel V.
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paying attention to the kind of jokes that are told one as 'puns'. There are some people who, when they are in high spirits, can, for considerable periods of time, answer every remark addressed to them with a pun. One of my friends, who is a model of discretion where his serious achievements in science are concerned, is apt to boast of this ability. When on one occasion he was holding the company breathless in this way and admiration was expressed for his staying power: 'Yes', he said, 'I am lying here auf der Ka-Lauer.'¹ And when he was finally begged to stop, he agreed to on condition that he was appointed 'Poeta Ka-laureatus'. Both of these, however, are excellent jokes of condensation with formation of composite words. ('I am lying here auf der Lauer [on the look-out] for making Kalauer [puns].')

In any case we can already gather from the disputes about the delimitation of puns and play upon words that the former will not be able to help us to discover a completely new joke-technique. If, in the case of puns, we give up the claim for the use of the same material in more than one sense, nevertheless the accent falls on rediscovering what is familiar, in the correspondence between the two words that make up the pun; and consequently puns merely form a sub-species of the group which reaches its peak in the play upon words proper.

[6]

But there really are jokes whose technique resists almost any attempt to connect it with the groups that have so far been considered.

"The story is told of Heine that he was in a Paris salon one evening conversing with the dramatist Soulié,² when there came into the room one of those financial kings of Paris whom people compare with Midas—and not merely on account of their wealth. He was soon surrounded by a crowd who treated him with the greatest deference. "Look there!" Soulié remarked to Heine, "Look at the way the nineteenth century is worshipping the Golden Calf!" With a glance at the object of so much admiration, Heine replied, as though by way of correction:

¹ ['Kalauer' = 'pun', 'Auf der Lauer' = 'on the look-out'.]
² [Frédéric Soulié (1800-47), French dramatist and novelist.]
In the one case the gold is the main thing and in the other words of the statue of the animal; it may also serve to characterize, in the name of removing the expression 'Golden Calf', we certainly get rid of the joke at the same time. We make there! Look at the way the people are crowding round the stupid fellow simply because he's rich!' This is no longer a joke and Heine's reply which is certainly a much better one. That being so, we have no right to touch the phrase about the Golden Calf, as directed only to the latter.

But we must recall that what we are concerned with is not Soulie's simile—which is a possible joke—but Heine's reply, which is certainly a much better one. That being so, we have no right to touch the phrase about the Golden Calf; it remains as the precondition of Heine's mot and our reduction must be directed only to the latter. If we expand the words 'Oh, he must be older than that by now!' we can only replace them by something like: 'Oh, he's not a calf any longer; he's a full-grown ox!' Thus what was necessary for Heine's joke was that he should no longer take the 'Golden Calf' in a metaphorical but in a personal sense and should apply it to the rich man himself. It may even be that this double meaning was already present in Soulie's remark.

But just a moment! It looks now as though this reduction has not done away with Heine's joke completely, but on the contrary has left its essence untouched. The position now is that Soulie says: 'Look there! Look at the way the nineteenth century is worshipping the Golden Calf!' and Heine replies: 'Oh, he's not a calf any longer; he's an ox already!' And in this reduced version it is still a joke. But no other reduction of Heine's mot is possible.

It is a pity that this fine example involves such complicated technical conditions. We can arrive at no clarification of it. So we will leave it and look for another one in which we seem to detect an internal kinship with its predecessor.

[See footnote 1, p. 27.]
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It is one of the ‘bath jokes’ which treat of the Galician Jews’ aversion to baths. For we do not insist upon a patent of nobility from our examples. We make no enquiries about their origin but only about their efficiency—whether they are capable of making us laugh and whether they deserve our theoretical interest. And both these two requirements are best fulfilled precisely by Jewish jokes.

‘Two Jews met in the neighbourhood of the bath-house. “Have you taken a bath?” asked one of them. “What?” asked the other in return, “is there one missing?”

If one laughs at a joke really heartily, one is not in precisely the best mood for investigating its technique. Hence some difficulties arise over making one’s way into these analyses. ‘It was a comical misunderstanding’, we are inclined to say. Yes but what is the technique of the joke? Clearly the use of the word ‘take’ in two meanings. For one of the speakers ‘take’ was the colourless auxiliary; for the other it was the verb with its ‘full’ and ‘empty’ (Group II (f) [p. 41]). If we replace the expression ‘taken a bath’ by the equivalent and simpler ‘bathed’, the joke vanishes. The reply no longer fits. Thus the joke is once again attached to the form of expression ‘taken a bath’.

That is so. But nevertheless it seems as though in this case too the reduction has been applied at the wrong point. The joke lies not in the question but in the answer—the second question: ‘What? is there one missing?’ And this answer cannot be robbed of being a joke by any extension or modification, so long as its sense is not interfered with. We have an impression, too, that in the second Jew’s reply the disregarding of the bath is more important than the misunderstanding of the word ‘take’. But here once more we cannot see our way clearly, and we will look for a third example.

It is again a Jewish joke; but this time it is only the setting that is Jewish, the core belongs to humanity in general. No doubt this example too has its unwanted complications, but fortunately they are not the same ones that have so far prevented us from seeing clearly.

‘An impoverished individual borrowed 25 florins from a prosperous acquaintance, with many asseverations of his necessitous circumstances. The very same day his benefactor

Es sei einer der »Badewitze«, welche die Badescheu der Juden in Galizien behandeln. Wir verlangen nämlich keinen Adelsbrief von unseren Beispielen, wir fragen nicht nach ihrer Herkunft, sondern nur nach ihrer Tüchtigkeit, ob sie uns zum Lachen zu bringen vermögen und ob sie unseres theoretischen Interesses würdig sind. Beide diesen Anforderungen entsprechen aber gerade die Judenwitze am besten.

Zwei Juden treffen in der Nähe des Badehauses zusammen. »Hast du genommen ein Bad?« fragt der eine. »Wieso?« fragt der andere dagegen, »fehlt eins?«

Wenn man über einen Witz recht herzlich lacht, ist man nicht gerade in der geeignetsten Disposition, um seiner Technik nachzuforschen. Darum bereitet es einige Schwierigkeiten, sich in diese Analysen hineinzufinden. »Das ist ein komisches Mißverständnis«, drängt sich uns auf. – Gut, aber die Technik dieses Witzes? – Offenbar der doppelsinnige Gebrauch des Wortes nehmen. Für den einen ist »nehmen« das farblos gewordene Hilfswort; für den anderen das Verb mit unabgeschwächter Bedeutung. Also ein Fall von »voll« und »leer« nehmen desselben Wortes (Gruppe II, f [S. 42]). Ersetzen wir den Ausdruck »ein Bad genommen« durch den gleichwertigen einfachen »gebadet«, so fällt der Witz weg. Die Antwort paßt nicht mehr. Der Witz haftet also wiederum am Ausdruck »genommen ein Bad«.


Wiederum ein Judenwitz, an dem aber nur das Beiwerk jüdisch ist, der Kern ist allgemein menschlich. Gewiß hat auch dieses Beispiel seine unerwünschten Komplikationen, aber zum Glück nicht diejenigen, welche uns bisher klarzusehen verhindert haben.

»Ein Verarmter hat sich von einem wohlhabenden Bekannten unter vielen Beteuerungen seiner Notlage 25 fl. geborgt. Am selben Tage noch
met him again in a restaurant with a plate of salmon mayonnaise in front of him. The benefactor reproached him: "What? You borrow money from me and then order yourself salmon mayonnaise? Is that what you've used my money for?" "I don't understand you," replied the object of the attack; "if I haven't any money I can't eat salmon mayonnaise, and if I have some money I mustn't eat salmon mayonnaise. Well, then, when am I to eat salmon mayonnaise?"

There at last no more trace of a double meaning is to be found. Nor can the repetition of 'salmon mayonnaise' contain the joke's technique, for it is not 'multiple use' of the same material but a real repetition of identical material called for by the subject-matter of the anecdote. We may for a time be quite baffled by this analysis and may even think of taking refuge in denying that the anecdote—though it made us laugh—possesses the character of a joke.

What more is there deserving of comment in the impoverished person's reply? That it has been very markedly given the form of a logical argument. But quite unjustifiably, for the reply is in fact illogical. The man defends himself for having spent the money lent to him on a delicacy and asks with an appearance of reason, when he is to eat salmon. But that is not the correct answer. His benefactor is not reproaching him with treating himself to salmon precisely on the day on which he borrowed the money; he is reminding him that in his circumstances he has no right to think of such delicacies at all. The impoverished bon vivant disregards this only possible meaning of the reproach, and answers another question as though he had misunderstood the reproach.

Can it be that the technique of this joke lies precisely in this diverting of the reply from the meaning of the reproach? If so, a similar change of standpoint, a similar shifting of the psychological emphasis, may perhaps be traceable in the two earlier examples, which we felt were akin to this one.

And, lo and behold! this suggestion is an easy success and in fact reveals the technique of those examples. Soulé pointed out to Heine that society in the nineteenth century worshipped the 'Golden Calf' just as did the Jews in the Wilderness. An appropriate answer by Heine might have been 'Yes, such is human nature; thousands of years have made no change in it' or some-

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Was läßt sich sonst bemerkenswertes über die Antwort des Verarmten sagen? Daß ihr in eigentlich auffälliger Weise der Charakter des Logischen verliehen ist. Mit Unrecht aber, die Antwort ist ja unlogisch. Der Mann verteidigt sich dagegen, daß er das ihm geliehene Geld für den Leckerbissen verwendete hat, und fragt mit einem Schem von Recht - »wann er denn eigentlich Lachs essen darf. Aber das ist gar nicht die richtige Antwort; der Geldgeber wirft ihm nicht vor, daß er sich den Lachs gerade an dem Tage gegessen hat, an dem er sich das Geld geborgt, sondern mahnt ihn daran, daß er in seinen Verhältnissen überhaupt nicht das Recht habe, an solche Leckerbissen zu denken. Diesen einzigen möglichen Sinn des Vorwurfes läßt der verarmte Bonvivant unberücksichtigt, antwortet, als ob er den Vorwurf mißverstanden hätte, auf etwas anderes.


Siehe da, dieser Nachweis gelingt ganz leicht und deckt in der Tat die Technik dieser Beispiele auf. Soulié macht Heine darauf aufmerksam, daß die Gesellschaft im neunzehnten Jahrhundert das »goldene Kalb« anbetet, gerade so wie einst das Volk der Juden in der Wüste. Dazu paßte eine Antwort von Heine etwa wie: »Ja, so ist die menschliche Natur, die Jahrtausende haben an ihr nichts geändert«, oder irgend-
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thing similar by way of asent. But Heine diverted his answer from the thought suggested to him and made no reply to it at all. He made use of the double meaning of which the phrase 'Golden Calf' is capable to branch off along a side-track. He caught hold of one component of the phrase, 'Calf', and replied, as though the emphasis in Soulë's remark had been upon it: 'Oh, he's not a calf any longer' . . . etc.¹

The diversion in the bath-joke is even plainer. This example calls for a graphic presentation:

The first Jew asks: 'Have you taken a bath?' The emphasis is on the element 'bath'.

The second replies as though the question had been: 'Have you taken a bath?'

This shifting of the emphasis is only made possible by the wording 'taken a bath'. If it had run 'have you bathed?' no displacement would have been possible. The non-joking answer would then have been: 'Bathed? What d'you mean? I don't know what that is.' But the technique of the joke lies in the displacement of the accent from 'bath' to 'taken' in various directions. First we must give a name to the technique straightforward example. What is new in it deserves our attention since its essence lies in the diversion of the train of thought, the displacement of the psychical emphasis on to a topic other than expression of the joke. Our example ('Salmon Mayonnaise')

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etwas anderes Beipflichtendes. Heine lenkt aber in seiner Antwort von dem angeregten Gedanken ab, er antwortet überhaupt nicht darauf, er bedient sich des Doppelsinnes, dessen die Phrase »goldenes Kalb« fähig ist, um einen Seitenweg einzuschlagen, greift den einen Bestandteil der Phrase, das »Kalb«, auf und antwortet, als ob auf dieses der Akzent in der Rede Souliës gefallen wäre: »Oh, das ist kein Kalb mehr« usw. ¹

Noch deutlicher ist die Ablenkung im Badewitz. Dieses Beispiel fordert eine graphische Darstellung heraus.

Der erste fragt: »Hast du genommen ein Bad?« Der Akzent ruht auf dem Element Bad.

Der zweite antwortet, als hätte die Frage gelauntet: »Hast du genommen ein Bad?«


¹ Die Antwort Heines ist eine Kombination von zwei Witztechniken, einer Ablenkung mit einer Ansprüuch. Er sagt ja nicht direkt: Das ist ein Ods.
² Das Wort »nehmen« eignet sich infolge seiner vielseitigen Gebrauchsfähigkeiten sehr gut für die Herstellung von Wortspielen, von denen ich ein reines Beispiel zum Gegen satz gegen den obenstehenden Verschiebungswitz mitteilen will: »Ein bekannter Börsen spekulant und Bankdirektor geht mit einem Freunde über die Ringstraße spazieren. Vor einem Kaffeehaus macht er diesem den Vorschlag: Gehe wir hinein und nehmen wir etwas.« Der Freund hält ihn zurück: »Aber Herr Hofrat, es sind doch Leute darin.«

¹ Heine's answer combines two joke-techniques: a diversion combined with an allusion. He did not say straight out: 'He's an ox.'
² The word 'take [nehmen]' is very well adapted to form a basis for play upon words owing to the variety of ways in which it can be used. I will give a plain example, as a contrast to the displacement jokes reported above: 'A well-known stock-exchange speculator and bank director was walking with a friend along the Ringstrasse [the main Vienna boulevard]. As they went past a café he remarked: "Let's go inside and take something!" His friend held him back: "But, Herr Hofrat, the place is full of people!"' [It may be pointed out that both this joke and the bath-joke above lose their effectiveness in translation because in both cases the natural 'empty' word would not be 'take' in English but 'have': 'Have you had a bath?' and 'Let's have something.']
Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten

Es ist lehrreich, diesen Witz mit einem ihm dem Sinne nach sehr nahestehenden zu vergleichen:

Ein Mann, der dem Trunk ergeben ist, ernährte sich in einer kleinen Stadt durch Lektionengeben. Sein Laster wird aber allmählich bekannt, und er verliert infolgedessen die meisten seiner Schüler. Ein Freund wird beauftragt, ihn zur Besserung zu mahnen. »Sehen Sie, Sie könnten die schönsten Lektionen in der Stadt haben, wenn Sie das Trinken aufgeben wollten. Also tun Sie's doch.« – »Wie kommen Sie mir vor?« ist die entrüstete Antwort. »Ich gebe Lektionen, damit ich trinken kann; soll ich das Trinken aufgeben, damit ich Lektionen bekomme?«
Auch dieser Witz trägt den Anschein von Logik, der uns bei »Lachs mit Mayonnaise« aufgefallen ist, aber er ist kein Verschiebungswitz mehr. Die Antwort ist eine direkte. Der Zynismus, der dort verhüllt ist, wird hier offen eingestanden. – »Das Trinken ist mir ja die Hauptsache.«


Im Badewitz ist die Abhängigkeit des Witzes vom Wortlaut (Hast du genommen ein Bad?) unverkennbar, und die Abänderung desselben
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involves the disappearance of the joke. For in this case the technique is a more complicated one—a combination of double meaning (sub-species) and displacement. The wording of the question admits a double meaning, and the joke is produced by the answer disregarding the meaning intended by the questioner and catching on to the subsidiary meaning. We are accordingly in a position to find a reduction which allows the double meaning of the wording to persist and yet destroys the joke; we can do this merely by undoing the displacement:

‘Have you taken a bath?’—‘What do you think I’ve taken? A bath? What’s that?’ But this is no longer a joke, but a malicious or facetious exaggeration.

A precisely similar part is played by the double meaning in Heine’s joke about the ‘Golden Calf’. It enables the answer to make a diversion from the suggested train of thought (which is effected in the ‘Salmon Mayonnaise’ joke without any such assistance from the wording). In the reduction Soulé’s remark and Heine’s reply would perhaps run: ‘The way in which the people here are crowding round the man simply because he’s rich reminds one vividly of the worship of the Golden Calf.’ And Heine: ‘That he should be honoured in this way because of his wealth doesn’t strike me as the worst of it. In what you say you’re not putting enough stress on the fact that because of his wealth people forgive him his stupidity.’ In this way the double meaning would be retained but the displacement joke would be destroyed.

But at this point we must be prepared to meet an objection which will assert that these fine distinctions are seeking to tear apart what belongs together. Does not every double meaning give occasion for a displacement—for a diversion of the train of thought from one meaning to the other? And are we prepared, then, to allow ‘double meaning’ and ‘displacement’ to be set up as representatives of two quite different types of joke-technique? Well, it is true that this relation between double meaning and displacement does exist, but it has nothing to do with our distinguishing the different joke-techniques. In the case of

1 [I.e. ‘use of the same word “full” and “empty”’. In the table on pp. 41–2, sub-species $f$ is included in Group II (Multiple Use of the Same Material), not in Group III (Double Meaning). But, as is pointed out on p. 36, Groups II and III merge into each other.]
double meaning a joke contains nothing other than a word capable of multiple interpretation, which allows the hearer to find the transition from one thought to another—a transition which, stretching a point, might be equated with a displacement. In the case of a displacement joke, however, the joke itself contains a train of thought in which a displacement of this kind has been accomplished. Here the displacement is part of the work which has created the joke; it is not part of the work necessary for understanding it. If this distinction is not clear to us, we have an unfailing means of bringing it tangibly before our eyes in our attempts at reduction. But there is one merit which we will not deny to the necessity of not confusing the psychical processes involved in the construction of the joke (the *joke-work* 

The justification for distinguishing displacement from the work which has created the joke; it is not part of the work self contains a train of thought in which a displacement of this kind has been accomplished. Here the displacement is part of the work which has created the joke; it is not part of the work necessary for understanding it. If this distinction is not clear to us, we have an unfailing means of bringing it tangibly before our eyes in our attempts at reduction. But there is one merit which we will not deny to the necessity of not confusing the psychical processes involved in the construction of the joke (the *joke-work*) with the psychical processes involved in *taking in* the joke (the work of understanding). Our present enquiry is only concerned with the former.

Are there other examples of the displacement technique? They are not easy to find. A straightforward instance is afforded by the following joke, which moreover is not characterized by the appearance of logic which was so much overstressed in our model case:

'A horse-dealer was recommending a saddle-horse to a customer. "If you take this horse and get on it at four in the morning you'll be at Pressburg by half-past six."—"What should I be doing in Pressburg at half-past six in the morning?"

Here the displacement leaps to the eye. The dealer obviously mentions the early hour of arriving at the provincial town.

1 [The term here introduced serves to emphasize the resemblance between the processes concerned in producing jokes and dreams which has already been hinted at above (p. 28 f.). The whole question is fully discussed in Chapter VI below.]

2 For the latter, see later chapters of this book.—A few further words of explanation are perhaps not unnecessary here. Displacement habitually takes place between a remark and a reply which pursues the train of thought in a direction other than that in which it was started by the original remark. The justification for distinguishing displacement from double meaning is most convincingly shown by the examples in which the two are combined—where, that is, the wording of the remark admits of a double meaning which is not intended by the speaker, but which points the way for the reply to make a displacement. (See the examples [pp. 52–3].)
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Leistungsfähigkeit des Pferdes an einer Probe zu beweisen. Der Kunde sieht von dem Leistungsvermögen des Tieres, das er weiter nicht in Zweifel zieht, ab und geht bloß auf die Daten des zur Probe gewählten Beispiels ein. Die Reduktion dieses Witzes ist dann nicht schwer zu geben.

Mehr Schwierigkeiten bietet ein anderes, in seiner Technik recht un­
durchsichtiges Beispiel, welches sich aber doch als Doppelsinn mit Ver­
schiebung auflösen läßt. Der Witz erzählt von der Ausflucht eines Schadchens (jüdischen Heiratsvermittlers), gehört also zu einer Gruppe, die uns noch mehrfach beschäftigen wird.

Der Schadde hat dem Bewerber versichert, daß der Vater des Mädchens nicht mehr am Leben ist. Nach der Verlobung stellt sich heraus, daß der Vater noch lebt und eine Kerkerstrafe abbüßt. Der Bewerber macht nun dem Schadchen Vorwürfe. »Nun«, meint dieser, »was habe ich Ihnen gesagt? Ist denn das ein Leben?«

den hören, daß dies nur die Schauseite, die Fassade, des Witzes ist; sein Sinn, d. h. seine Absicht ist eine andere. Wir schieben es auch auf, eine Reduktion von ihm zu versuchen 1.

Nach diesen komplizierten und schwierig zu analysierenden Beispielen wird es uns wiederum Befriedigung bereiten, wenn wir in einem Falle ein völlig reines und durchsichtiges Vorbild eines »Verschiebungswitzes« zu erkennen vermögen.

Ein Schnorrer trägt dem reichen Baron seine

1 S. unten Abschnitt III [S. 99 ff.]
a request for the grant of some assistance for his journey to
Ostend. The doctors, he said, had recommended him sea-bathing
to restore his health. “Very well”, said the rich man, “I’ll
give you something towards it. But must you go precisely to
-“Herr Baron”;
Ostend.

The doctors, he said, had recommended him
seabathing to restore his health. “Very well”, said the rich man, “I’ll
give you something towards it. But must you go precisely to
Ostend, which is the most expensive of all sea-bathing resorts?”
—“Herr Baron”, was the reproachful reply, “I consider nothing
too expensive for my health.””¹ This is no doubt a correct
point of view, but not correct for a petitioner. The answer is
given from the point of view of a rich man. The Schnorrer behaves
as though it was his own money that he was to sacrifice for his
health, as though the money and the health were the concern
of the same person.²

Let us start once more from that highly instructive example
‘Salmon Mayonnaise’. It, too, presented us with a façade, in
which a striking parade of logical thinking was exhibited; and
we learnt from analysing it that this logic was used to conceal
a piece of faulty reasoning—namely, a displacement of the train
of thought. This may serve to remind us, if only by means of a
contrasting connection, of other jokes which, quite the other
way, undisguisedly exhibit a piece of nonsense or stupidity. We
shall be curious to learn what may be the technique of such jokes.

I will begin with the most forcible and at the same time the
plainest example of the whole group. Once again it is a Jewish
joke:

‘Itzig had been declared fit for service in the artillery. He was
clearly an intelligent lad, but intractable and without any
interest in the service. One of his superior officers, who was
friendly disposed to him, took him on one side and said to him:
“Itzig, you’re no use to us. I’ll give you a piece of advice: buy
yourself a cannon and make yourself independent!”’³

This advice, which may raise a hearty laugh, is obvious non-
sense. Cannons are not to be bought and an individual cannot
make himself independent as a military unit—set himself up in
business, as it were. But it is impossible to doubt for a moment
that the advice is not mere nonsense but joking nonsense—an
excellent joke. How then is the nonsense turned into a joke?

¹ [This joke reappears on p. 112 below.]

² Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten
Bitte um Gewährung einer Unterstützung für die Reise nach Ostende
vor; die Ärzte hätten ihm Seebäder zur Herstellung seiner Gesundheit
empfohlen. »Gut, ich will Ihnen etwas dazu geben«, meint der Reiche,
aber müssen Sie gerade nach Ostende gehen, dem teuersten aller See-
bäder?«

—»Herr Baron«, lautet die zurechtweisende Antwort, »für
meine Gesundheit ist mir nichts zu teuer.« — Gewiß, ein richtiger Stand-
punkt, nur eben nicht richtig für den Bittsteller. Die Antwort ist vom
Standpunkt eines reichen Mannes gegeben. Der Schnorrer bemerkt sich,
as wäre es sein eigenes Geld, das er für seine Gesundheit opfern soll,
as gingen Geld und Gesundheit die nämliche Person an.³

Knüpfen wir nun von neuem an das so lehrreiche Beispiel »Lachs mit
Mayonnaise« an. Es kehrte uns gleichfalls eine Schauseite zu, an welcher
ein auffälliges Aufgebot von logischer Arbeit zu bemerken war, und
wir haben durch die Analyse erfahren, daß diese Logik einen Denk-
fehler, nämlich eine Verschiebung des Gedankenganges zu verdecken
hatte. Von hier aus mögen wir, wenn auch nur auf dem Wege der Kon-
trastverknüpfung, an andere Witze gemahnt werden, die ganz im
Gegenteil etwas Widersinniges, einen Unssinn, eine Dummheit unver-
hüllt zur Schau stellen. Wir werden neugierig sein, worin die Technik
dieser Witze bestehen mag.

Ich stelle das stärkste und zugleich reinste Beispiel der ganzen Gruppe
voran. Es ist wiederum ein Judenwitz.

Itzig ist zur Artillerie assenziert worden. Er ist offenbar ein intelligenter
Bursche, aber ungefährlich und ohne Interesse für den Dienst. Einer seiner
Vorgesetzten, der ihm wohlgesinnt ist, nimmt ihn beiseite und sagt ihm:
>Itzig, du taugst nicht zu uns. Ich will dir einen Rat geben: Kauf dir
eine Kanon' und machs dich selbständig.«

Der Rat, über den man herzlich lachen kann, ist ein offenbarer Un-
sinn. Es gibt doch keine Kanonen zu kaufen, und ein einzelner kann
sich als Wehrkraft unmöglich selbständig machen, gleichsam »etablie-
en«. Es kann uns aber keinen Moment zweifelhaft bleiben, daß dieser
Rat kein bloßer Unssinn ist, sondern ein witziger Unssinn, ein vorzüg-
licher Witz. Wodurch wird also der Unssinn zum Witz?

³ [Dieser Witz kommt auf S. 106 f. noch einmal vor.]
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Not much reflection is needed. We can infer from the authorities' comments indicated above in the introduction [p. 12] that there is sense behind joking nonsense such as this, and that it is this sense that makes the nonsense into a joke. The sense in our example is easy to find. The officer who gives Artilleryman Itzig this nonsensical advice is only making him­self out stupid to show Itzig how stupidly he himself is behaving. He is copying Itzig: 'I'll give you some advice that's as stupid as you are.' He enters into Itzig's stupidity and makes it clear to him by taking it as the basis of a suggestion which would fit in with Itzig's wishes: if Itzig possessed a cannon of his own and carried out military duties on his own account, how useful his intelligence and ambition would be to him! In what good order he would keep his cannon and how familiar he would make himself with its mechanism so as to meet the competition of the other possessors of cannons!

I will interrupt the analysis of this example, to point out the same sense in nonsense in a shorter and simpler, though less glaring, case of a nonsensical joke:

'Never to be born would be the best thing for mortal men.'

'But', adds the philosophical comment in Fliegende Blätter,

'this happens to scarcely one person in a hundred thousand.'

This modern addition to an ancient saw is an evident piece of nonsense, made sillier by the ostensibly cautious 'scarcely'. But the addition is attached to the original statement as an indisputably correct limitation, and is thus able to open our eyes to the fact that this solemnly accepted piece of wisdom is itself not much better than a piece of nonsense. Anyone who is not born is not a mortal man at all, and there is no good and no best for him. Thus the nonsense in the joke serves to uncover and demonstrate another piece of nonsense, just as in the example of Artilleryman Itzig.

And here I can add a third instance, which, from its content, would scarcely deserve the lengthy description that it requires, but which once again exemplifies with special clarity the use of nonsense in a joke to demonstrate another piece of nonsense.

'A man who was obliged to go on a journey confided his daughter to a friend with the request that he should watch over...

1 [Contest of Homer and Hesiod, Section 316.]
2 [A well-known comic weekly.]
her virtue during his absence. Some months later he returned, and found that she was pregnant. As was natural, he reproached his friend, who, however, seemed unable to explain the misfortune. "Well?", asked the father at last, "where did she sleep?"—"In the room with my son."—"But how could you let her sleep in the same room as your son after I'd begged you to look after him?"—"After all there was a screen between them. Your daughter's bed was on one side and my son's bed on the other, with the screen between them."—"And suppose he walked round the screen?"—"Yes, there is that," replied the other thoughtfully; "it might have happened like that."

We can arrive with the greatest ease at the reduction of this joke, whose qualities have otherwise little to recommend it. It would obviously run: 'You have no right to reproach me. How could you be so stupid as to leave your daughter in a house where she is bound to live in the constant company of a young man? How would it be possible for an outsider to answer for a girl's virtue during his absence. The reduction has disposed of the stupidity in the joke and at the same time of the joke itself. The element 'stupidity' itself has not been got rid of: it is to be found at another point in the context of the sentence after it has been reduced to its original meaning.

We can now attempt a reduction of the joke about the cannon. The officer should have said: 'Itzig, I know you're an intelligent man of business. But I assure you it is very stupid of you if you can't see that it is impossible to behave in the army in the same way as in business life, where each person acts for himself and against the others. In military life subordination and co-operation are the rule."

The technique of the nonsensical jokes which we have so far considered really consists, therefore, in presenting something that is stupid and nonsensical, the sense of which lies in the revelation and demonstration of something else that is stupid and nonsensical.

Has this use of absurdity in joke technique always the same significance? Here is one more example which gives an affirmative reply:

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Er kommt nach Monaten zurück und findet sie geschwingert. Natürlich macht er dem Freund Vorwürfe. Der kann sich den Unglücksfall angeblich nicht erklären. »Wo hat sie denn geschlafen?« fragt endlich der Vater. — »Im Zimmer mit meinem Sohn.« — »Aber wie kannst du sie im selben Zimmer mit deinem Sohn schlafen lassen, nachdem ich dich so gebeten habe, sie zu behütet?« — »Es war doch eine spanische Wand zwischen ihnen. Da war das Bett von deiner Tochter, das Bett von meinem Sohn und dazwischen die spanische Wand.« — »Und wenn er um die spanische Wand herumgegangen ist?« — »Auch das, meint der andere nachdenklich. »So wäre es möglich.«


Die Technik der bisherigen Unsinnswitze besteht also wirklich in der Anbringung von etwas Dummem, Unsinnigem, dessen Sinn die Veranschaulichung, Darstellung von etwas anderem Dummen und Unsinnigen ist.

Hat die Verwendung des Widersinnes in der Witztechnik jedesmal diese Bedeutung? Hier ist noch ein Beispiel, welches im bejahenden Sinne antwortet:
When on one occasion Phocion\(^1\) was applauded after making a speech, he turned to his friends and asked: "What have I said that's stupid, then?"

The question sounds absurd. But we see its meaning at once: 'What have I said, then, that can have pleased these stupid people so much? I ought to feel ashamed of the applause. If what I said has pleased stupid people, it cannot itself have been very sensible.'

Other examples, however, can teach us that absurdity is very often used in joke-technique without serving the purpose of demonstrating another piece of nonsense:

'A well-known University teacher, who was in the habit of peppering his unattractive special subject with numerous jokes, was congratulated on the birth of his youngest child, who was granted to him when he had already reached an advanced age. "Yes", he replied to his well-wishers, "it is remarkable what human hands can accomplish." \(^\text{— This answer seems quite specially nonsensical and out of place. Children, after all, are regarded as a blessing of God, quite in contrast to human handiwork. But it soon occurs to us that after all the answer has a meaning and, at that, an obscene one. There is no question here of the happy father making himself out stupid in order to show that something or someone else is stupid. The apparently senseless answer makes a surprising, a bewildering impression on us, as the authorities would say. As we have seen [p. 12 f.] they attribute the whole effect of jokes like this to an alternation between 'bewilderment and illumination'. We shall try later [p. 131] to form a judgement on this; for the moment we must be content to stress the fact that the technique of this joke lies in its presentation of something bewildering and nonsensical."

A joke of Lichtenberg's takes a quite special place among these 'stupid' jokes:

'He wondered how it is that cats have two holes cut in their skin precisely at the place where their eyes are.' To wonder about something that is in fact only the statement of an identity is undoubtedly a piece of stupidity [see below, p. 93 f.]. It reminds one of Michelet's exclamation\(^2\) which was meant to be taken seriously, and which to the best of my recollection

\(^1\) [The Athenian statesman.]

\(^2\) \textit{La femme} [1860].
runs: 'How beautifully Nature has arranged it that as soon as a child comes into the world it finds a mother ready to take care of it!' Michelet's pronouncement is a real piece of stupidity, but Lichtenberg's is a joke which makes use of stupidity for some purpose and behind which something lies. But what? For the moment, we must admit, no answer can be given.

We have now already found from two groups of examples that the joke-work makes use of deviations from normal thinking—of displacement and absurdity—as technical methods for producing a joking form of expression. It is no doubt justifiable to expect that other kinds of faulty reasoning may find a similar use. And it is in fact possible to produce a few examples of the sort:

'A gentleman entered a pastry-cook's shop and ordered a cake; but he soon brought it back and asked for a glass of liqueur instead. He drank it and began to leave without having paid. The proprietor detained him. "What do you want?" asked the customer.—"You've not paid for the liqueur."—"But I gave you the cake in exchange for it."—"You didn't pay for that either."—"But I hadn't eaten it."

This anecdote too has an appearance of logic about it, which, as we already know, is a suitable façade for a piece of faulty reasoning. The mistake evidently lies in the crafty customer's constructing a connection which did not exist between the giving back of the cake and the taking of the liqueur in its place. The episode in fact fell into two processes, which were independent of each other as far as the vendor was concerned and were substitutes for each other only from the point of view of the purchaser's intention. First he took the cake and gave it back, and therefore owed nothing for it; then he took the liqueur, and for it he owed payment. We might say that the customer used the relation "in exchange for" with a double meaning. But it would be more correct to say that by means of a double meaning he constructed a connection which was not in reality valid.1

1 [Footnote added 1912.] A similar nonsensical technique appears if a joke seeks to maintain a connection which seems to be excluded by the

[8]

Wir haben nun bereits an zwei Gruppen von Beispielen erfahren, daß die Witzarbeit sich der Abweichungen vom normalen Denken, der Verschiebung und des Widersinnes, als technischer Mittel zur Herstellung des witzigen Ausdrucks bedient. Es ist gewiß eine berechtigte Erwartung, daß auch andere Denkfehler eine gleiche Verwendung finden können. Wirklich lassen sich einige Beispiele von dieser Art angeben:

Ein Herr kommt in eine Konditorei und läßt sich eine Torte geben; bringt dieselbe aber bald wieder und verlangt an ihrer Statt ein Gläschen Likör. Dieses trinkt er aus und will sich entfernen, ohne gezahlt zu haben. Der Lädchenbesitzer hält ihn zurück. »Was wollen Sie von mir?« — »Sie sollen den Likör bezahlen.« — »Für den habe ich Ihnen ja die Torte gegeben.« — »Die haben Sie ja auch nicht bezahlt.« — »Die habe ich ja auch nicht gegessen.«

Auch dieses Geschichtchen trägt den Schein von Logik zur Schau, den wir als geeignete Fassade für einen Denkfehler bereits kennen. Der Fehler liegt offenbar darin, daß der schlaue Kunde zwischen dem Zurückgeben der Torte und dem Dafürnehmen des Likörs eine Beziehung herstellt, die nicht besteht. Der Sachverhalt zerfällt vielmehr in zwei Vorgänge, die für den Verkäufer voneinander unabhängig sind, nur in seiner eigenen Absicht im Verhältnis des Ersatzes stehen: Er hat zuerst die Torte genommen und zurückgegeben, für die er also nichts schuldig ist, dann nimmt er den Likör, und den ist er schuldig zu bezahlen. Man kann sagen, der Kunde wende die Relation »dafür« doppelsinnig an; richtiger, er stelle vermittels eines Doppelsinnes eine Verbindung her, die scheinbar stichhaltig ist.1

1 [Zusatz 1912.] Eine ähnliche Unsinnstechnik ergibt sich, wenn der Witz einen Zusammenhang aufrechterhalten will.
This is an opportunity for making a not unimportant admission. We are engaged in investigating the technique of jokes as shown in examples; and we should therefore be certain that the examples we have chosen are really genuine jokes. It is the case, however, that in a number of instances we are in doubt whether the particular example ought to be called a joke or not. We have no criterion at our disposal before our investigation has given us one. Linguistic usage is untrustworthy and itself needs to have its justification examined. In coming to our decision we can base ourselves on nothing but a certain 'feeling', which we may interpret as meaning that the decision is made in our judgement in accordance with particular criteria that are not yet accessible to our knowledge. In the case of our last example we must feel a doubt whether it should be represented as a joke, or perhaps as a 'sophistical' joke, or simply as a piece of sophistry. For the fact is that we do not yet know in what the characteristic of being a joke resides.

On the other hand, the next example, which exhibits a type of faulty reasoning that may be said to be complementary to the former instance, is an undoubted joke. It is once again a story of a marriage-broker:

'The Schadchen was defending the girl he had proposed against the young man’s protests. "I don’t care for the mother-in-law", said the latter. "She’s a disagreeable, stupid person."—"But after all you’re not marrying the mother-in-law. What you want is her daughter."—"Yes, but she’s not young any longer, and she’s not precisely a beauty."—"No matter. If she’s neither young nor beautiful she’ll be all the more faithful to you."—"And she hasn’t much money."—"Who’s talking about money? Are you marrying money then? After all it’s a wife that you want."—"But she’s got a hunchback too."—"Well, what do you want? Isn’t she to have a single fault?"

What was really in question, then, was an uneatable girl, no longer young, with a scantly dowry and an unpleasant complement to the former condition implied in its content. Such, for instance, is Lichtenberg’s knife without a blade which has no handle. [This is further explained in a passage near the end of the 'History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement' (1914d), Standard Ed., 14, 66.] So, too, the joke repeated by Von Falke [1897]: 'Is this the place where the Duke of Wellington spoke those words?'—"Yes, it is the place; but he never spoke the words." [Cf. Von Falke's Memoirs, p. 271.]

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Es ist nun die Gelegenheit da, ein nicht unwichtiges Bekenntnis abzulegen. Wir beschäftigen uns hier mit der Erforschung der Technik des Witzes an Beispielen und sollten also sicher sein, daß die von uns gewählten Beispiele wirklich richtige Witze sind. Es steht aber so, daß wir in einer Reihe von Fällen ins Schwanken geraten, ob das betreffende Beispiel ein Witz genannt werden darf oder nicht. Ein Kriterium steht uns ja nicht zu Gebote, ehe die Untersuchung ein solches ergeben hat; der Sprachgebrauch ist unzuverlässig und bedarf selbst der Prüfung auf seine Berechtigung; wir können uns bei der Entscheidung auf nichts anderes stützen als auf eine gewisse »Empfindung«, welche wir dahin interpretieren dürfen, daß sich in unserem Urteile die Entscheidung nach bestimmten Kriterien vollziehe, die unserer Erkenntnis noch nicht zugänglich sind. Für eine zureichende Begründung werden wir die Berufung auf diese »Empfindung« nicht ausgeben dürfen. Bei dem letzten erwähnten Beispiel werden wir nun zweifeln müssen, ob wir es als Witz darstellen dürfen, als einen sophistischen Witz etwa, oder als ein Sophisma schlechweg. Wir wissen eben noch nicht, worin der Charakter des Witzes liegt.

Hingegen ist das nächstfolgende Beispiel, welches den sozusagen komplementären Denkfehler aufweist, ein unzweifelhafter Witz. Es ist wiederum eine Heiratsvermittlersgeschichte:

Der Schadchen verteidigt das von ihm vorgeschlagene Mädchen gegen die Ausstellungen des jungen Mannes. »Die Schwiegermutter gefällt mir nicht«, sagt dieser, »sie ist eine boshafte, dumme Person.«—»Sie heira­teten doch nicht die Schwiegermutter, Sie wollen die Tochter.«—»Ja, aber jung ist sie nicht mehr und schön von Gesicht gerade auch nicht.«—»Das macht nichts; ist sie nicht jung und schön, wird Sie Ihnen um so eher treu bleiben.«—»Geld ist auch nicht viel da.«—»Wer spricht vom Geld? Heiraten Sie denn das Geld? Sie wollen doch eine Frau!«—»Aber sie hat ja auch einen Buckel!«—»Nun, was wollen Sie? Gar keinen Fehler soll sie haben!«

Es handelt sich also in Wirklichkeit um ein nicht mehr junges, unschönes Mädchen mit geringer Mitgift, das eine abstößende Mutter hat und der durch die besonderen Bedingungen seines Inhalts aufgehoben erscheint. Dazu gehört Lichtenbergs Messer ohne Klinge, wo der Spiel fehlt. Ähnlich der von J. Falke [1897, 271] erzählte Witz: »ist die Stelle, wo der Duke of Wellington diese Worte gesprochen hat?«—»Ja, das ist die Stelle, aber die Worte hat er nie gesprochen.«
mother, who was moreover the victim of a serious deformity—
not very inviting conditions for contracting a marriage. The
marriage broker was able, in the case of each one of these
defects, to point out how it would be possible to come to
terms with it. He was then able to claim that the inexcusable hunch-
back was the single defect that every individual must be allowed
to possess. Once more there is the appearance of logic which
is characteristic of a piece of sophistry and which is intended
to conceal the faulty reasoning. Clearly the girl had a number
of defects—several that might be overlooked and one that it
was impossible to disregard; she was unmarriageable. The
broker behaved as though each separate defect was got rid of
by an amount of depreciation behind which had to be added to the
next one. He insisted on treating each defect in isolation and
refused to add them up into a total.

The same omission is the core of another piece of sophistry
which has been much laughed over, but whose right to be
called a joke might be doubted:

"A. borrowed a copper kettle from B. and after he had re-
turned it was sued by B. because the kettle now had a big hole
in it which made it unusable. His defence was: 'First, I never
borrowed a kettle from B. at all; secondly, the kettle had a
hole in it already when I got it from him; and thirdly, I gave
him back the kettle undamaged.' " Each one of these defences
is valid in itself, but taken together they exclude one another.
A. was treating in isolation what had to be regarded as a con-
nected whole, just as the marriage-broker treated the girl's
defects. We might also say: 'A. has put an "and" where only an
"either—or" is possible.' 1

We find another piece of sophistry in the following marriage-
broker story:

'The would-be bridegroom complained that the bride had
one leg shorter than the other and limped. The Schadchen con-
tradicted him: "You're wrong. Suppose you marry a woman
with healthy, straight limbs! What do you gain from it? You
never have a day's security that she won't fall down, break a
leg and afterwards be lame all her life. And think of the suffer-
ing then, the agitation, and the doctor's bill! But if you take

1 [This anecdote is further discussed below on p. 205.]
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this one, that can't happen to you. Here you have a fail accompli.'"

The appearance of logic is very thin in this case, and no one will be ready to prefer an already 'accomplished misfortune' to one that is merely a possibility. The fault in this train of thought can be more easily shown in another example—a story which I cannot entirely divest of its dialect:

'In the temple at Cracow the Great Rabbi N. was sitting and praying with his disciples. Suddenly he uttered a cry, and, in reply to his disciples' anxious enquiries, exclaimed: 'At this very moment the Great Rabbi L. has died in Lemberg.' The community put on mourning for the dead man. In the course of the next few days people arriving from Lemberg were asked how the Rabbi had died and what had been wrong with him; but they knew nothing about it, and had left him in the best of health. At last it was established with certainty that the Rabbi L. in Lemberg had not died at the moment at which the Rabbi N. had observed his death by telepathy, since he was still alive. A stranger took the opportunity of jeering at one of the Rabbi N.'s disciples:

"That you may say, the Rabbi made a great fool of himself that time, when he saw the Rabbi L. die in Lemberg. He should have admitted it today," the disciple replied. "Whatever you may say, the Rabbi from Cracow to Lemberg was a magnificent one."

The faulty reasoning common to the last two examples is here undisguisedly admitted. The value of phantasy is exalted unduly in comparison with reality; a possibility is almost equated with an actual event. The distant look across the stretch of country separating Cracow and Lemberg would have been an impressive telepathic achievement if it had produced something that was true. But the disciple was not concerned with that. It might after all have possibly happened that the Rabbi in Lemberg had died at the moment at which the Cracow Rabbi announced his death; and the disciple displaced the emphasis from the condition subject to which the

1 [A Yiddish word] from the German 'gucken [to look or peep]': 'look', 'distant look'.—[This story is alluded to in Freud's posthumously published paper on 'Psycho-Analysis and Telepathy' (1941d [1921]), Standard Ed., 18, 188.]

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so kann Ihnen das nicht passieren; da haben Sie eine färbige Sach'.

Der Schein von Logik ist hier recht dünn, und niemand wird dem bereits fertigen Unglück gar noch einen Vorzug vor dem bloß möglichen zuteil werden wollen. Der in dem Gedankengang enthaltene Fehler wird sich leichter an einem zweiten Beispiel aufzeigen lassen, einer Geschichte, die ich des Jargons nicht völlig entkleiden mag.

Im Tempel zu Krakau sitzt der große Rabbi N. und betet mit seinen Schülern. Er stößt plötzlich einen Schrei aus und äußert, von den besorgten Schülern befragt: «Eben jetzt ist der große Rabbi L. in Lemberg gestorben.» Die Gemeinde legt Trauer um den Verstorbenen an. Im Laufe der nächsten Tage werden nun die aus Lemberg Ankommenden befragt, wie der Rabbi gestorben, was ihm gefehlt, aber sie wissen nichts davon, sie haben ihn im besten Wohlbefinden verlassen. Es stellt sich endlich als ganz gesichert heraus, daß Rabbi L. in Lemberg nicht zu jener Stunde gestorben ist, in dem der Krakauer Rabbi seinen Tod telepathisch empfunden hatte. Er stieß erst später auf der Reise nach Lemberg aus, weil er noch weiter lebt. Ein Fremder ergreift die Gelegenheit, einen Schüler des Krakauer Rabbi mit dieser Begebenheit aufzuwecken. «Es war eine große Blamage von eurem Rabbi, daß er damals den Rabbi L. in Lemberg sterben gesehen hat. Der Mann lebt noch heute. »Macht nichts«, erwidert der Schüler, »der Kuck von Krakau bis nach Lemberg war doch großartig.»

Hier wird der beiden letzten Beispielen gemeinsame Denkfehler unverhüllt eingestanden. Der Wert der Phantasievorstellung wird gegen die Realität ungebührlich erhoben, die Möglichkeit fast der Wirklichkeit gleichgestellt. Der Fernblick über die Krakau von Lemberg trennende Länderstrecke wäre eine imposante telepathische Leistung, wenn er etwas Wahres ergeben hätte, aber darauf kommt es dem Schüler nicht an. Es wäre doch möglich gewesen, daß der Rabbi in Lemberg in jenem Moment gestorben wäre, in dem der Krakauer Rabbi seinen Tod verkündete, und dem Schüler verschiebt sich der Akzent von der Bedingung,

1 «Kuck» [ein jiddisches Wort] von »gucken«, also Blick, Fernblick.
teacher's achievement deserved admiration on to an unconditional admiration of the achievement. 'In magnis rebus voluisse sat est' \(^1\) expresses a similar point of view. Just as in this example reality is disregarded in favour of possibility, so in the former one the marriage-broker suggests to the would-be bridegroom that the possibility of a woman being made lame by an accident should be regarded as something far more important than the question of whether she is really lame or not.

This group of 'sophistical' pieces of faulty reasoning is resembled by another interesting group in which the faulty reasoning can be described as 'automatic'. It may be due to no more than a whim of chance that all the examples that I shall bring forward of this new group are once more Schaden stories:

'A Schaden' had brought an assistant with him to the discussion about the proposed bride, to bear out what he had to say. "She is straight as a pine-tree", said the Schaden. — "As a pine-tree", repeated the echo. — "And she has eyes that ought to be seen!" — "What eyes she has!" confirmed the echo. — "And she is better educated than anyone!" — "What an education!" — "It's true there's one thing", admitted the broker, "she has a small hump." — "And what a hump!" the echo confirmed once more. The other stories are analogous, but have more sense.

'The bridegroom was most disagreeably surprised when the bride was introduced to him, and drew the broker on one side and whispered his remonstrances: "Why have you brought me here?" he asked reproachfully. "She's ugly and old, she squints and has bad teeth and bleary eyes ..." — "You needn't lower your voice", interrupted the broker, "she's deaf as well."

'The bridegroom was paying his first visit to the bride's house in the company of the broker, and while they were waiting in the salon for the family to appear, the broker drew attention to a cupboard with glass doors in which the finest set of silver plate was exhibited. "There! Look at that! You can see from these things how rich these people are." — "But", asked the suspicious young man, "mightn't it be possible that these...

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1 ['In great things it is enough to have wished.' The quotation, in a slightly different form — 'in magnis et voluisse sat est' — is from Propertius, Elegies, x, 6.]

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unter der die Leistung des Lehrers bewundernswert ist, zur unbedingten Bewunderung dieser Leistung. 'In magnis rebus voluisse sat est' \(^2\) bezeugt einen ähnlichen Standpunkt. Ebenso wie in diesem Beispiel von der Realität abgesehen wird zugunsten der Möglichkeit, so mutet im vorigen der Heiratsvermittler dem Bewerber zu, die Möglichkeit, daß eine Frau durch einen Unfall lahm werden kann, als das bei weitem Bedeutsamere ins Auge zu fassen, wogegen die Frage, ob sie wirklich lahm ist oder nicht, ganz zurücktreten soll.

Dieser Gruppe der sophistischen Denkfehler reiht sich eine interessante andere an, in welcher man den Denkfehler als einen automatischen bezeichnen kann. Es ist vielleicht nur eine Laune des Zufalls, daß alle Beispiele, die ich aus dieser neuen Gruppe anführen werde, wiederum den Schadhengeschichten angehören:


»Der Bräutigam ist bei der Vorstellung der Braut sehr unangenehm überrascht und zieht den Vermittler beiseite, um ihm flüstern seine Ausstellungen mitzuteilen. »Wozu haben Sie mich hierhergebracht? fragt er ihn vorwurfsvoll. »Sie ist häßlich und alt, schieht und hat schlechte Zähne und triefende Augen., — »Sie können laut sprechen, wirft der Vermittler ein, »tamb ist sie auch.«

»Der Bräutigam macht mit dem Vermittler den ersten Besuch im Hause der Braut, und während sie im Salon auf das Erscheinen der Familie warten, macht der Vermittler auf einen Glashäkchen aufmerksam, in welchem die schönsten Silbergeräte zur Schau gestellt sind. »Da schauen Sie hin, an diesen Sachen können Sie sehen, wie reich diese Leute sind.« — »Aber, fragt der mißtrauische junge Mann, wäre es denn nicht möglich,
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fine things were only collected for the occasion—that they were borrowed to give an impression of wealth?—“What an ideal” answered the broker protestingly. “Who do you think would lend these people anything?”

The same thing happens in all three cases. A person who has reacted in the same way several times in succession repeats this mode of expression on the next occasion, when it is unsuitable and defeats his own intentions. He neglects to adapt himself to the needs of the situation, by giving way to the automatic action of habit. Thus, in the first story the assistant forgets that he was brought along in order to prejudice the would-be bridegroom in favour of the proposed bride. And since to begin with he has performed his task and underlined the bride’s advantages by repeating each one as it is brought forward, he goes on to underline her timidly admitted hump, which he should have minimized. The broker in the second story is so much fascinated by the enumeration of the bride’s defects and infirmities that he completes the list out of his own knowledge, though that was certainly not his business or purpose. In the third story, finally, he allows himself to be so much carried away by his eagerness to convince the young man of the family’s wealth that, in order to establish one confirmatory point, he brings up something that is bound to upset all his efforts. In every case automatic action triumphs over the expedient modification of thought and expression.

This is easy to see; but it is bound to have a confusing effect when we notice that these three stories have as much right to be called ‘comic’ as we had to produce them as ‘jokes’. The uncovering of psychical automatism is one of the techniques of the comic, just as is any kind of revelation or self-betrayal. We suddenly find ourselves faced at this point with the problem of the relation of jokes to the comic which we intended to evade. (See the introduction [p. 9].) Are these stories perhaps only ‘comic’ and not ‘jokes’? Is the comic operating here by the same methods as jokes do? And, once again, what constitutes the peculiar characteristics of jokes?

We must keep to our view that the technique of this last group of jokes that we have examined lies in nothing else than in bringing forward ‘faulty reasoning’. But we are obliged to admit that their examination has so far led us more into obscurity that these schönen Sachen nur für die Gelegenheit zusammengeborgt sind, um den Eindruck des Reichtums zu machen?—»Was fällt Ihnen ein?« antwortet der Vermittler abweisend. »Wer wird denn den Leuten was borgen?«

In allen drei Fällen ereignet sich das nämliche. Eine Person, die mehrmals nacheinander in gleicher Weise reagiert hat, setzt diese Weise der Äußerung auch bei dem nächsten Anlasse fort, wo sie unpassend wird und den Absichten der Person zuwiderläuft. Sie versäumt es, sich den Anforderungen der Situation anzupassen, indem sie dem Automatismus der Gewöhnung nachgibt. So vergißt der Helfer in der ersten Geschichte, daß er mitgenommen wurde, um den Bewerber zugunsten der vorgeschlagenen Braut zu stimmen, und daß er bisher seiner Aufgabe gerecht wurde, indem er die vorgebrachten Vorzüge der Braut durch seine Wiederholung unterstrich, unterstreicht er jetzt auch ihren schüchtern zu­gestandenen Höcker, den er hätte verkleinern sollen. Der Vermittler der zweiten Geschichte wird von der Aufzählung der Mängel und Gebre­chen der Braut so fasziniert, daß er die Liste derselben aus seiner eigenen Kenntnis vervollständigt, wiewohl das gewiß nicht sein Amt und seine Absicht ist. In der dritten Geschichte endlich läßt er sich von seinem Eifer, den jungen Mann von dem Reichtum der Familie zu überzeugen, so weit hinreißen, daß er, um nur in dem einen Beweispunkte recht zu behalten, etwas vorbringt, was seine ganze Bemühung umstoßen muß. Überall siegt der Automatismus über die zweckmäßige Abänderung des Denkens und Äußerns.

Das ist nun leicht einzusehen, aber verwirrend muß es wirken, wenn wir aufmerksam werden, daß diese drei Geschichten mit dem gleichen Recht als »komisch« bezeichnet werden können, wie wir sie als witzig angeführt haben. Die Aufdeckung des psychischen Automatismus gehört zur Technik des Komischen wie jede Entlarvung, jeder Selbstverrat. Wir sehen uns hier plötzlich vor das Problem der Beziehung des Witzes zur Komik gestellt, das wir zu umgehen trachteten. (Siehe Einleitung [S. 13].) Sind diese Geschichten etwa nur »komisch« und nicht auch »witzig«? Arbeiter hier die Komik mit denselben Mitteln wie der Witz? Und wiederum, worin besteht der besondere Charakter des Witzigen?

Wir müssen daran festhalten, daß die Technik der letzuntersuchten Gruppe von Witzen in nichts anderem als in der Anbringung von »Denkefehlern« besteht, sind aber genötigt zuzustehen, daß deren Untersuchung uns bisher mehr ins Dunkel als zur Erkenntnis geführt
than understanding. Nevertheless we do not abandon our expectation that a more complete knowledge of the techniques of jokes will lead us to a result which can serve as a starting point for further discoveries.

The next examples of jokes, with which we shall pursue our enquiry, offer an easier task. Their technique, in particular, reminds us of what we already know. First, here is a joke of Lichtenberg’s:

‘January is the month in which we offer our dear friends wishes, and the rest are the months in which they are not fulfilled.’

Since these jokes are to be described as refined rather than strong, and work by methods that are unobtrusive, we will begin by presenting a number of them in order to intensify their effect:

‘Human life falls into two halves. In the first half we wish the second one would come; and in the second we wish the first one were back.’

‘Experience consists in experiencing what we do not wish to experience.’

(Both these last two are from Fischer, 1889 [59–60].) These examples cannot fail to remind us of a group with which we have already dealt and which is distinguished by the ‘multiple use of the same material’ [p. 32 ff.]. The last example in particular will raise the question of why we did not include it in that group instead of introducing it here in a fresh connection. ‘Experience’ once again described in its own terms, just as ‘jealousy’ was earlier (p. 35). I should not be inclined to dispute this classification very seriously. But as regards the other two examples (which are of a similar nature), I think another factor is more striking and more important than the multiple use of the same words, in which in this case there is nothing that fringes on double meaning. I should like in particular to stress the fact that here new and unexpected unities are set up, relations of ideas to one another, definitions made mutually or by reference to a common third element. I should like to name this process ‘unification’. It is clearly analogous to

hat. Wir geben jedoch die Erwartung nicht auf, durch eine vollständigere Kenntnis der Techniken des Witzes zu einem Ergebnis zu gelangen, welches der Ausgangspunkt für weitere Einsichten werden kann.
condensation by compression into the same words. Thus the two halves of human life are described by a mutual relation discovered to exist between them: in the first we wish the second would come and in the second we wish the first were back. Speaking more precisely, two very similar mutual relations have been chosen for representation. To the similarity of the relations there corresponds a similarity of the words, which may indeed remind us of the multiple use of the same material: 'wish ... would come'—'wish ... back'. In Lichtenberg's joke January and the months contrasted with the second would come and in the second we wish the first were discovered to exist. Thus the relations there corresponds a similarity of the words, which may indeed remind us of the multiple use of the same material: 'wish ... would come'—'wish ... back'.

1 In order to give a better description of 'unification' than the examples above allow of, I will make use of something I have already mentioned [p. 32n.], namely the peculiar negative relation that holds between jokes and riddles, according to which the one conceals what the other exhibits. Many of the riddles with the production of which G. T. Fechner, the philosopher, passed his time when he was blind, are characterized by a high degree of unification, which lends them a special charm. Take, for instance, as a neat example, Riddle No. 203 (Dr. Mises' [pseudonym of Fechner] Rätselbüchlein, 4th edition, enlarged, N.D.):

Die beiden ersten finden ihre Ruhestätte
Im Paar der andern, und das Ganze macht ihr Bette.

[My two first (Toten, the dead) find their resting-place in my two last (Gräber, graves), and my whole (Totengräber, grave-digger) makes their bed.]

We are told nothing about the two pairs of syllables that have to be guessed except a relation that holds between them, and about the whole we are only told its relation to the first pair.

The following are two examples of description by relation to the same or a slightly modified third element:

Die erste Silb' hat Zah'n und Haare,
Die zweite Zähne in dem Haaren,
Vom Ganzen kaufe keine Waren.

No. 170.

[The first syllable has teeth and hair (Ross, horse), the second has teeth in the hair (Kamm, comb). No one who has not hair on his teeth (i.e. who is not able to look after his interests) should buy goods from the whole (Rosskamm, horse-dealer).]
Here is a neat example of a unification joke which needs no explanation:

'The French poet J. B. Rousseau wrote an Ode to Posterity. Voltaire was not of opinion that the poem merited survival, and jokingly remarked: "This poem will not reach its destination."' (Fischer, 1889 [123].)

This last example draws attention to the fact that it is essentially unification that lies at the bottom of jokes that can be described as 'ready repartees'. [Cf. p. 34.] For repartee consists in the defence going to meet the aggression, in 'turning the tables on someone' or 'paying someone back in his own coin' — that is, in establishing an unexpected unity between attack and counter-attack. For instance:

'An innkeeper had a whitlow on his finger and the baker said to him: "You must have got that by putting your finger in your beer." "It wasn't that", replied the innkeeper, "I got a piece of your bread under my nail."' (From Überhorst (1900, 2.)

'Serenissimus' was making a tour through his provinces and noticed a man in the crowd who bore a striking resemblance to his own...
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to his own exalted person. He beckoned to him and asked:
"Was your mother at one time in service in the Palace?"
"No, your Highness," was the reply, "but my father was."

'Duke Charles of Württemberg happened on one of his rides to come upon a dyer who was engaging on his job. Pointing to the grey horse he was riding, the Duke called out: "Can you dye him blue?"" "Yes, of course, your Highness," came the answer, "if he can stand boiling."' [Fischer, 1889, 107.]

In this excellent tu quoque, in which a nonsensical question is met by an equally impossible condition, there is another technical factor at work which would have been absent if the dyer had answered: 'No, your Highness, I'm afraid the horse wouldn't stand boiling.'

Unification has another, quite specially interesting technical instrument at its disposal: stringing things together with the conjunction 'and'. If things are strung together in this way it implies that they are connected; we cannot help understanding it so. For instance, when Heine, speaking of the city of Göttingen in the Harzreise, remarks: 'Speaking generally, the inhabitants of Göttingen are divided into students, professors, philistines and donkeys', we take this grouping in precisely the sense which Heine emphasizes in an addition to the sentence: 'and these four classes are anything but sharply divided.' Or, again, when [ibid.] he speaks of the school in which he had to put up with 'so much Latin, caning and Geography', this series, which is made even more transparent by the position of the 'caning' between the two educational subjects, tells us that the unmistakable view taken by the schoolboys of the caning certainly extended to Latin and Geography was well.

Among the examples given by Lipps [1898, 177] of 'joking enumeration' ('co-ordination'), we find the following lines quoted as being closely akin to Heine's 'students, professors, philistines and donkeys':

Mit einer Gabel und mit Mühl' 
Zog ihn die Mutter aus der Brüh.

[With a fork and much to-do  
His mother dragged him from the stew.]

It is as though (Lipps comments), the Mühl [trouble, to-do] were an instrument like the fork. We have a feeling, however,

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sicht. Er winkt ihn heran, um ihn zu fragen: »Hat Seine Mutter wohl einmal in der Residenz gedient?« – »Nein, Durchlaucht«, lautet die Antwort, »aber mein Vater.«

Herzog Karl von Württemberg trifft auf einem seiner Spazierritte von ungefähr einen Färber, der mit seiner Hanterung beschäftigt ist. »Kann Er meinen Schimmel blau färben?« ruft ihm der Herzog zu und erhält die Antwort zurück: »Ja wohl, Durchlaucht, wenn er das Sieden vertragen kann!« [Fischer, 1889, 107.]

Bei dieser ausgezeichneten »Retourkutsche« – die eine unsinnige Anfrage mit einer ebenso unmöglichen Bedingung beantwortet – wirkt noch ein anderes technisches Moment mit, das ausgeblieben wäre, wenn die Antwort des Färbers gelauscht hätte: »Nein, Durchlaucht; ich fürchte, der Schimmel wird das Sieden nicht vertragen.«

Der Unifizieritung steht noch ein anderes, ganz besonders interessantes technisches Mittel zu Gebote, die Anreihung durch das Bindewort und. Solche Anreihung bedeutet Zusammenhang; wir verstehen sie nicht anders. Wenn z. B. Heine in der Harzreise von der Stadt Göttingen erzählt: »Im allgemeinen werden die Bewohner Göttingens eingeteilt in Studenten, Professoren, Philister und Vieh«, so verstehen wir diese Zusammenstellung genau in dem Sinne, der durch den Zusatz Heines noch unterstrichen wird: »welche vier Stände doch nichts weniger als scharf geschieden sind.« Oder, wenn er [ibid.] von der Schule spricht, so er »so viel Latein, Prügel und Geographie« ausstehen mußte, so will diese Anreihung, die durch die Mittelstellung der Prügel zwischen den beiden Lehrgegenständen überdeutlich wird, uns sagen, daß wir die durch die Prügel unverkennbar bezeichnete Auffassung des Schulknaben gewiß auch auf Latein und Geographie ausdehnen sollen.

Bei Lipps [1898, 177] finden wir unter den Beispielen von »witziger Aufzählung« (»Koordination«) als nächst verwandt dem Heineschen »Studenten, Professoren, Philister und Vieh« den Vers:

»Mit einer Gabel und mit Mühl' zog ihn die Mutter aus der Brüh«;

ob die Mühe ein Instrument wäre wie die Gabel, setzt Lipps erläuternd hinzu. Wir empfangen aber den Eindruck,
that these lines, though they are very comic, are far from being a joke, while Heine’s list undoubtedly is one. We may perhaps recall these examples later, when we need no longer evade the problem of the relation between the comic and jokes. [See below, p. 212.]

[10]

We observed in the example of the Duke and the dyer that it would remain a joke by unification if the dyer had replied: ‘No, I’m afraid the horse wouldn’t stand boiling.’ But his actual reply was: ‘Yes, your Highness, if he can stand boiling.’ The replacement of the really appropriate ‘no’ by a ‘yes’ constitutes a new technical method of joking, the employment of which we will pursue in some other examples.

A joke similar to the one we have just mentioned (also quoted by Fischer [1889, 107–8]) is simpler:

‘Frederick the Great heard of a preacher in Silesia who had the reputation of being in contact with spirits. He sent for the man and received him with the question “You can conjure up spirits?” The reply was: “At your Majesty’s command. But they don’t come.”’ It is quite obvious here that the method used in the joke lay in nothing else than the replacing of the only possible answer ‘no’ by its opposite. In order to carry out the replacement, it was necessary to add a ‘but’ to the ‘yes’; so that ‘yes’ and ‘but’ are equivalent in sense to ‘no’.

This ‘representation by the opposite’, as we shall call it, serves the joke-work in various forms. In the next two examples it appears almost pure:

‘This lady resembles the Venus of Milo in many respects: she, too, is extraordinarily old, like her she has no teeth, and there are white patches on the yellowish surface of her body.’ (Heine.)

Here we have a representation of ugliness through resemblances to what is most beautiful. It is true that these resemblances can only exist in qualities that are expressed in terms with a double meaning or in unimportant details. This latter feature applies to our second example—‘The Great Spirit’, by Lichtenberg:

‘He united in himself the characteristics of the greatest men.

[10]

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Eine Darstellung der Häßlichkeit vermittels ihrer Übereinstimmungen mit dem Schönsten; diese Übereinstimmungen können freilich nur in doppelsinnig ausgedrückten Eigenschaften oder in Nebensachen bestehen. Letzteres trifft für das zweite Beispiel zu: Lichtenberg: »Der große Geist«.

»Er hatte die Eigenschaften der größten Männer in sich vereinigt, er
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He carried his head askew like Alexander; he always had to wear a toupet like Caesar; he could drink coffee like Leibnitz; and once he was properly settled in his armchair, he forgot eating and drinking like Newton, and had to be woken up like him; he wore his wig like Dr. Johnson, and he always left a breeches-button undone like Cervantes.'

Von Falke (1897, 271) brought home a particularly good example of representation by the opposite from a journey to Ireland, an example in which no use whatever is made of words with a double meaning. The scene was a wax-work show (as it might be, Madame Tussaud's). A guide was conducting a company of old and young visitors from figure to figure and commenting on them: 'This is the Duke of Wellington and his horse', he explained. Whereupon a young lady asked: 'Which is the Duke of Wellington and which is his horse?' 'Just as you like, my pretty child,' was the reply. 'You pays your money and you takes your choice.'

The reduction of this Irish joke would be: 'Shameless the things these wax-work people dare to offer the public! One can't distinguish between the horse and its rider! (Facetious exaggeration.) And that's what one pays one's money for!' This indignant exclamation is then dramatized, based on a small occurrence. In place of the public in general an individual lady appears and the figure of the rider is particularized: he must be the Duke of Wellington, who is so extremely popular in Ireland. But the shamelessness of the proprietor or guide, who takes money out of people's pockets and offers them nothing in return, is represented by the opposite—by a speech in which he boasts himself a conscientious man of business, who has nothing more closely at heart than regard for the rights which the public has acquired by its payment. And now we can see that the technique of this joke is not quite a simple one. In so far as it enables the swindler to insist on his conscientiousness it is a case of representation by the opposite; but in so far as it effects this on an occasion on which something quite different is demanded of him—so that he replies with business-like respectability where what we expect of him is the identification of the figures—it is an instance of displacement. The technique of the joke lies in a combination of the two methods.

No great distance separates this example from a small group
which might be described as 'overstatement' jokes. In these the 'yes' which would be in place in the reduction is replaced by a 'no', which, however, on account of its content, has the force of an intensified 'yes', and vice versa. A denial is a substitute for an overstated confirmation. Thus, for instance, in

Lichtenberg's malicious defence of philosophy:

'There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy', said Prince Hamlet contemptuously. Lichtenberg knew that this condemnation is not nearly severe enough for it does not take into account all the objections that can be made to philosophy. He therefore added what was missing: 'But there is much, too, in philosophy that is not to be found in heaven or earth.' His addition, it is true, emphasizes the way in which philosophy compensates us for the insufficiency for which Hamlet censures it. But this compensation implies another and still greater reproach.

Two Jewish jokes, though they are of a coarse type, are even clearer, since they are free from any trace of displacement:

'Two Jews were discussing baths. 'I have a bath every year', said one of them, "whether I need one or not."

It is obvious that this boastful insistence on his cleanliness only serves to convict him of uncleanliness.

'A Jew noticed the remains of some food in another one's beard. 'I can tell you what you had to eat yesterday.'—"Well, tell me."—"Lentils, then."—"Wrong: the day before yesterday!"

The following example is an excellent 'overstatement' joke, which can easily be traced back to representation by the opposite:

'The King condescended to visit a surgical clinic and came on the professor as he was carrying out the amputation of a leg. He accompanied all its stages with loud expressions of his royal satisfaction: 'Bravo! Bravo! my dear Professor!' When he

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als Überbietungswitze benennen könnte. In ihnen wird das 'Ja', welches in der Reduktion am Platze wäre, durch ein 'Nein' ersetzt, das aber mit einem noch verstärkten 'Ja' infolge seines Inhalts gleichwertig ist, und ebenso im umgekehrten Falle. Der Widerspruch steht an Stelle einer Bestätigung mit Überbietung; so z. B. das Epigramm von Lessing:

'Die gute Galathea! Man sagt, sie schwärzte ihr Haar; Da doch ihr Haar schon schwarz, als sie es kaufte, war.

Oder die boshafte Scheinverteidigung der Schulweisheit durch Lichtenberg:

'Es gibt mehr Dinge im Himmel und auf Erden, als Eure Schulweisheit sich träumen läßt', hatte Prinz Hamlet verächtlich gesagt. Lichtenberg weiß, daß diese Verurteilung lange nicht scharf genug ist, indem sie nicht alles verwertet, was man gegen die Schulweisheit einwenden kann. Er fügt also das noch Fehlende hinzu: 'Aber es gibt auch vieles in der Schulweisheit, das sich weder im Himmel noch auf Erden findet.' Seine Darstellung hebt zwar hervor, wodurch uns die Schulweisheit für den von Hamlet gerügten Mangel entschädigt, aber in dieser Entschädigung liegt ein zweiter und noch größerer Vorwurf.

Durchsichtiger noch, weil frei von jeder Spur von Verschwiegenheit, sind zwei Judenwitze, allerdings von grobem Kaliber.


Ein Jude bemerkt Speisereste am Bart des anderen: 'Ich kann dir sagen, was du gestern gegessen hast.'—'Nun, sag.'—'Also Linsen.'—'Ge fehlt, vorgestern!' Ein prächtiger Überbietungswitz, der leicht auf Darstellung durchs Gegenteil zurückzuführen ist, ist auch folgender:

Der König besucht in seiner Herablassung die chirurgische Klinik und trifft den Professor bei der Vornahme der Amputation eines Beines, deren einzelne Stadien er nun mit lauten Äußerungen seines königlichen Wohlgefallens begleitet. 'Bravo, bravo, mein lieber Geheimrat.' Nach

1 ['Auf die Galatheea', Sinngedichte.] Modelled on one in the Greek Anthology.

2 [Hamlet, 1. Akt, 5. Szene.]
operation was finished, the professor approached him and asked him with a deep bow: "Is it your Majesty's command that I should remove the other leg too?"

The professor's thoughts during the royal applause could certainly not have been expressed unaltered: 'This makes it look as though I were taking off the poor fellow's bad leg by royal command and only for the royal satisfaction. After all I really have other reasons for the operation.' But he then goes to the King and says: 'I have no reasons for carrying out an operation other than your Majesty's command. The applause you honoured me with has made me so happy that I only await your Majesty's orders to amputate the sound limb too.' In this way he succeeds in making himself understood by saying the opposite of what he thinks but must keep to himself. This opposite is an overstatement that cannot be believed.

As these examples show, representation by the opposite is an instrument of joke-technique that is used frequently and works powerfully. But there is something else that we should not overlook: namely that this technique is by no means peculiar to jokes. When Mark Antony, after he has made a long speech in the Forum and has reversed the emotional attitude of his audience round Caesar's corpse, finally exclaims once more:

'For Brutus is an honourable man ...'

he knows that the people will now shout back to him the true sense of his words:

'They were traitors: honourable men!'

Or when Simplizissimus describes a collection of incredible pieces of brutality and cynicism as the expressions of 'men of feeling', this too is a representation by the opposite. But we call this 'irony' and no longer a joke. The only technique that characterizes irony is representation by the opposite. Moreover we read and hear of 'ironical jokes'. So it can no longer be doubted that technique alone is insufficient to characterize the nature of jokes. Something further is needed which we have not yet discovered. But on the other hand it remains an uncontradicted fact that if we undo the technique of a joke it disappears. For the time being we may find difficulty in thinking

\[1\] The famous Munich comic weekly.

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vollendeter Operation tritt der Professor an ihn heran und fragt, sich tief verneigend: »Befehlen Majestät auch das andere Bein?«


Die Darstellung durchs Gegenteil ist, wie wir an diesen Beispielen sehen, ein häufig gebrauchtes und kräftig wirkendes Mittel der Witztechnik. Aber wir dürfen auch etwas anderes nicht übersehen, daß diese Technik keineswegs dem Witz allein eigen ist. Wenn Marcus Antonius, nachdem er in langer Rede auf dem Forum die Stimmung der Zuhörer um Cäsars Leichnam umgemodelt, endlich wieder einmal die Worte hinwirft:

»Denn Brutus ist ein ehrenwerter Mann ...«,

so weiß er, daß das Volk ihm nun den wahren Sinn seiner Worte entgegenschreiten wird:

»Sie sind Verräter: ehrenwerte Männer!«\[1\]

Oder wenn der Simplizissimus eine Sammlung unerhörter Brutalitäten und Zynismen als Außerungen von »Gemütsmimen« überschreibt, so ist das auch eine Darstellung durchs Gegenteil. Diese heißt man aber »Ironie«, nicht mehr Witz. Der Ironie ist gar keine andere Technik als die der Darstellung durchs Gegenteil eigentümlich. Überdies liest und hört man vom ironischen Witz. Es ist also nicht mehr zu bezweifeln, daß die Technik allein nicht hinreicht, den Witz zu charakterisieren. Es muß noch etwas anderes hinzukommen, das wir bis jetzt nicht aufgefun- den haben. Anderseits steht aber noch immer unwidersprochen da, daß mit der Rückbildung der Technik der Witz beseitigt ist. Vorläufig mag es uns schwerfallen,

\[1\] Julius Cäsar, III. Akt, 2. Szene]
how these two fixed points that we have arrived at in explaining jokes can be reconciled.

[11]

If representation by the opposite is one of the technical methods of jokes, we can expect that jokes may also make use of its contrary—representation by something similar or akin. A further pursuit of our enquiry will in fact show us that this is the technique of a fresh and particularly comprehensive group of conceptual jokes. We shall describe the peculiarity of this technique far more appropriately if, instead of representation by something ‘akin’, we say by something ‘correlated’ or ‘connected’. We will take our start, in fact, with this latter characteristic and illustrate it at once by an example.

Here is an American anecdote: 'Two not particularly scrupulous business men had succeeded, by dint of a series of highly risky enterprises, in amassing a large fortune, and they were now making efforts to push their way into good society. One method, which struck them as a likely one, was to have their portraits painted by the most celebrated and highly-paid artist in the city, whose pictures had an immense reputation. The precious canvases were shown for the first time at a large evening party, and the two hosts themselves led the most influential connoisseur and art critic up to the wall upon which the portraits were hanging side by side, to extract his admiring judgement on them. He studied the works for a long time, and then, shaking his head, as though there was something he had missed, pointed to the gap between the pictures and asked quietly: ‘But where’s the Saviour?’' (I.e. ‘I don’t see the picture of the Saviour’.)

The meaning of this remark is clear. It is once again a question of the representation of something that cannot be expressed directly. How does this ‘indirect representation’ come about? Starting from the representation in the joke, we trace the path backwards through a series of easily established associations and inferences.

1 [As contrasted with verbal jokes. See below, p. 90.]
2 [The anecdote was used again by Freud in the third of his lectures at Clark University (1910a), Standard Ed., 11, 30-1.]
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We can guess from the question 'Where's the Saviour? Where's the picture of the Saviour?' that the sight of the two pictures had reminded the speaker of a similar sight, familiar to him, as to us, which however, included an element that was missing here—the picture of the Saviour between two other pictures. There is only one such situation: Christ hanging between the two thieves. The missing element is brought into prominence by the joke. The similarity lies in the pictures, hanging to the right and left of the Saviour, which the joke passes over; it can only consist in the fact that the pictures hanging on the walls are pictures of thieves. What the critic wanted to say but could not say was: ‘You are a couple of rascals—I know that!’ And he did in fact end by saying it by means of a few associations and inferences, using the method which we speak of as an ‘allusion’.

We at once recall where we have already come across allusion—in connection, namely, with double meaning. When two meanings are expressed in one word and one of them is so much more frequent and usual that it occurs to us at once, while the second is more out of the way and therefore less prominent, we proposed to speak of this as ‘double meaning with an allusion’ [p. 41]. In a whole number of the examples we have already examined we remarked that the technique was not a simple one, and we now perceive that the ‘allusion’ was the complicating factor in them. (See, for instance, the inversion joke about the wife who has lain back a bit and so has been able to earn a lot [p. 33] or the nonsensical joke about the man who replied to congratulations on the birth of his youngest child by saying that it was remarkable what human hands could accomplish [p. 59].)

In the American anecdote we now have before us an allusion without any double meaning, and we see that its characteristic is replacement by something linked to it in a conceptual connection. It may easily be guessed that the utilizable connection can be of more than one kind. In order not to lose ourselves in a maze of detail, we will discuss only the most marked variants and these only in a few examples.

The connection used for the replacement may be merely a resemblance in sound, so that this sub-species becomes
analogous to puns among verbal jokes. Here, however, it is not the resemblance in sound between two words, but between whole sentences, characteristic phrases, and so on.

For instance, Lichtenberg coined the saying: 'New spas cure well', which at once reminds us of the proverb: 'New brooms sweep clean.' The two phrases share the first one and a half words and the last word, as well as the whole structure of the sentence. And there is no doubt that the sentence came into the witty philosopher's head as an imitation of the familiar proverb. Thus Lichtenberg's saying becomes an allusion to the proverb. By means of this allusion something is suggested that is not said straight out—namely that something else is responsible for the effects produced by spas besides the unvarying characteristics of thermal springs.

A similar technical solution applies to another jest [Scherz] or joke [Witz] of Lichtenberg's: 'A girl scarcely twelve Moden old.' This sounds like 'twelve Monden (moons)', i.e. months, and may originally have been a slip of the pen for the latter, which is a permissible expression in poetry. But it also makes good sense to use the changing fashion instead of the changing moon as a method of determining a woman's age.

The connection may also consist in similarity except for a 'slight modification'. So that this technique, too, is parallel to a verbal technique [p. 33]. Both species of joke make almost the same impression, but they can be better distinguished from each other if we consider the processes of the joke-work.

Here is an example of a verbal joke or pun of this kind: Marie Wilt was a great singer, famous, however, for the compass not only of her voice. She suffered the humiliation of having the title of a play based on Jules Verne's well-known novel used as an allusion to her misshapen figure: 'Round the Wilt in 80 Days'.

Or: 'Every fathom a queen', a modification of Shakespeare's familiar 'Every inch a king'. The allusion to this quotation was not said straight out—namely that something else is responsible for the effects produced by spas besides the unvarying characteristics of thermal springs.

Ahnlich ist ein anderer Scherz oder Witz von Lichtenberg technisch aufzulösen; Ein Mädchen, kaum zwölf Moden alt. Das klingt an die Zeitbestimmung zwölf Monden (i.e. Monate) an und war vielleicht ursprünglich ein Schreibfehler für letzteren, in der Poesie zulässigen Ausdruck. Aber es hat einen guten Sinn, die wechselnde Mode anstatt des wechselnden Mondes zur Altersbestimmung für ein weibliches Wesen zu verwenden.


Als Beispiel eines solchen Wortwitzes oder Kalauers: Die große, aber nicht nur durch den Umfang ihrer Stimme berühmte Sängerin Marie Wilt erfuhr die Krankung, daß man den Titel eines aus dem bekannten Roman von J. Verne gezogenen Theaterstücks zu einer Anspielung auf ihre Mißgestalt verwendete: Die Reise um die Wilt in 80 Tagen. Oder: Jede Klafter eine Königin, eine Modifikation des bekannten Shakespeareschen Jeder Zoll ein König und eine Anspielung auf die-
made with reference to an aristocratic and over-life-size lady. No very serious objection could really be made if anyone were to prefer to include this joke among the 'condensations accompanied by modifications as substitute'. (See 'tête-à-bête', p. 25.)

A friend said of someone who had lofty views but was obstinate in the pursuit of his aims: 'Er hat ein Ideal vor dem Kopf [He has an ideal in front of his head]. The current phrase is: 'Ein Brett vor dem Kopf haben' [literally, 'to have a board in front of one's head'—'to be dense']. The modification alludes to this phrase and makes use of its meaning for its own purposes. Here, once more, the technique might be described as 'condensation with modification'.

It is almost impossible to distinguish between 'allusion by means of modification' and 'condensation with substitution', if the modification is limited to a change of letters. For instance: 'Dichteritis'. This allusion to the scourge of 'Diphtheritis' [diphtheria] represents authorship by unqualified persons as another public danger.

Negative particles make very neat allusions possible at the cost of slight alterations: 'My fellow-unbeliever Spinoza', says Heine. 'We, by the ungrace of God, day-labourers, serfs, negroes, villeins ...' is how Lichtenberg begins a manifesto (which he carries no further) made by these unfortunates—who certainly have more right to this title than kings and princes have to its unmodified form.

Finally, another kind of allusion consists in 'omission', which may be compared to condensation without the formation of a substitute. Actually, in every allusion something is omitted, viz. the train of thought leading to the allusion. It only depends on whether the more obvious thing is the gap in the wording of the allusion or the substitute which partly fills the gap. Thus a series of examples would lead us back from blatant omission to allusion proper.

Omission without a substitute is shown in the following example: There is a witty and pugnacious journalist in Vienna, whose biting invective has repeatedly led to his being physically

1 [A non-existent word, which might be translated 'authority'—from 'Dichter (an author).']

8 [Freud quoted this example in a footnote to his analysis of the 'Rat-

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ses Zitat, auf eine vornehme und überlebensgroße Dame bezogen. Es wäre wirklich nicht viel Ernsthaftes dagegen zu sagen, wenn jemand diesen Witz vielmehr zu den Verdichtungen mit Modifikationen als Ersatzbildung (S. 28) stellen würde. (Vgl. tète-à-bête.)

Von einer hochstrebenden, aber in der Verfolgung ihrer Ziele eigensinnigen Person sagte ein Freund: »Er hat ein Ideal vor dem Kopf.« »Ein Brett vor dem Kopf haben« ist die geläufige Redensart, auf welche diese Modifikation anspielt und deren Sinn sie für sich selbst in Anspruch nimmt. Auch hier kann man die Technik als Verdichtung mit Modifikation beschreiben.

Fast ununterscheidbar werden Anspielung durch Modifikation und Verdichtung mit Ersatzbildung, wenn sich die Modifikation auf die Veränderung von Buchstaben einschränkt, z. B. Dichteritis. Die Anspielung auf die böse Seuche der Diphtheritis stellt auch das Dichten Unberufener als gemeingefährlich hin.

Die Negationspartikeln ermöglichen sehr schöne Anspielungen mit geringen Abänderungskosten:

»Mein Unglubensgenosse Spinoza,« sagt Heine. »Wir von Gottes Ungnaden Tagläuher, Leibeigene, Neger, Fronknechte usw. ... beginnt bei Lichtenberg ein nicht weiter ausgeführtes Manifest dieser Unglücklichen, die jedenfalls auf solche Titulatur mehr Anrecht haben als Könige und Fürstlichkeiten auf die unmodifizierte.

Eine Form der Anspielung ist schließlich auch die Auslassung, der Verdichtung ohne Ersatzbildung vergleichbar. Eigentlich wird bei jeder Anspielung etwas ausgelassen, nämlich die zur Anspielung hinführenden Gedankenwege. Es kommt nur darauf an, ob die Lüge das Augenfälligere ist oder der die Lücke teilweise ausfüllende Ersatz in dem Wortlaut der Anspielung. So kämen wir über eine Reihe von Beispielen von der krassen Auslassung zur eigentlichen Auslassung zurück.

Auslassung ohne Ersatz findet sich in folgendem Beispiel: In Wien lebt ein geistreicher und kampfustiger Schriftsteller, der sich durch die Schärfe seiner Invective wiederholt körperliche Mißhandlungen von

1 [Freud erwähnt dieses Beispiel in einer Fußnote zu seiner Analyse des »Ratten-
maltreated by the subjects of his attacks. On one occasion, when a fresh misdeed on the part of one of his habitual opponents was being discussed, somebody exclaimed: ‘If X hears of this, he’ll get his ears boxed again.’ 1 The technique of this joke includes, in the first place, bewilderment at its apparent nonsense, since we cannot see how getting one’s ears boxed can be an immediate consequence of having heard something. The absurdity of the remark disappears if we insert in the gap: ‘he’ll write such a scathing article upon the man that ... etc.’ Allusion by means of omission, combined with nonsense, are accordingly the technical methods used in this joke.

“He praises himself so much that the price of fumigating candles is going up.’ (Heine.) This gap is easy to fill. What is omitted has been replaced by an inference, which then leads back to what has been omitted, in the form of an allusion: ‘self-praise stinks.’

And now once again two Jews outside the bath-house:
One of them sighed: ‘Another year gone by already!’

These examples leave us in no doubt that here the omission forms part of the allusion.

There is still quite a marked gap to be seen in our next example, though it is a genuine and correct allusive joke. After an artists’ carnival in Vienna a jest-book was circulated, in which, among others, the following highly remarkable epigram appeared:

‘A wife is like an umbrella. Sooner or later one takes a cab.’

An umbrella is not enough protection against rain. The ‘sooner or later’ can only mean ‘if it rains hard’, and a cab is a public vehicle. But since we are only concerned here with the form of the analogy, we will postpone the closer examination of this joke to a later moment. [See p. 110 f.]

Heine’s ‘Bäder von Lucca’ contains a regular wasp’s nest of the most stinging allusions and makes the most ingenious use of this form of joke for polemical purposes (against Count Platen). 2 Long before the reader can suspect what is afoot, Man’ (1909d), to illustrate the use of a similar technique in obsessional symptoms. (Standard Ed., 10, 227 n.)

1 [The ‘X’ in question was Karl Kraus, who has already been referred to above (p. 27). Another of his jokes was quoted by Freud in his paper ‘Civilized” Sexual Morality’ (1908d), Standard Ed., 9, 200.]
2 [August, Count von Platen (1796–1835), the lyric poet, had aroused

Heine: »Er lobt sich so stark, daß die Räucherkerzen im Preise stei-
gen.« Diese Lücke ist leicht auszufüllen. Das Ausgelassene ist durch eine Folgerung ersetzt, die nun als Anspielung auf daselbe zurückleitet. Eigenlob stinkt.

Nun wieder einmal die beiden Juden vor dem Badehaus!
»Schon wieder ein Jahr vergangen!« seufzt der eine.

Diese Beispiele lassen wohl keinen Zweifel bestehen, daß die Auslassung zur Anspielung gehört.

Eine immer noch auffällige Lücke findet sich in nachstehendem Beispiel, das doch ein echter und richtiger Anspielungswitz ist. Nach einem Künstlerfest in Wien wurde ein Scherbuch herausgegeben, in welchem unter anderen folgender, höchst merkwürdiger Sinnspruch verzeichnet stand:

»Eine Frau ist wie ein Regenschirm. Man nimmt sich dann doch einen Komfortabel.«

Ein Regenschirm schützt nicht genug vor dem Regen. Das »dann doch« kann nur heißen: wenn es tüchtig regnet, und ein Komfortabel ist ein öffentliches Fuhrwerk. Da wir es aber hier mit der Form des Gleichnisses zu tun haben, wollen wir die eingehendere Untersuchung dieses Witzes auf einen späteren Moment verschieben. [Vgl. S. 105 f.]

Ein wahres Wespennest der stachligsten Anspielungen enthalten Heines ‘Bäder von Lucca’, die von dieser Form des Witzes die kunstvollste Verwendung zu polemischen Zwecken (gegen den Grafen Platen) machen. Lange zuvor, ehe der Leser diese Verwendung ahnen kann, wird einem manns» (1909d, II (A), um die Anwendung einer ähnlichen Technik bei Zwangssymptomen zu beleuchten.)

2 [Dieser »X« war Karl Kraus, auf den schon auf S. 30 hingewiesen wurde.]

1 [Der Lyriker August Graf von Platen (1796–1835) hatte sich durch eine Satire über
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there are foreshadowings of a particular theme, peculiarly ill-adapted for direct representation, by allusions to material of the most varied kind,—for instance, in Hirsch-Hyacinth's verbal contortions: 'You are too stout and I am too thin; you have a good deal of imagination and I have all the more business sense; I am a practicus and you are a diarrheticus; in short you are my complete antidopex.'—'Venus Urinia'—'the stout Gudel von Dreckwall' of Hamburg, and so on. In what follows, the events described by the author take a turn which seems at first merely to display his mischievous spirit but soon reveals its symbolic relation to his polemical purpose and at the same time shows itself as allusive. Eventually the attack on Platen bursts out, and thenceforward allusions to the theme (with which we have already been made acquainted) of the Count's love for men gushes out and overflows in every sentence of Heine's attack on his opponent's talents and character. For instance:

'Even though the Muses do not favour him, he has the Genius of Speech in his power, or rather he knows how to do violence to him. For he does not possess the free love of that Genius, he must unceasingly pursue this young man, too, and he knows how to capture only the outer forms, which, despite their lovely curves never speak nobly.'

'He is like the ostrich, which believes he is well hidden if he sticks his head in the sand, so that only his behind can be seen. Our exalted bird would have done better to hide his behind in the sand and show us his head.'

Allusion is perhaps the commonest and most easily manageable method of joking and is at the bottom of the majority of Heine's enmity by a satirical work on the romantic movement. '*

1 [These instances all touch on anal material. Venus 'Urinia', though on the surface suggesting urine, is a malapropism for 'Urania', the heavenly, homosexual, love of Plato's Symposium. 'Gudel' was a real, aristocratic and wealthy Hamburg lady, to whom Hyacinth here gives the anal-sounding pseudonym of 'Dreckwall'. (Dreck = excrement.) All these examples will be found in Chapter IX of 'Die Bäder von Lucca' (Part III of Heine's Reisebilder). The rest of that chapter is concerned with predominantly anal anecdotes.]


3 [Im XI. Kapitel, dem letzten des Buchs.]
short-lived jokes which we are accustomed to weaving into our conversations and which will not bear being uprooted from their original soil and kept in isolation. But it precisely reminds us once more of the fact that had begun to puzzle us in our consideration of the technique of jokes. An allusion in itself does not constitute a joke; there are correctly constructed allusions which have no claim to such a character. Only allusions that possess that character can be described as jokes. So that the criterion of jokes, which we have pursued into their technique, eludes us there once again. Allusions which have no claim to such a character. Witzig ist nur die »witzige« Anspielung, so daß das Kennzeichen des Witzes, das wir bis in die Technik verfolgt haben, uns dort wieder entschwindet.

I have occasionally described allusion as ‘indirect representation’; and we may now observe that the various species of allusion, together with representation by the opposite and other techniques that have still to be mentioned, may be united into a single large group, for which ‘indirect representation’ would be the most comprehensive name. ‘Faulty reasoning’, ‘unification’, ‘indirect representation’—these, then, are the headings under which we can classify those techniques of conceptual jokes which we have come to know.

If we examine our material further, we seem to recognize a fresh sub-species of indirect representation which can be precisely characterized but of which few examples can be adduced. This is representation by something small or very small— which performs the task of giving full expression to a whole characteristic by means of a tiny detail. This group can be brought under the classification of ‘allusion’, if we bear in mind that this smallness is related to what has to be represented, and can be seen to proceed from it. For instance:

‘A Galician Jew was travelling in a train. He had made himself really comfortable, had unbuttoned his coat and put his feet up on the seat. Just then a gentleman in modern dress entered the compartment. The Jew promptly pulled himself together and took up a proper pose. The stranger fingered through the pages of a notebook, made some calculations, reflected for a moment and then suddenly asked the Jew: “Excuse me, when is Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement)”?

1 [Displacement on to something very small was later recognized by Freud as a characteristic mechanism in obsessional neurosis. See the ‘Rat Man’ case history (1909d), Standard Ed., 10, 241 and 244.]
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"Oho!", said the Jew, and put his feet up on the seat again before answering.

It cannot be denied that this representation by something small is related to the 'tendency to economy' which we were left with as the last common element after our investigation of verbal technique [p. 42 ff.].

Here is a very similar example:
The doctor, who had been asked to look after the Baroness at her confinement, pronounced that the moment had not come, and suggested to the Baron that in the meantime they should have a game of cards in the next room. After a while a cry of pain from the Baroness struck the ears of the two men: "Ah, mon Dieu, que je souffre!" Her husband sprang up, but the doctor signed to him to sit down: "It's nothing. Let's go on with the game!" A little later there were again sounds from the pregnant woman: "Mein Gott, mein Gott, what terrible pains!" — "Aren't you going in, Professor?" asked the Baron. — "No, no. It's not time yet." — At last there came from next door an unmistakable cry of "Aa~ee, aa~ee, aa~ee!" The doctor threw down his cards and exclaimed: "Now it's time."

This successful joke demonstrates two things from the example of the way in which the cries of pain uttered by an aristocratic lady in child-birth changed their character little by little. It shows how pain causes primitive nature to break through all the layers of education, and how an important decision can be properly made to depend on an apparently trivial phenomenon.

There is another kind of indirect representation used by jokes, namely the 'analogy'. We have kept it back so long because the consideration of it comes up against new difficulties, or makes particularly evident difficulties that we have already come up against in other connections. We have already admitted that in some of the examples we have examined we have not been able to banish a doubt as to whether they ought to be regarded as jokes at all [e.g. pp. 50 and 61]; and in this uncertainty we have recognized that the foundations of our enquiry have been seriously shaken. But I am aware of this uncertainty in no other

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»Aesoï«, sagt der Jude und legt die Füße wieder auf die Bank, ehe er die Antwort gibt.

Es wird nicht abzuweisen sein, daß diese Darstellung durch ein Kleines an die Tendenz zur Ersparnis anknüpft, welche wir nach der Erforschung der Wortwitzen technik als das letzte Gemeinsame übrig behalten haben [S. 43 ff.].

Ein ganz ähnliches Beispiel ist folgendes:

Der Arzt, der gebeten worden ist, der Frau Baronin bei ihrer Entbindung beizustehen, erklärt den Moment für noch nicht gekommen und schlägt dem Baron unterdessen eine Kartenpartie im Nebenzimmer vor. Nach einer Weile dringt der Wehruhr der Frau Baronin an das Ohr der beiden Männer. »Ah mon Dieu, que je souffre!« Der Gemahl springt auf, aber der Arzt wehrt ab: »Es ist nichts, spielen wir weiter.« Eine Weile später hört man die Kreißende wieder: »Mein Gott, mein Gott, was für Schmerzen!« — »Wollen Sie nicht hineingehen, Herr Professor?« fragt der Baron. — »Nein, nein, es ist noch nicht Zeit.« — Endlich hört man aus dem Nebenzimmer ein unverkennbares: »Ai, waib, waib« geschrien; da wirft der Arzt die Karten weg und sagt: »Es ist Zeit.«

Wie der Schmerz durch alle Schichten der Erziehung die ursprüngliche Natur durchbrechen läßt, und wie eine wichtige Entscheidung mit Recht von einer scheinbar belanglosen Äußerung abhängig gemacht wird, das zeigt beides dieser gute Witz an dem Beispiel der schrittweisen Veränderung der Klagerufe bei der gebärenden vornehmen Frau.

Eine andere Art der indirekten Darstellung, deren sich der Witz bedient, das Gleichnis, haben wir uns so lange aufgespart, weil dessen Beurteilung auf neue Schwierigkeiten stößt, oder Schwierigkeiten, die sich schon bei anderen Gelegenheiten ergeben haben, besonders deutlich erkennen läßt. Wir haben schon vorhin eingestanden, daß wir bei manchen zur Untersuchung vorliegenden Beispielen ein Schwanken, ob sie überhaupt den Witz zuzurechnen seien, nicht zu bannen vermögen [z. B. S. 50 und S. 60], und haben in dieser Unsicherheit eine bedenkliche Erschütterung der Grundlagen unserer Untersuchung erkannt. Bei keinem anderen Material empfinde ich aber diese Unsicherheit stärker
material more strongly or more frequently than in jokes of analogy. There is a feeling—and this is probably true of a large
number of other people under the same conditions—which tells me 'this is a joke, I can pronounce this to be a joke' even before
the hidden essential nature of jokes has been discovered. This
feeling leaves me in the lurch most often in the case of joking
analogies. If I want to begin with I unhesitatingly pronounce an
analogy to be a joke, a moment later I seem to notice that the
enjoyment it gives me is of a quality different from what I am
accustomed to derive from a joke. And the circumstance that
joking analogies are very seldom able to provoke the explosive
laugh which signalizes a good joke makes it impossible for me to
resolve the doubt in my usual way—by limiting myself to the
best and most effective examples of a species.

It is easy to demonstrate that there are remarkably fine and
effective examples of analogies that do not in the least strike us
as being jokes. The fine analogy between the tenderness in
Ottilie's diary and the scarlet thread of the English navy (p. 23n.)
is one such. And I cannot refrain from quoting in the same sense
another one, which I am never tired of admiring and the effect
of which I have not grown out of. It is the analogy with which
Ferdinand Lassalle ended one of his celebrated speeches for the
defence ('Science and the Workers'): 'Upon a man such as I
have shown you this one to be, who has devoted his life to the
watchword "Science and the Workers", being convicted, if it
were his lot, would make no more impression than would the
bursting of a retort upon a chemist deep in his scientific
experiments. As soon as the interruption is past, with a slight frown
over the rebelliousness of his material, he will quietly pursue his
researches and his labours.'

A rich selection of apt and joking analogies are to be found
among Lichtenberg's writings (the second volume of the Göttingen
edition of 1853), and it is from there that I shall take the
material for our investigation.

'It is almost impossible to carry the torch of truth through a
crowd without singeing someone's beard.'

No doubt that seems to be a joke; but on closer examination
we notice that the joking effect does not arise from the analogy
itself but from a subsidiary characteristic. 'The torch of truth'
is not a new analogy but one that has been common for a very
and häufiger als bei den Gleichniswitzen. Die Empfindung, welche mir—
und wahrscheinlich einer großen Anzahl anderer unter den nämlichen
Bedingungen wie mir—zu sagen pflegt: Dies ist ein Witz, dies darf man
für einen Witz ausgegeben, noch ehe der verborgene wesentliche Charak-
ter des Witzes entdeckt ist; diese Empfindung läßt mich bei den witzi-
zen Vergleichen am ehesten im Stiche. Wenn ich den Vergleich zuerst
ohne Bedenken für einen Witz erklärt habe, so glaube ich einen Augen-
blick später zu bemerken, daß das Vergnügen, das er mir bereitet, von
ander Qualität ist, als welches ich einem Witz zu verdanken pflege,
und der Umstand, daß die witzigen Vergleiche nur sehr selten das explo-
sionsartige Lachen hervorzurufen vermögen, durch welches sich ein guter
Witz bezeuge, macht es mir unmöglich, mich dem Zweifel wie sonst zu
entziehen, indem ich mich auf die besten und effektvollen Beispiele der
Gattung einschränke.

Daß es ausgezeichnet schöne und wirksame Beispiele von Gleichnissen
gibt, die uns den Eindruck des Witzes keineswegs machen, ist leicht zu
zeigen. Der schöne Vergleich der durchgehenden Zärtlichkeit in Ottiliens
tagebuch mit dem roten Faden der englischen Marine (s. S. 26 Anm. 1)
ist ein solcher; auch ein anderes, das zu bewundern ich noch nicht müde
geworden bin und dessen Eindruck ich nicht überwunden habe, kann ich
mir nicht versagen, im gleichen Sinne anzuführen. Es ist das Gleichnis,
mit welchem Ferd. Lassalle eine seiner berühmten Verteidigungsreden
(»Die Wissenschaft und die Arbeiter«) geschlossen hat: »Ein Mann, wel-
der, wie ich Ihnen dies erklärt habe, sein Leben dem Wahlspruch ge-
widmet hat »Die Wissenschaft und die Arbeiter«, dem würde auch eine
Verurteilung, die er auf seinem Wege findet, keinen anderen Eindruck
machen können, als etwa das Springen einer Retorte dem in seine wiss-
schaftlichen Experimente vertieften Chemiker. Mit einem leisen
Stirnrunzeln über den Widerstand der Materie setzt er, sowie die Stö-
rung beseitigt ist, ruhig seine Forschungen und Arbeiten fort.«
Eine reiche Auswahl von treffenden und witzigen Gleichnissen findet
man in den Schriften Lichtenbergs (2. Bd. der Göttinger Ausgabe,
1853); von dort will ich auch das Material für unsere Untersuchung ent-
nehmen.

»Es ist fast unmöglich, die Fackel der Wahrheit durch ein Gedränge zu
tragen, ohne jemanden den Bart zu sengen.«
Das erscheint wohl witzig, aber bei näherem Zusehen merkt man, daß
die witzige Wirkung nicht vom Vergleich selbst, sondern von einer
Nebeneigenschaft desselben ausgeht. Die »Fackel der Wahrheit« ist
eigentlich kein neuer Vergleich, sondern ein längst gebräuchlicher und
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long time and has become reduced to a cliché—as always happens when an analogy is lucky and accepted into linguistic usage. Though we scarcely notice the analogy any longer in the phrase ‘the torch of truth’, it is suddenly given back its full original force by Lichtenberg, since an addition has long ceased to be an effective analogy, whether or not it originally had an effect as a joke. But the analogy is refreshed, it is given back its full force, if a modification is derived from it and a second, new, analogy is thus obtained from it. The way in which this second analogy comes about seems to be what determines the joke, not the two analogies themselves. This would be an instance of the same joke-technique as in the example of the torch.

The following example seems to have the character of a joke for another reason, but one that must be judged similarly:

‘Reviews seem to me to be a kind of childish illness to which new-born books are more or less liable. There are examples of the healthiest dying of it; and the weakest often get through it. Some escape it altogether. Attempts have often been made to guard against it by the amulets of preface and dedication, or even to inoculate against it by judgements of one’s own. But this does not always help.’

The comparison of reviews to a childish illness is founded in the first instance on the fact of being exposed to them shortly after first seeing the light of day. I cannot venture to decide whether up to this point the comparison has the character of a joke. But it is then carried further: it turns out that the subsequent fate of new books can be represented within the

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Dieselbe Beurteilung wird gewiß auch für einen anderen witzigen Vergleich desselben Autors gelten können:

»Ein großes Licht war der Mann eben nicht, aber ein großer Leuchter…«

Er war Professor der Philosophie.

Einen Gelehrten ein großes Licht, ein lumen mundi zu heißen, ist längst kein wirksamer Vergleich mehr, mag er ursprünglich als Witz gewirkt haben oder nicht. Aber man frischt den Vergleich auf, man gibt ihm seine Vollkraft wieder, indem man eine Modifikation aus ihm ableitet und solcherart einen zweiten, neuen Vergleich aus ihm gewinnt. Die Art, wie der zweite Vergleich entstanden ist, scheint die Bedingung des Witzes zu enthalten, nicht die beiden Vergleiche selbst. Es wäre dies ein Fall der nämlichen Witztechnik wie im Beispiel von der Fackel.

Aus einem anderen, aber ähnlich zu beurteilenden Grunde erscheint folgender Vergleich als witzig:

»Ich sehe die Rezensionen als eine Art von Kinderkrankheit an, die die neugeborenen Bücher mehr oder weniger befällt. Man hat Exempel, daß die gesündesten daran sterben und die schwächlichen oft durchkommen. Manche bekommen sie gar nicht. Man hat oft versucht, ihnen durch Amulette von Vorrede und Dedikation vorzubeugen oder sie gar durch eigene Urteile zu makulieren; es hilft aber nicht immer.«

Der Vergleich der Rezensionen mit den Kinderkrankheiten ist zuerst nur auf das Befallenwerden, kurz nachdem sie das Licht der Welt erblücht haben, gegründet. Ob er soweit witzig ist, gebe ich mich nicht zu entscheiden. Aber dann wird er fortgeführt: es ergibt sich, daß die weiteren Schicksale der neuen Bücher innerhalb des Rahmens des näm-
framework of the same analogy or through related analogies. A prolongation like this of an analogy is undoubtedly in the nature of a joke, but we already know what technique it has to thank for this—it is a case of unification, the making of an unsuspected connection. The character of the unification is not altered by the fact that here it consists in making an addition to a previous analogy.

In another group of analogies one is tempted to shift what is undoubtedly an impression that has the character of a joke on to another factor, which once again has in itself nothing to do with the nature of the analogy. These are analogies which contain a striking juxtaposition, often a combination that sounds absurd, or which are replaced by something of the sort as the outcome of the analogy. The majority of the Lichtenberg examples belong to this group.

'It is a pity that one cannot see the learned entrails of authors so as to discover what they have eaten.' The 'learned' entrails is a bewildering and indeed absurd epithet, which is only explained by the analogy. What if the impression of its being a joke were due entirely to the bewildering character of the juxtaposition? If so, it would correspond to a method of joking with which we are quite familiar—'representation by absurdity' [p. 56 ff.].

Lichtenberg has used the same analogy between the ingestion of reading and instructive matter and the ingestion of physical nourishment for another joke:

'He thought very highly of learning at home, and was therefore entirely in favour of learned stall-feeding.'

Other analogies by the same author exhibit the same absurd, or at least remarkable, assignment of epithets, which, as we now begin to see, are the true vehicles of the joke:

'That is the weather side of my moral constitution; I can stand things there quite well.'

'Everyone has his moral backside,¹ which he does not show except in case of need and which he covers as long as possible with the breeches of respectability.'

'Moral backside'—the assignment of this remarkable epithet is the outcome of an analogy. But in addition, the analogy is continued further with an actual play upon words—'need'—

¹ [In English.]

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lichen Gleichnisses oder durch angelehnte Gleichnisse dargestellt werden können. Solche Fortsetzung einer Vergleichung ist unzweifelhaft witzig, aber wir wissen bereits, dank welcher Technik sie so erscheint; es ist ein Fall von Unifizierung, Herstellung eines ungeahnten Zusammenhanges. Der Charakter der Unifizierung wird aber dadurch nicht geändert, daß dieselbe hier in der Anreihung an ein erstes Gleichnis besteht.


> Es ist schade, daß man bei Schriftstellern die gelehrteng Eingeweide nicht sehen kann, um zu erforschen, was sie gegessen haben.« > Die gelehnten Eingeweide, das ist eine verblüffende, eigentlich absurde Attribuierung, die sich erst durch die Vergleichung aufklärt. Wie wäre es, wenn der witzige Eindruck dieses Vergleiches ganz und voll auf den verblüffenden Charakter dieser Zusammenstellung zurückginge? Dies entspräche einem der uns gut bekannten Mittel des Witzes, der Darstellung durch Widersinn [S. 55 ff.].

Lichtenberg hat dieselbe Vergleichung der Aufnahme von Lese- und Lernstoff mit der Aufnahme von physischer Nahrung auch zu einem anderen Witz verwendet:

> Er hielt sehr viel vom Lernen auf der Stube und war also gänzlich für gelehrt; Stallfütterung.«

Die nämliche absurde oder mindestens auffällige Attribuierung, welche, wie wir zu merken beginnen, der eigentliche Träger des Witzes ist, zeigen andere Gleichnisse desselben Autors:

> Das ist die Wetterseite meiner moralischen Konstitution, da kann ich etwas aushalten.«

> Jeder Mensch hat auch seine moralische Backside, die er nicht ohne Not zeigt und die er so lange als möglich mit den Hosen des guten Anstandes zudeckt.«

Die »moralische Backside«, das ist die auffällige Attribuierung, die als Resultat einer Vergleichung dasteht. Dazu kommt aber eine Fortführung des Vergleiches mit einem regelrechten Wortspiel (»Not«) und
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and a second even more unusual juxtaposition (‘the breeches of respectability’), which is perhaps a joke in itself; for the breeches, since they are the breeches of respectability, themselves, as it were, become a joke. We need not be surprised, then, if the whole gives us the impression of being an analogy that is a very good joke. We begin to notice that we are inclined, quite generally, where a characteristic attaches only to a part of a whole, to extend it in our estimation to the whole itself. The ‘breeches of respectability’, incidentally, recall some similarly bewildering lines of Heine’s:

... Bis mir endlich,  
endlich alle Knöpfe rissen,  
an der Hose der Geduld.

[... Till at last,  
at last every button bursts  
on my breeches of patience.]  

There can be no doubt that these last two analogies have a characteristic that we do not find in every good (that is to say, in every apt) analogy. They are to a great degree ‘debasing’, we might put it. They juxtapose something of a high category, something abstract (in these instances, ‘respectability’ and ‘patience’), with something of a very concrete and even low kind (‘breeches’). We shall have to consider in another connection whether this peculiarity has anything to do with the joke. Here we will try to analyse another example in which this disparaging characteristic is quite specially plain. Weinberl, the clerk in Nestroy’s farce Einen Jux will er sich machen [He wants to have a spree], pictures to himself how one day, when he is a respectable old business man, he will remember the days of his youth: ‘When the ice in front of the warehouse of memory has been hacked up like this in a friendly talk’, he says, ‘when the arched doorway of old times has been unlocked again and the showcase of the imagination is fully stocked with goods from the past...’ These are, to be sure, analogies between abstract and very commonplace concrete things; but the joke depends—whether entirely or in part—on the fact that a clerk is making use of analogies taken from the domain of his

1 [Romanzero, Book III (Hebräische Melodien), Jehuda ben Halevy IV.]  
2 [This is in Austrian dialect in the original.]  

... Bis mir endlich,  
endlich alle Knöpfe rissen,  
an der Hose der Geduld.<

Es ist unverkennbar, daß diese beiden letzten Vergleichungen einen Charakter an sich tragen, den man nicht an allen guten, d. h. zutreffenden Gleichnissen wiederfinden kann. Sie sind in hohem Grade herabziehend, könnten man sagen, sie stellen ein Ding hoher Kategorie, ein Abstraktum (hier: den guten Anstand, die Geduld) mit einem Ding sehr konkreter Natur und selbst niedriger Art (der Hose) zusammen. Ob diese Eigentümlichkeit etwas mit dem Witz zu schaffen hat, werden wir noch in einem anderen Zusammenhange in Erwägung ziehen müssen. Versuchen wir hier ein anderes Beispiel, in dem dieser herabziehende Charakter ganz besonders deutlich ist, zu analysieren. Der Kommiss Weinberl in Nestroy’s Posse Einen Jux will er sich machen, der sich ausmalt, wie er einmal als solider alter Handelsherr seiner Jugendtage gedenken wird, sagt: »Wenn so im traulichen Gesprächen das Eis aufg’shackt wird vor dem Magazin der Erinnerung, wann die G’wohlhör der Vorzeit wieder aufg’sperrt und die Pudel der Phantasie voll ang’raumt wird mit Waren von ehemals...» Das sind sicherlich Vergleichungen von abstarkten mit sehr gewöhnlichen konkreten Dingen, aber der Witz hängt — ausschließlich oder nur zum Teile — an dem Umstand, daß ein Kommiss sich dieser Vergleichungen bedient, die aus dem Bereiche seiner

1 [Romanzero, Buch III (Hebräische Melodien), Jehuda ben Halevy IV.]
everyday activities. But the bringing of these abstractions into connection with the ordinary things with which his life is normally filled is an act of unification.

Let us return to the Lichtenberg analogies:

'The motives that lead us to do anything might be arranged like the thirty-two winds [= points of the compass] and might be given names in a similar way: for instance, “bread-bread-fame” or “fame-fame-bread”.' As is so often the case with Lichtenberg’s jokes, the impression of something apt, witty and shrewd is so prominent that our judgement upon the nature of what constitutes the joke is misled by it. If some amount of joke is admixed with the admirable meaning, let us give names in a similar way: for instance, shrewd is so prominent that our judgement upon the nature of Lichtenberg’s jokes, the impression of something apt, witty and shrewd is so prominent that our judgement upon the nature of what constitutes the joke is misled by it. If some amount of joke is misled by it. If some amount of joke is admixed with the admirable meaning in a remark of this kind, we are probably led into declaring that the whole thing is an excellent joke. I should like, rather, to hazard the statement that everything in it that is really in the nature of a joke arises from our surprise at the strange combination ‘bread-bread-fame’. As a joke, therefore, it would be a ‘representation by absurdity’.

A strange juxtaposition or the attribution of an absurd epithet can stand by itself as the outcome of an analogy:

‘A zweischläfrige woman,’ ‘An einschlüfiger church-pew.’ (Both by Lichtenberg.) Behind both these there is an analogy with a bed; in both of them, besides the ‘bewilderment’ the technical factor of ‘allusion’ is in operation—an allusion in one case to the sleepy effects of sermons and in the other to the inexhaustible topic of sexual relations.

So far we have found that whenever an analogy strikes us as being in the nature of a joke it owes this impression to the admixture of one of the joke-techniques that are familiar to us. But a few other examples seem at last to provide evidence that an analogy can in itself be a joke.

This is how Lichtenberg describes certain odes:

‘They are in poetry what Jakob Böhme’s immortal works are in prose—a kind of picnic, in which the author provides the words and the reader the sense.’

1 [Freud returned to this analogy nearly thirty years later in his open letter to Einstein Why War? (1936).]

2 [These two German words—meaning literally ‘that can sleep two’ and ‘that can sleep one’—are ordinarily applied to beds, i.e. ‘double’ and ‘single’. Einschlafrig, however, can also mean ‘ soporific’.]

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‘When he philosophizes, he throws as a rule an agreeable moonlight over things, which pleases in general but shows no single thing clearly.’

Or here is Heine:

‘Her face resembled a palimpsest, on which, beneath the fresh black monastic manuscript of the text of a Church Father, there lurk the half-obiterated lines of an ancient Greek love-poem.’ [Harzreise.]

Or let us take the lengthy analogy, with a highly degrading1 purpose, in the ‘Bäder von Lucca’ [Reisebilder III]:

‘A catholic cleric behaves rather like a clerk with a post in a large business house. The Church, the big firm, of which the Pope is head, gives him a fixed job and, in return, a fixed salary. He works lazily, as everyone does who is not working for his own profit, who has numerous colleagues and can easily escape notice in the bustle of a large concern. All he has at heart is the credit of the house and still more its maintenance, since if it should go bankrupt he would lose his livelihood. A protestant cleric, on the other hand, is in every case his own principal and carries on the business of religion for his own profit. He does not, like his catholic fellow-traders, carry on a wholesale business but only manages it alone, he cannot be lazy. He must advertise his four quarters of the globe.’

In the face of this and many other examples, we can no longer dispute the fact that an analogy can in itself possess the characteristic of being a joke, without this impression being accounted for by a complication with one of the familiar joke-techniques. But, that being so, we are completely at a loss to see what it is that determines the joking characteristic of analogies, since that characteristic certainly does not reside in analogy as a form of expression of thought or in the operation of making a comparison. All we can do is to include analogy among the species of ‘indirect representation’ used by the joke-technique.

1 [See below, p. 200n.]

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»Wenn er philosophiert, so wirft er gewöhnlich ein angenehmes Mondlicht über die Gegenstände, das im ganzen gefällt, aber nicht einen einzigen Gegenstand deutlich zeigt.«

Oder Heine: »Ihr Gesicht glich einem Codex palimpsestus, wo unter der neuschwarzen Mönchschrift eines Kirchenvaters textes die halb erloschenen Verse eines altgriechischen Liebesdichters hervorlaufen.« [Harzreise.]

Oder die fortgesetzte Vergleichung mit stark herabsetzender1 Tendenz in den Bäden von Lucca [Reisebilder III]:

»Der katholische Pfaffe treibt es mehr wie ein Kommis, der in einer großen Handlung angestellt ist; die Kirche, das große Haus, dessen Chef der Papst ist, gibt ihm bestimmte Beschäftigung und dafür ein bestimmtes Salär; er arbeitet lässig, wie jeder, der nicht für eigene Rechnung arbeitet und viele Kollegen hat und im großen Geschäftstreiben leicht unbemerkt bleibt — nur der Kredit des Hauses liegt ihm am Herzen, und noch mehr dessen Erhaltung, da er bei einem etwaiigen Bankerott seinen Lebensunterhalt verliere. Der protestantische Pfaffe hingegen ist überall selbst Prinzipal und treibt die Religionsgeschäfte für eigene Rechnung. Er treibt keinen Grobhandel wie sein katholischer Gewerbegenosse, sondern nur einen Kleinhandel; und da er demselben allein vorstehen muß, darf er nicht lässig sein, er muß seine Glaubensartikel den Leuten anrühmen, die Artikel seiner Konkurrenten herabsetzen, und als echter Kleinhandler steht er in seiner Ausschnittbude, voll von Gewerbsneid gegen alle großen Häuser, absonderlich gegen das große Haus in Rom, das viele tausend Buchhalter und Packknechte besoldet und seine Faktoreien hat in allen vier Weltteilen.«

Angesichts dieser wie vieler anderer Beispiele können wir doch nicht mehr in Abrede stellen, daß ein Vergleich auch an sich witzig sein mag, ohne daß dieser Eindruck auf eine Komplikation mit einer der bekannten Witztechniken zu beziehen wäre. Es entgeht uns aber dann völlig, wodurch der witzige Charakter des Gleichnisses bestimmt ist, da er gewiß nicht am Gleichniss als Ausdrucksform des Gedankens oder an der Operation des Vergleichens haftet. Wir können nicht anders als das Gleichnis unter die Arten der »indirekten Darstellung« aufnehmen, deren sich die Witztechnik bedient.

1 [S. unten, S. 186 und Anm.]
and we must leave unresolved the problem which we have met with much more clearly in the case of analogies than in the methods of joking that we came across earlier. No doubt, moreover, there must be some special reason why the decision whether something is a joke or not offers greater difficulties in analogies than in other forms of expression.

This gap in our understanding gives us no grounds, however, for complaining that this first investigation has been without results. In view of the intimate connection which we must be prepared to attribute to the different characteristics of jokes, it would be imprudent to expect that we could completely explain one side of the problem before we have so much as cast a glance at the others. We shall no doubt have now to attack the problem from another direction.

Can we feel sure that none of the possible techniques of jokes has escaped our investigation? Of course not. But a continued examination of fresh material can convince us that we have got to know the commonest and most important technical methods of the joke-work—at all events as much as is required for forming a judgement on the nature of that psychical process. So far we have not arrived at any such judgement; but on the other hand we are now in possession of an important indication of the direction from which we may expect to receive further light upon the problem. The interesting processes of condensation accompanied by the formation of a substitute, which we have recognized as the core of the technique of verbal jokes, point towards the formation of dreams, in the mechanism of which the same psychical processes have been discovered. This is equally true, however, of the techniques of conceptual jokes—displacement, faulty reasoning, absurdity, indirect representation, representation by the opposite—which re-appear one and all in the technique of the dream-work. Displacement is responsible for the puzzling appearance of dreams, which prevents our recognizing that they are a continuation of our waking life. The use of absurdity and nonsense in dreams has cost them the dignity of being regarded as psychical products and has led the authorities to suppose that a disintegration of the mental activities and a cessation of criticism, morality and logic are necessary conditions of the formation of dreams. Representation by the

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und müssen das Problem unerledigt lassen, das uns beim Gleichnis weit deutlicher als bei den früher behandelten Mitteln des Witzes entgegengetreten ist. Es muß wohl auch seinen besonderen Grund haben, wenn uns die Entscheidung, ob etwas ein Witz ist oder nicht, beim Gleichnis mehr Schwierigkeiten bereitet als bei anderen Ausdrucksformen.

Einen Grund aber, uns zu beklagen, daß diese erste Untersuchung ergebnislos verlaufen sei, bietet uns auch diese Lücke in unserem Verständnis nicht. Bei dem intimen Zusammenhang, den wir den verschiedenen Eigenschaften des Witzes zuzuordnen bereit sein mußten, wäre es unvorsichtig gewesen zu erwarten, wir könnten eine Seite des Problems voll aufklären, ehe wir noch einen Blick auf die anderen geworfen haben. Wir werden das Problem nun wohl an anderer Stelle angreifen müssen.

Sind wir sicher, daß keine der möglichen Techniken des Witzes unserer Untersuchung entgangen ist? Das wohl nicht, aber wir können uns bei fortgesetzter Prüfung an neum Material überzeugen, daß wir die häufigsten und wichtigsten technischen Mittel der Witzarbeit kennengelernt haben, zum mindesten so viel, als zur Schöpfung eines Urteils über die Natur dieses psychischen Vorganges erfordert wird. Ein solches Urteil steht gegenwärtig noch aus; hingegen sind wir in den Besitz einer wichtigen Anzeige gelangt, von welcher Richtung wir eine weitere Aufklärung des Problems zu erwarten haben. Die interessanten Vorgänge der Verdichtung mit Ersatzbildung, die wir als den Kern der Technik des Wortwitzes erkannt haben, wiesen uns auf die Traumbildung hin, in deren Mechanismus die nämlichen psychischen Vorgänge aufgedeckt worden sind. Eben dahin weisen aber auch die Techniken des Gedankenwitzes, die Verschiebung, die Denkfehler, der Widersinn, die indirekte Darstellung, die Darstellung durchs Gegenteil, die samt und sonders in der Technik der Traumarbeit wiederkehren. Die Verschiebung verdankt der Traum das befremdende Ansehen, das uns abhält, in ihm die Fortsetzung unserer Wachgedanken zu erkennen; die Verwendung von Widersinn und Absurdität im Traum hat ihn die Würde eines psychischen Produkts gekostet und hat die Autoren verleitet, Zerfall der geistigen Tätigkeiten, Sistierung von Kritik, Moral und Logik als Bedingungen der Traumbildung anzunehmen. Die Darstellung durchs
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opposite is so common in dreams that even the popular books
of dream-interpretation, which are on a completely wrong tack,
are in the habit of taking it into account. Indirect representa-
tion—the replacement of a dream-thought by an allusion, by
something small, a symbolism akin to analogy—is precisely
what distinguishes the mode of expression of dreams from that
of our waking life. So far-reaching an agreement between the
methods of the joke-work and those of the dream-work can
scarcely be a matter of chance. To demonstrate this agreement
in detail and to examine its basis will be one of our later tasks.
[See Chapter VI below.]

1 Cf. Chapter VI ('The Dream-Work') of my Interpretation of Dreams.

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Gegenteil ist im Traum so gebräuchlich, daß selbst die populären, gänz-
lich irregehen den Traumdeutungsbücher mit ihr zu rechnen pflegen; die
indirekte Darstellung, der Ersatz des Traumgedankens durch eine An-
spielung, ein Kleines, eine dem Gleichnis analoge Symbolik, ist gerade
das, was die Ausdrucksweise des Traumes von der unseres wachen Den-
kens unterscheidet. Eine so weitgehende Übereinstimmung wie die
zwischen den Mitteln der Witzarbeit und denen der Traumarbeit wird
kaum eine zufällige sein können. Diese Übereinstimmung ausführlich
nachzuweisen und ihrer Begründung nadizuspüren, wird eine unserer
späteren Aufgaben werden. [Vgl. Kapitel VI, S. 149 ff.]

1 Vgl. meine Traumdeutung (1900a), Abschnitt [Kapitel] VI, 'Die Traumarbeit'.

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When at the end of my last chapter I wrote down Heine’s comparison of a catholic priest to an employee in a wholesale business and of a protestant one to a retail merchant, I was aware of an inhibition which was trying to induce me not to make use of the analogy. I told myself that among my readers there would probably be a few who felt respect not only for religion but for its governors and assistants. Such readers would merely be indignant about the analogy and would get into an emotional state which would deprive them of all interest in deciding whether the analogy had the appearance of being a joke on its own account or as a result of something extra added to it. With other analogies—for instance, the neighbouring one of the agreeable moonlight which a particular philosophy throws over things—there seemed to be no need for worry about the disturbing effect they might have on a section of my readers. The most pious man would remain in a state of mind in which he could form a judgement on our problem.

It is easy to divine the characteristic of jokes on which the difference in their hearers’ reaction to them depends. In the one case the joke is an end in itself and serves no particular aim, in the other case it does serve such an aim—it becomes tendentious. Only jokes that have a purpose run the risk of meeting with people who do not want to listen to them.

Non-tendentious jokes were described by Vischer as ‘abstract’ jokes. I prefer to call them ‘innocent’ jokes.

Since we have already divided jokes into ‘verbal’ and ‘conceptual’ jokes according to the material handled by their technique, it devolves on us now to examine the relation be-

1 [The German substantive ‘Tendenz’ is throughout this book translated ‘purpose’. (Cf. ‘a play with a purpose.’) The German adjective derived from it, however, (tendenzioš) has become a naturalized English word and is accordingly translated here ‘tendentious.’]
between that classification and the new one that we are introducing. The relation between verbal and conceptual jokes on the one hand and abstract and tendentious jokes on the other is not one of mutual influence; they are two wholly independent classifications of joking products. Some people may perhaps have gained an impression that innocent jokes are predominantly verbal jokes, but that the more complex technique of conceptual jokes is mostly employed for definite purposes. But there are innocent jokes that work with play upon words and similarity of sound, and equally innocent ones that employ all the methods of conceptual jokes. And it is just as easy to show that a tendentious joke need be nothing other than a verbal joke as regards its technique. For instance, jokes that ‘play about’ with proper names often have an insulting and wounding purpose, though, needless to say, they are verbal jokes. But the most innocent of all jokes are once more verbal jokes; for instance, the Schüttelreime, which have recently become so popular and in which the multiple use of the same material with a modification entirely peculiar to it constitutes the technique:

Und weil er Geld in Menge hatte,  
lag stets er in der Hängematte.  
[And because he had money in quantities  
He always lay in a hammock.]

It may be hoped that no one will question that the enjoyment derived from these otherwise unpretentious rhymes is the same as that by which we recognize jokes.

Good examples of abstract or innocent conceptual jokes are to be found in plenty among the Lichtenberg analogies, with some of which we have already become acquainted. I add a few more:

‘They had sent a small octavo volume to Göttingen, and had got back something that was a quarto in body and soul.’

‘In order to erect this building properly, it is above all necessary that good foundations shall be laid; and I know of none firmer than if, upon every course of masonry pro, one promptly lays a course contra.’

1 [Literally, ‘shaking-up rhymes’. It will be seen that these are a rhyming form of what we know as ‘Spoonerisms’.]

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Es wird hoffentlich niemand in Abrede stellen, daß das Wohlgefallen an dieser Art von sonst anspruchslosen Reimen das nämliche ist, an dem wir den Witz erkennen.

Gute Beispiele von abstrakten oder harmlosen Gedankenwitzen findet man reichlich unter den Lichtenbergschen Vergleichen, von denen wir einige bereits kennengelernt haben. Ich füge einige weitere hinzu:

»Sie hatten ein Octavbändchen nach Göttingen geschickt und an Leib und Seele einen Quartanten wieder bekommen.«

»Um dieses Gebäude gehörig aufzuführen, muß vor allen Dingen ein guter Grund gelegt werden, und da weiß ich, keinen festeren, als wenn man über jede Schicht pro gleich eine Schicht kontra aufträgt.«

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»Und weil er Geld in Menge hatte,  
lag stets er in der Hängematte.«
‘One person procreates a thought, a second carries it to be baptized, a third begets children by it, a fourth visits it on its deathbed and a fifth buries it.’ (Analogy with unification.)

‘Not only did he disbelieve in ghosts; he was not even frightened of them.’ Here the joke lies entirely in the nonsensical form of representation, which puts what is commonly thought less of into the comparative and uses the positive for what is regarded as more important. If this joking envelope is removed, we have: ‘it is much easier to get rid of a fear of ghosts intellectually than to escape it when the occasion arises.’ This is no longer in the substance. It may assert something of value. But the substance of a joke is independent of the joke and is the substance of the thought, which is here, by means of a special arrangement, expressed as a joke. No doubt, just as a Katholik der Ruhe zu erwehren. Dies ist gar nicht mehr witzig, wohl aber eine richtige und noch zu wenig gewürdigte psychologische Erkenntnis, die nämliche, der Lessing in den bekannten Worten Ausdruck gibt:

>Es sind nicht alle frei, die ihrer Ketten spotten.«

I may take the opportunity that this affords of getting rid of what is nevertheless a possible misunderstanding. For ‘innocent’ or ‘abstract’ jokes are far from having the same meaning as jokes that are ‘trivial’ or ‘lacking in substance’; they merely connote the opposite of the ‘tendentious’ jokes that will be discussed presently. As our last example shows, an innocent— that is, a non-tendentious—joke may also be of great substance, it may assert something of value. But the substance of a joke is independent of the joke and is the substance of the thought, which is here, by means of a special arrangement, expressed as a joke. No doubt, just as watch-makers usually provide a particularly good movement with a similarly valuable case, so it may happen with jokes that the best achievements in the way of jokes are used as an envelope for thoughts of the greatest substance.

If now we draw a sharp distinction in the case of conceptual jokes between the substance of the thought and the joking envelope, we shall reach a discovery which may throw light on much of our uncertainty in judging jokes. For it turns out—and this is a surprising thing—that our enjoyment of a joke is based on a combined impression of its substance and of its effectiveness as a joke and that we let ourselves be deceived by the one factor over the amount of the other. Only after the joke has been reduced do we become aware of this false judgement.

Moreover, the same thing is true of verbal jokes. When we,

1 [Nathan der Weise, IV, 4.]

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> Einer zeugt den Gedanken, der andere hebt ihn aus der Taufe, der dritte zeugt Kinder mit ihm, der vierte besucht ihn auf dem Sterbebette und der fünfte begräbt ihn.« (Gleidnis mit Unifizierung.)

> Er glaubte nicht allein keine Gespenster, sondern er färdigte sich nicht einmal davor.« Der Witz liegt hier ausschließlich an der widersinnigen Darstellung, die das gewöhnlich für geringer Geschätzte in den Komparativ setzt, das für bedeutsamer Gehaltene zum Positiv nimmt. Mit Verzicht auf diese witzige Einkleidung hiefie es: es ist viel leichter, sich mit dem Verstand über die Gespensterfurcht hinwegzusetzen, als sich ihrer bei vorkommender Gelegenheit zu erwehren. Dies ist gar nicht mehr witzig, wohl aber eine richtige und noch zu wenig gewürdigte psychologische Erkenntnis, die nämliche, der Lessing in den bekannten Worten Ausdruck gibt:

> Es sind nicht alle frei, die ihrer Ketten spotten.«

Ich kann die Gelegenheit, die sich hier bietet, ergreifen, um ein immerhin mögliches Mißverständnis wegzuräumen. > Harmloser oder > abstrakter Witz soll nämlich keineswegs gleichbedeutend sein mit > ge haltlosem Witz, sondern eben nur den Gegensatz zu den später zu besprechenden > tendenziösen Witzen bezeichnen. Wie obiges Beispiel zeigt, kann ein harmloser, d. i. tendenziöser Witz auch sehr gehaltvoll sein, etwas Wertvolles aussagen. Der Gehalt eines Witzes ist aber vom Witz unabhängig und ist der Gehalt des Gedankens, der hier durch eine besondere Veranstaltung witzig ausgedrückt wird. Freilich so wie die Uhrmacher ein besonders gutes Werk auch mit einem kostbaren Gehäuse auszustatten pflegen, mag es auch beim Witz vorkommen, daß die besten Witzleistungen gerade zur Einkleidung der gehaltvollsten Gedanken benützt werden.

Wenn wir nun scharf auf die Unterscheidung von Gedankengehalt und witziger Einkleidung beim Gedankenwitz achten, so gelangen wir zu einer Einsicht, welche uns viel Unsicherheit in unserem Urteil über Witze aufzuklären vermag. Es stellt sich nämlich, was doch über raschend ist, heraus, daß wir unser Wohlgefallen an einem Witz nach dem summierten Eindruck von Gehalt und Witzleistung abgeben und uns durch den einen Faktor über das Ausmaß des anderen geradezu täuschen lassen. Erst die Reduktion des Witzes klärt uns die Urteils täsuschung auf.

Das nämliche trifft übrigens auch beim Wortwitz zu. Wenn wir hören:

1 [Nathan der Weise, IV, Akt, 4. Szene.]

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are told that 'experience consists in experiencing what one does not wish to experience' [p. 66], we are bewildered and think we have learnt a new truth. It is a little time before we recognize under this disguise the platitude of 'Injury makes one wise'. [Adversity is the best teacher.] (Fischer [1889, 59].)

The apt way in which the joke succeeds in defining 'experience' almost purely by the use of the word 'to experience' deceives us into overvaluing the substance of the sentence. Just the same thing is true of Lichtenberg's 'January' joke of unification (p. 66), which has nothing more to tell us than something we have already long known—that New Year's wishes come true as seldom as other wishes. So too in many similar cases.

And we find just the contrary with other jokes, in which the aptness and truth of the thought tricks us into calling the whole sentence a brilliant joke—whereas only the thought is brilliant and the joke's achievement is often feeble. Precisely in Lichtenberg's jokes the kernel of thought is frequently far more valuable than the joking envelope to which we unjustifiably extend our appreciation. Thus, for instance, the remark about the 'torch of truth' (p. 82) is an analogy that scarcely amounts to a joke, but it is so apt that we are inclined to insist that the sentence is a particularly good joke.

Lichtenberg's jokes are outstanding above all on account of their intellectual content and the certainty with which they hit their mark. Goethe was quite right in saying of that author that in fact his joking and jesting ideas concealed problems; it would have been even more correct to say that they touch on the solution of problems. When, for instance, he remarked as a joke: 'He had read Homer so much that he always read "Agamemnon" instead of "angenommen" [supposed]'—the technique used is 'stupidity' plus 'similarity of sound'—Lichtenberg had discovered nothing less than the secret of misreading.¹

Similarly with a joke the technique of which struck us as most unsatisfactory (p. 59): 'He wondered how it is that cats have two holes cut in their skin precisely at the place where their eyes are'. The stupidity that is paraded here is only apparent. In fact, behind this simple remark lies the great problem of two holes cut in their skin precisely at the place where their eyes are.¹

¹ See my *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1910b) [Chapter X. See also Chapter VI (A), Example 8 (added in 1910). The joke is also discussed at the end of the second of Freud's *Introductory Lectures* (1916-17).]
teleology in the structure of animals. It was by no means so completely a matter of course that the palpebral fissure should open at the point at which the cornea is exposed, until the theory of evolution had thrown light on the coincidence.

We shall bear in mind the fact that we receive from joking remarks a total impression in which we are unable to separate the share taken by the thought content from the share taken by the joke-work. It may be that later on we shall find a still more significant parallel to this. [Cf. p. 135.]

From the point of view of throwing theoretical light on the nature of jokes, innocent jokes are bound to be of more value to us than tendentious ones, and trivial jokes of more value than profound ones. Innocent and trivial jokes are likely to put the problem of jokes before us in its purest form, since with them we are unable to separate our judgement misled by their good sense. It may be that later on we shall find a still more significant parallel to this. [Cf. p. 135.]

I will select the most innocent possible example of a verbal joke:

'A girl to whom a visitor was announced while she was at her toilet complained: "Oh, what a shame that one mayn't let oneself be seen just when one's at one's most anziehend!"' ¹ (Klein-paul, 1890.)

Since, however, doubts arise in me after all as to whether I have a right to describe this joke as being non-tendentious, I will replace it by another one which is extremely simple and should really not be open to that objection.

At the end of a meal in a house to which I had been invited as a guest, a pudding of the kind known as a 'Roulard' ² was served. It requires some skill on the part of the cook to make it; so one of the guests asked: 'Made in the house?' To which the host replied: 'Yes, indeed. A home-roulard.' ³

This time we will not examine the technique of the joke; we propose to turn our attention to another factor, which is actually

¹ ['Anziehend' means both 'dressing' and 'attractive'.]
² [This should perhaps be spelt 'Roulade'.]
³ [In the original the words 'Home Rule' are added in English.]
the most important one. When those of us present heard this improvised joke it gave us pleasure—which I can clearly recall—and made us laugh. In this instance, as in countless others, the hearers' feeling of pleasure cannot have arisen from the purpose of the joke or from its intellectual content; there is nothing left open to us but to bring that feeling of pleasure into connection with the technique of the joke. The technical methods of joking which we have earlier described—condensation, displacement, indirect representation and so on—thus possess the power of evoking a feeling of pleasure in the hearer, though we cannot in the least see how they may have acquired this power. In this simple way we arrive at the second thesis in our clarification of jokes; the first (p. 17) asserted that the characteristic of jokes lay in their form of expression. Let us further reflect that this second thesis has in fact taught us nothing new. It merely isolates what was already included in an observation we had made earlier. It will be recalled that when we had succeeded in reducing a joke (that is, in replacing its form of expression by another one, while carefully preserving its sense) it had lost not only its character as a joke but also its power to make us laugh—our enjoyment of the joke.

We cannot proceed further at this point without a discussion with our philosophical authorities.

The philosophers, who count jokes a part of the comic and who 'treat of the comic itself under the heading of aesthetics, define an aesthetic idea by the condition that in it we are not trying to get anything from things or do anything with them, that we are not needing things in order to satisfy one of our major vital needs, but that we are content with contemplating them and with the enjoyment of the idea. 'This enjoyment, this kind of ideation, is the purely aesthetic one, which lies only in itself, which has its aim only in itself and which fulfils none of the other aims of life.' (Fischer, 1889, 20.) [Cf. p. 10 f., above.]

We shall scarcely be contradicting this statement of Fischer's—we shall perhaps be doing no more than translating his thoughts into our mode of expression—if we insist that the joking activity should not, after all, be described as pointless or aimless, since it has the unmistakable aim of evoking pleasure in its hearers. I doubt if we are in a position to undertake anything without having an intention in view. If we do not require our mental apparatus...
at the moment for supplying one of our indispensable satisfactions, we allow it itself to work in the direction of pleasure and we seek to derive pleasure from its own activity. I suspect that this is in general the condition that governs all aesthetic ideation, but I understand too little of aesthetics to try to enlarge on this statement. As regards joking, however, I can assert, on the basis of the two discoveries we have already made, that it is an activity which aims at deriving pleasure from mental processes, whether intellectual or otherwise. No doubt there are other activities which have the same aim. They are perhaps differentiated according to the fields of mental activity from which they seek to derive pleasure or perhaps according to the methods of which they make use. We cannot for the moment decide about this; but we hold firmly to the view that the joke-technique and the tendency towards economy by which it is partly governed (p. 42 ff.) have been brought into connection with the production of pleasure.

But before we set about solving the riddle of how the technical methods of the joke-work are able to excite pleasure in the hearer, we have to recall the fact that, with a view to simplification and greater perspicuity, we have left tendentious jokes entirely on one side. We must, after all, try to throw light on the question of what the purposes of jokes are, and how they serve those purposes.

There is, first and foremost, one observation which warns us not to leave tendentious jokes on one side in our investigation of the origin of the pleasure we take in jokes. The pleasurable effect of innocent jokes is as a rule a moderate one; a clear sense of satisfaction, a slight smile, is as rule all it can achieve in its hearers. And it may be that a part even of this effect is to be attributed to the joke's intellectual content, as we have seen from suitable examples (p. 93). A non-tendentious joke scarcely ever achieves the sudden burst of laughter which makes tendentious ones so irresistible. Since the technique of both can be the same, a suspicion may be aroused in us that tendentious jokes, by virtue of their purpose, must have sources of pleasure at their disposal to which innocent jokes have no access.

The purposes of jokes can easily be reviewed. Where a joke is not an aim in itself—that is, where it is not an innocent one—

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2 [So in the German.]

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There are only two purposes that it may serve, and these two can themselves be subsumed under a single heading. It is either a hostile joke (serving the purpose of aggressiveness, satire, or defence) or an obscene joke (serving the purpose of exposure). It must be repeated in advance that the technical species of the joke—whether it is a verbal or a conceptual joke—bears no relation to these two purposes.

It is a much lengthier business to show the way in which jokes serve these two purposes. In this investigation I should prefer to deal first not with the hostile jokes but with the joke—whether it is a verbal or a conceptual joke—bears no relation to these two purposes.

We will not allow ourselves to be disconcerted by this, for we shall immediately come upon a marginal case of joking which promises to bring us enlightenment on more than one obscurity.

We know what is meant by 'smut': the intentional bringing into prominence of sexual facts and relations by speech. This definition, however, is no more valid than other definitions. In spite of this definition, a lecture on the anatomy of the sexual organs or the physiology of procreation need not have a single point of contact with smut. It is a further relevant fact that smut is directed to a particular person, by whom one is sexually excited and who, on hearing it, is expected to become aware of the speaker's excitement and as a result to become sexually excited in turn. Instead of this excitement the other person may be led to feel shame or embarrassment, which is only a reaction against the excitement and, in a roundabout way, is an admission of it. Smut is thus originally directed towards women and may be equated with attempts at seduction. If a man in a company of men enjoys telling or listening to smut, the original situation, which owing to social inhibitions cannot be realized, is at the same time imagined. A person who laughs at smut that he hears is laughing as though he were the spectator of an act of sexual aggression.

The sexual material which forms the content of smut includes more than what is peculiar to each sex; it also includes what is common to both sexes and to which the feeling of shame extends—that is to say, what is excremental in the most comprehensive sense. This is, however, the sense covered by sexuality in

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Man weiß, was unter der 'Zote' verstanden wird: Die beabsichtigte Hervorhebung sexueller Tatsachen und Verhältnisse durch die Rede. Indes diese Definition ist nicht stichhaltiger als andere Definitionen. Ein Vortrag über die Anatomie der Sexualorgane oder über die Physiologie der Zeugung braucht trotz dieser Definition nicht einen einzigen Begründungspunkt mit der Zote gemein zu haben. Es gehört noch dazu, daß die Zote an eine bestimmte Person gerichtet werde, von der man sexuell erregt wird und die durch das Anhören der Zote von der Erregung des Redenden Kenntnis bekommen und dadurch selbst sexuell erregt werden soll. Anstatt dieser Erregung mag sie auch in Scham oder Verlegenheit gebracht werden, was nur eine Reaktion gegen ihre Erregung und auf diesem Umwege ein Eingeständnis derselben bedeutet. Die Zote ist also ursprünglich an das Weib gerichtet und einem Verführungsversuch gleichzusetzen. Wenn sich dann ein Mann in Männergesellschaft mit dem Erzählen oder Anhören von Zoten vergnügt, so ist die ursprüngliche Situation, die infolge sozialer Hemmnisse nicht verwirklicht werden kann, dabei mit vorgestellt. Wer über die gehörte Zote lacht, lacht wie ein Zuschauer bei einer sexuellen Aggression.

Das Sexuelle, welches den Inhalt der Zote bildet, umfaßt mehr als das bei beiden Geschlechtern Besondere, nämlich noch überdies das beiden Geschlechtern Gemeinsame, auf das die Scham sich erstreckt, also das Exkrementelle in seinem ganzen Umfang. Dies ist aber der Umfang,
childhood, an age at which there is, as it were, a cloaca within which what is sexual and what is excremental are barely or not at all distinguished. Throughout the whole range of the psychology of the neuroses, what is sexual includes what is excremental, and is understood in the old, infantile, sense.

Smut is like an exposure of the sexually different person to whom it is directed. By the utterance of the obscene words it compels the person who is assailed to imagine the part of the body or the procedure in question and shows her that the assailant is himself imagining it. It cannot be doubted that the desire to see what is sexual exposed is the original motive of smut.

It can only help to clarify things if at this point we go back to fundamental facts. A desire to see the organs peculiar to each sex exposed is one of the original components of our libido. It may itself be a substitute for something earlier and go back to a hypothetical primary desire to touch the sexual parts. As so often, looking has replaced touching. The libido for looking and touching is present in everyone in two forms, active and passive, male and female; and, according to the preponderance of the sexual character, one form or the other predominates. It is easy to observe the inclination to self-exposure in young children. In cases in which the germ of this inclination escapes its usual fate of being buried and suppressed, it develops in men into the familiar perversion known as exhibitionism. In women the inclination to passive exhibitionism is almost invariably buried under the imposing reactive function of sexual modesty, but not without a loophole being left for it in relation to clothes. I need only hint at the elasticity and variability in the amount of exhibitionism that women are permitted to retain in accordance with differing convention and circumstances.

In men a high degree of this trend persists as a portion of their libido, and it serves to introduce the sexual act. When this urge makes itself felt at the first approach to a woman, it must make use of words, for two reasons; firstly, to announce itself

1 See my Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905d), which is appearing at the same time as the present work.

2 Cf. Moll's instinct of 'conrectation' (Moll, 1898). [An explanatory note on this will be found in Freud's Three Essays (1905d), Standard Ed., 7, 169.]

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Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten

den das Sexuelle im Kindesalter hat, wo für die Vorstellung gleichsam eine Kloake existiert, innerhalb deren Sexuelles und Exkrementelles schlecht oder gar nicht gesondert werden. Überall im Gedankenbereich der Neurosenpsychologie schließt das Sexuelle noch das Exkrementelle ein, wird es im alten, infantilen Sinne verstanden.

Die Zote ist wie eine Entblößung der sexuell differenten Person, an die sie gerichtet ist. Durch das Aussprechen der obszönen Worte zwingt sie die angegriffene Person zur Vorstellung des betreffenden Körperteiles oder der Verrichtung und zeigt ihr, daß der Angreifer selbst sich solches vorstellt. Es ist nicht zu bezweifeln, daß die Lust, das Sexuelle entblößt zu sehen, das ursprüngliche Motiv der Zote ist.


Beim Manne bleibt ein hoher Grad dieser Strebung als Teilstück der Libido bestehen und dient zur Einleitung des Geschlechtsaktes. Wenn diese Strebung sich bei der ersten Annäherung an das Weib geltend macht, muß sie sich aus zwei Motiven der Rede bedienen. Erstens um

1 S. meine gleichzeitig erscheinenden Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie (1905d).

2 Moll's Kontrektationstrie (Untersuchungen über die Libido sexualis, 1898). [Moll beschrieb den von ihm eingeführten 'Kontrektationstrieb' als Antrieb, mit anderen Menschen in Kontakt zu kommen.]
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The development of smut, although, to be sure, it seems merely
ism. A wooing speech like this is not yet smut, but it passes over
into it. If the woman's readiness emerges quickly the obscene
self in the shape of smut.

If the woman's readiness emerges quickly the obscene
self in the shape of smut. In that case the sexually exciting speech becomes an aim in
itself in the shape of smut. Since the sexual aggressiveness is held
up in its advance towards the act, it pauses at the evocation of
the excitement and derives pleasure from the signs of it in the
woman. In so doing, the aggressiveness is no doubt altering its
character as well, just as any libidinal impulse
ponents of the sexual instinct.

The woman's inflexibility is therefore the first condition for
the development of smut; to begin with, however, the presence
of a woman brings the smut to an end. This
suttiness starts up.

The men save up this kind of entertainment, which originally
was reserved for the third person, the listener, and owing to this transformation
it is already near to assuming the character of a joke.

From this point onwards our attention will be drawn to two
factors: the part played by the third person, the listener, and
the conditions governing the subject-matter of the smut itself.

Unsere Aufmerksamkeit kann von dieser Stelle an von zwei Momenten
in Anspruch genommen werden, von der Rolle des Dritten, des Zuhö-

ers, und von den inhaltlichen Bedingungen der Zote selbst.
Generally speaking, a tendentious joke calls for three people: in addition to the one who makes the joke, there must be a second who is taken as the object of the hostile or sexual aggressiveness, and a third in whom the joke's aim of producing pleasure is fulfilled. We shall have later to examine the deeper reasons for this state of things; for the moment let us keep to the fact to which this testifies—namely that it is not the person who makes the joke who laughs at it and who therefore enjoys its pleasurable effect, but the inactive listener. In the case of smut the three people are in the same relation. The course of events may be thus described. When the first person finds his libidinal impulse inhibited by the woman, he develops a hostile trend against that second person and calls on the originally interfering third person as his ally. Through the first person's smutty speech the woman is exposed before the third, who, as listener, has now been bribed by the effortless satisfaction of his own libido.

It is remarkable how universally popular a smutty interchange of this kind is among the common people and how it unfailingly produces a cheerful mood. But it also deserves to be noticed that in this complicated procedure, which involves so many of the characteristics of tendentious jokes, none of the formal requirements which characterize jokes are made of the smut itself. The uttering of an undisguised indecency gives the first person enjoyment and makes the third person laugh.

Only when we rise to a society of a more refined education do the formal conditions for jokes play a part. The smut becomes a joke and is only tolerated when it has the character of a joke. The technical method which it usually employs is the allusion—that is, replacement by something small, something remotely connected, which the hearer reconstructs in his imagination into a complete and straightforward obscenity. The greater the discrepancy between what is given directly in the form of smut and what it necessarily calls up in the hearer, the more refined becomes the joke and the higher, too, it may venture to climb into good society. As can easily be shown from examples, smut which has the characteristics of a joke has at its disposal, apart from allusion, whether coarse or refined, all the other methods of verbal and conceptual jokes.

And here at last we can understand what it is that jokes

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Der tendenziöse Witz braucht im allgemeinen drei Personen, außer der, die den Witz macht, eine zweite, die zum Objekt der feindseligen oder sexuellen Aggression genommen wird, und eine dritte, an der sich die Absicht des Witzes, Lust zu erzeugen, erfüllt. Die tiefere Begründung für diese Verhältnisse werden wir später aufzusuchen haben, vorläufig halten wir uns an die Tatsache, die sich ja darin bekundet, daß nicht, wer den Witz macht, ihn auch belacht, also dessen Lustwirkung geübt, sondern der untätige Zuhörer. In der nämlichen Relation befinden sich die drei Personen bei der Zote. Man kann den Hergang so beschreiben: Der libidinöse Impuls des Ersten entfaltet, erster die Befriedigung durch das Weib gemehmt findet, eine gegen diese zweite Person feindselige Tendenz und ruft die ursprünglich störende dritte Person zum Bundesgenossen auf. Durch die zotige Rede des Ersten wird das Weib vor diesem Dritten entblöst, der nun als Zuhörer—durch die mühelose Befriedigung seiner eigenen Libido—bestochen wird.

Es ist merkwürdig, daß solcher Zotenverkehr beim gemeinen Volke so überaus beliebt und eine nie fehlende Betätigung heiterer Stimmung ist. Beachtenswerter ist aber auch, daß bei diesem komplizierten Vorgang, der so viele Charaktere des tendenziösen Witzes an sich trägt, an die Zote selbst keiner der formellen Ansprüche, welche den Witz kennzeichnen, gestellt wird. Die unverhüllte Nudität auszusprechen bereitet dem Ersten Vergnügen und macht den Dritten lachen.

Erst wenn wir zu feiner gebildeter Gesellschaft aufsteigen, tritt die formelle Witzbedingung hinzu. Die Zote wird witzig und wird nur geduldet, wenn sie witzig ist. Das technische Mittel, dessen sie sich zu- meist bedient, ist die Anspielung, d. h. die Ersetzung durch ein Kleines, ein im entfernten Zusammenhang Befindliches, welches der Hörer in seinem Vorstellen zur vollen und direkten Obszönität rekonstruiert. Je größer das Mißerhältnis zwischen dem in der Zote direkt Gegebenen und dem von ihr im Hörer mit Notwendigkeit Angeregten ist, desto feiner wird der Witz, desto höher darf er sich dann auch in die gute Gesellschaft hinaufwagen. Außer der groben und der feinen Anspielung stehen der witzigen Zote, wie leicht an Beispielen gezeigt werden kann, alle anderen Mittel des Wort- und Gedankenwitzes zur Verfügung.

Hier wird endlich greifbar, was der Witz im Dienste seiner Tendenz
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achieve in the service of their purpose. They make possible the satisfaction of an instinct (whether lustful or hostile) in the face of an obstacle that stands in its way. They circumvent this obstacle and in that way draw pleasure from a source which the obstacle had made inaccessible. The obstacle standing in the way is in reality nothing other than women's incapacity to tolerate undisguised sexuality, an incapacity correspondingly increased with a rise in the educational and social level. The woman who is thought of as having been present in the initial situation is afterwards retained as though she were still present, or in her absence her influence still has an intimidating effect on the men. We can observe how men of a higher class are at once induced, when they are in the company of girls of an inferior class, to reduce their smutty jokes to the level of simple smut.

The power which makes it difficult or impossible for women, and to a lesser degree for men as well, to enjoy undisguised obscenity is termed by us 'repression'; and we recognize in it the same psychical process which, in cases of serious illness, keeps whole complexes of impulses, together with their derivatives, away from consciousness, and which has turned out to be the main factor in the causation of what are known as psychoneuroses. It is our belief that civilization and higher education have a large influence in the development of repression, and we suppose that, under such conditions, the psychical organization undergoes an alteration (that can also emerge as an inherited disposition) as a result of which what was formerly felt as agreeable now seems unacceptable and is rejected with all possible psychical force. The repressive activity of civilization brings it about that primary possibilities of enjoyment, which have now, however, been repudiated by the censorship in us, are lost to us. But to the human psyche all renunciation is exceedingly difficult, and so we find that tendentious jokes provide a means of undoing the renunciation and retrieving what was lost. When we laugh at a refined obscene joke, we are laughing at the same thing that makes a peasant laugh at a coarse piece of smut. In both cases the pleasures springs from the same source. We, however, could never bring ourselves to laugh at the coarse smut; we should feel ashamed or it would seem to us disgusting. We can only laugh when a joke has come to our help.


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Die Macht, welche dem Weibe und in geringerem Maße auch dem Manne den Genuss der unverhüllten Obszönität erschwert oder unmöglich macht, heißen wir die »Verdrängung« und erkennen in ihr denselben psychischen Vorgang, der in ernsten Krankheitsfällen ganze Komplexe von Regungen mitsamt deren Abkömmlingen vom Bewußtsein fernhält und sich als ein Hauptfaktor der Verursachung bei den sogenannten Psychoneurosen herausgestellt hat. Wir gestehen der Kultur und höheren Erziehung einen großen Einfluß auf die Ausbildung der Verdrängung zu und nehmen an, daß unter diesen Bedingungen eine Veränderung der psychischen Organisation zustande kommt, die auch als ererbte Anlage mitgebracht werden kann, derzufolge sonst angenehm Empfundenes nun als unannehmbar erscheint und mit allen psychischen Kräften abgelehnt wird. Durch die Verdrängungsarbeit der Kultur gehen primäre, jetzt aber von der Zensur in uns verworfene Genüßmöglichkeiten verloren. Der Psyche des Menschen wird aber alles Verzichten so sehr schwer, und so finden wir, daß der tendenziöse Witz ein Mittel abgibt, den Verzicht rückgängig zu machen, das Verlorene wiederzugewinnen. Wenn wir über einen feinen obszönen Witz lachen, so lachen wir über das nämliche, was der Bauer bei einer groben Zote lachen macht; die Lust stammt in beiden Fällen aus der nämlichen Quelle; über die grobe Zote zu lachen, brachten wir aber nicht zustande, wir würden uns schämen, oder sie erschienen uns ekelhaft; wir können erst lachen, wenn uns der Witz seine Hilfe geliehen hat.

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Thus what we suspected to begin with [p. 96] seems to be confirmed: namely that tendentious jokes have sources of pleasure at their disposal besides those open to innocent jokes, in which all the pleasure is in some way linked to their technique. And we may also once more repeat that with tendentious jokes we are not in a position to distinguish by our feeling what part of the pleasure arises from the sources of their technique and what part from those of their purpose. Thus, strictly speaking, we do not know what we are laughing at.1 With all obscene jokes we are subject to glaring errors of judgement about the ‘goodness’ of jokes so far as this depends on formal determinants; the technique of such jokes is often quite wretched, but they have immense success in provoking laughter.

We will now examine the question of whether jokes play the same part in the service of a hostile purpose.

Here, from the outset, we come upon the same situation. Since our individual childhood, and, similarly, since the childhood of human civilization, hostile impulses against our fellow men have been subject to the same restrictions, the same progressive repression, as our sexual urges. We have not yet got so far as to be able to love our enemies or to offer our left cheek after being struck on the right. Furthermore, all moral rules for the restriction of active hatred give the clearest evidence to this day that they were originally framed for a small society of fellow clansmen. In so far as we are all able to feel that we are members of one people, we allow ourselves to disregard most of these restrictions in relation to a foreign people. Nevertheless, within our own circle we have made some advances in the control of hostile impulses. As Lichtenberg puts it in drastic terms: ‘Where we now say “Excuse me!” we used to give a box on the ears.’ Brutal hostility, forbidden by law, has been replaced by verbal invective; and a better knowledge of the interlinking of human impulses is more and more robbing us —by its consistent ‘tout comprendre c’est tout pardonner’—of the capacity for feeling angry with a fellow man who gets in our way. Though as children we are still endowed with a power-

1 [In all the editions before 1925 this sentence was italicized.]
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ful inherited disposition to hostility, we are later taught by a higher personal civilization that it is an unworthy thing to use abusive language; and even where fighting has in itself remained permissible, the number of things which may not be employed as methods of fighting has extraordinarily increased. Since we have been obliged to renounce the expression of hostility by deeds—held back by the passionless third person, in whose interest it is that personal security shall be preserved—we have, just as in the case of sexual aggressiveness, developed a new technique of invective, which aims at enlisting this third person against our enemy. By making our enemy small, inferior, despicable or comic, we achieve in a roundabout way the enjoyment of overcoming him—to which the third person, who has made no efforts, bears witness by his laughter.

We are now prepared to realize the part played by jokes in hostile aggressiveness. A joke will allow us to exploit something ridiculous in our enemy which we could not, on account of obstacles in the way, bring forward openly or consciously; once again, then, the joke will evade restrictions and open sources of pleasure that have become inaccessible. It will further bribe the hearer with its yield of pleasure into taking sides with us without any very close investigation, just as on other occasions we ourselves have often been bribed by an innocent joke into overestimating the substance of a statement expressed jokingly. This is brought out with perfect aptitude in the common phrase 'die Lacher auf seine Seite ziehen' [to bring the laughers over to our side].

Let us, for instance, consider Herr N.'s jokes, which were scattered over the last chapter. They are all of them pieces of invective. It is as though Herr N. wanted to exclaim aloud: 'The Minister for Agriculture is himself an ox! [P. 27.]

"Don't talk to me about * * *! He's bursting with vanity! [P. 25.]

'I've never in my life read anything more boring than this historian's essays on Napoleon in Austria! [P. 22.]

But the high position he occupies makes it impossible for him to give out his judgements in that form. They therefore bring in a joke to their help, and this guarantees them a reception with the hearer which they would never have found in a non-joking form, in spite of the truth they might contain. One of these jokes is particularly instructive—the one about the 'red Fadian' [p. 22],

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...
perhaps the most impressive of all of them. What is there about it that makes us laugh and diverts our interest so completely from the question of whether or not an injustice has been done to the poor author? The joking form, of course—that is to say, the joke; but what is there about it that we are laughing at? No doubt at the person himself, who is introduced to us as the 'red Fadian', and in particular at his having red hair. Educated people have broken themselves of the habit of laughing at physical defects, and moreover they do not include having red hair among the laughable physical failings. But there is no doubt that it is so regarded by schoolboys and the common people—and this is still true even at the level of education of certain municipal and parliamentary representatives. And now Herr N. has made it possible in the most ingenious manner for us, grown-up and sensitive people, to laugh like the schoolboys at the historian X's red hair. This was certainly not Herr N.'s intention; but it is most doubtful whether a person who gives free play to a joke must necessarily know its precise intention.

If in these cases the obstacle to the aggressiveness which the joke helped to evade was an internal one—an aesthetic objection to the invective—elsewhere it can be of a purely external sort. This was so in the case in which Serenissimus asked a stranger by whose similarity to his own person he had been struck: 'Was your mother in the Palace at one time?' and the repartee was: 'No, but my father was.' [P. 68 f.] The person to whom the question was put would no doubt have liked to knock down the impertinent individual who dared by such an allusion to cast a slur on his beloved mother's memory. But the impertinent individual was Serenissimus, whom one may not knock down or even insult unless one is prepared to purchase that revenge at the price of one's whole existence. The insult must therefore, it would seem, be swallowed in silence. But fortunately a joke shows the way in which the insult may be safely avenged—by making use of the technical method of unification in order to take up the allusion and turn it back against the aggressor. Here the impression of a joke is so much determined by its purpose that, in face of the joking character of the rejoinder, we are inclined to forget that the question asked by the aggressor had itself the character of a joke with the technique of allusion.

The prevention of invective or of insulting rejoinders by

War in diesen Fällen das Hindernis für die Aggression, welches der Witz umgehen half, ein innerliches — die ästhetische Auflehnung gegen die Schmach —, so kann es andere Male rein äußerlicher Natur sein. So in dem Falle, wenn Serenissimus den Fremden, dessen Ähnlichkeit mit seiner eigenen Person ihn auffällt, fragt: War seine Mutter einmal in der Residenz? und die schlagfertige Antwort darauf lautet: Nein, aber mein Vater. [S. 67.] Der Gefragte möchte gewiß den Frechen niederschlagen, der es wagt, durch solche Anspielung dem Andenken der geliebten Mutter Schmach anzutun; aber dieser Freche ist Serenissimus, den man nicht niederschlagen, nicht einmal beleidigen darf, wenn man diese Rache nicht mit seiner ganzen Existenz erkauft will. Es hieße also die Beleidigung schweigend herunterzwingen; aber zum Glück zeigt der Witz den Weg, sie ungefährdet zu vergelten, indem man mit dem technischen Mittel der Unifizierung die Anspielung aufnimmt und gegen den Angreifer wendet. Der Eindruck des Witzigen wird hier so sehr von der Tendenz bestimmt, daß wir angesichts der witzigen Entgegnung zu vergessen neigen, daß die Frage des Angreifers selbst durch Anspielung witzig ist.

Die Verhinderung der Schmach oder beleidigenden Entgegnung durch
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external circumstances is such a common case that tendentious jokes are especially favoured in order to make aggressiveness or criticism possible against persons in exalted positions who claim to exercise authority. The joke then represents a rebellion against that authority, a liberation from its pressure. The charm of caricatures lies in this same factor: we laugh at them even if they are unsuccessful simply because we count rebellion against authority as a merit.

If we bear in mind the fact that tendentious jokes are so highly suitable for attacks on the great, the dignified and the mighty, who are protected by internal inhibitions and external circumstances from direct disparagement, we shall be obliged to take a special view of certain groups of jokes which seem to be concerned with inferior and powerless people. I am thinking of the anecdotes about marriage-brokers, some of which we became acquainted with in the course of our investigation of the various techniques of conceptual jokes. In a few of them, for instance in the examples 'She's deaf as well' [p. 64] and 'Who would lend these people anything?' [loc. cit.], the broker is laughed at for his improvidence and thoughtlessness and he becomes comic because the truth escapes him as it were automatically. But does what we have learnt of the nature of tendentious jokes on the one hand and on the other hand our great enjoyment of these stories fit in with the paltriness of the people whom these jokes seem to laugh at? Are they worthy opponents of the jokes? Is it not rather the case that the jokes only put forward the marriage-brokers in order to strike at something more important? Is it not a case of saying one thing and meaning another? It is really not possible to reject this view.

This interpretation of the broker anecdotes may be carried further. It is true that there is no necessity for my entering into them, that I can content myself with regarding these anecdotes as 'Schwänze [funny stories]' and deny that they have the character of a joke. Thus jokes can also have a subjective determinant of this kind. Our attention has now been drawn to that possibility and we shall have to examine it later [Chapter V]. It declares that only what I allow to be a joke is a joke. What is a joke to me may be merely a comic story to other people. But if a joke admits of this doubt, the reason can only äußere Umstände ist ein so häufiger Fall, daß der tendenziöse Witz mit ganz besonderer Vorliebe zur Ermöglichung der Aggression oder der Kritik gegen Höhergestellte, die Autorität in Anspruch nehmen, verwendet wird. Der Witz stellt dann eine Auflehnung gegen solche Autorität, eine Befreiung von dem Druck derselben dar. In diesem Moment liegt ja auch der Reiz der Karikatur, über welche wir uns selbst dann lachen, wenn sie schlecht geraten ist, bloß weil wir ihr die Auflehnung gegen die Autorität als Verdienst anrechnen.

Wenn wir im Auge behalten, daß der tendenziöse Witz sich so sehr zum Angriff auf Großes, Würdiges und Mächtiges eignet, das durch innere Hemmungen oder äußere Umstände gegen direkte Herabsetzung geschützt ist, so werden wir zu einer besonderen Auffassung gewisser Gruppen von Witzen gedrängt, die sich mit minderwertigen und ohnmächtigen Personen abzugeben scheinen. Ich meine die Heiratsvermittlergeschichten, von denen wir einzelne bei der Untersuchung der mannigfaltigen Techniken des Gedankenwitzes kennengelernt haben. In einigen derselben, z. B. in den Beispielen »Taub ist sie auch« [S. 63] und »Wer borgt denn den Leuten was!« [loc. cit.] ist der Vermittler als ein unvorsichtiger und gedankenloser Mensch verlacht worden, der dadurch komisch wird, daß ihm die Wahrheit gleichsam automatisch entwischt. Aber reiht sich einerseits das, was wir von der Natur des tendenziösen Witzes erfahren haben, und andererseits die Größe unseres Wohlgeließens an diesen Geschichten mit der Armseligkeit der Personen zusammen, über die der Witz zu lachen scheint? Sind das des Witzes würdige Gegner? Geht es nicht vielmehr so zu, daß der Witz die Vermittler nur vorschickt, um etwas Bedeutungseres zu treffen, daß er, wie das Sprichwort sagt, auf den Sack schlägt, während er den Esel meint? Diese Auffassung ist wirklich nicht abzuweisen.

Die obige Deutung der Vermittlergeschichten läßt eine Fortsetzung zu. Es ist wahr, daß ich auf dieselbe nicht einzugehen brauche, daß ich mich begnügen kann, in diesen Geschichten »Schwänze« zu sehen und ihnen den Charakter des Witzes abzusprechen. Eine solche subjektive Bedeutung des Witzes besteht also auch; wir sind jetzt auf sie aufmerksam geworden und werden sie späterhin untersuchen müssen [Kapitel V]. Sie besagt, daß nur das ein Witz ist, was ich als einen Witz gelten lasse. Was für mich ein Witz ist, kann für einen anderen-bloß eine komische-Geschichte sein. Gestattet aber ein Witz diesen Zweifel, so kann es nur
be that it has a façade—in these instances a comic one—in the contemplation of which one person is satiated while another may try to peer behind it. A suspicion may arise, moreover, that this façade is intended to dazzle the examining eye and that these stories have therefore something to conceal.

In any case, if our marriage-broker anecdotes are jokes, they are all the better jokes because, thanks to their façade, they are in a position to conceal not only what they have to say but also the fact that they have something—forgotten—to say. The continuation of this interpretation—and this uncovers the hidden meaning and reveals these anecdotes with a comic continuations of this interpretation—and this uncovers the hidden meaning and reveals these anecdotes with a comic continuation of this interpretation—and this uncovers the hidden meaning and reveals these anecdotes with a comic façade as tendentious jokes—would be as follows. Anyone who has allowed the truth to slip out in an unguarded moment is in fact glad to be free of pretence. This is a correct and profound piece of psychological insight. Without this internal agreement no one lets himself be mastered by the automatism which in these cases brings the truth to light. But this converts the laughable figure of the Schadchen into a sympathetic one, deserving of pity. How happy the man must be to be able at last to throw off the burden of pretence, since he makes use of the first chance of shutting out the very last scrap of truth! As soon as he sees that the case is lost, that the bride does not please the young man, he gladly betrays yet another concealed defect which has escaped notice, or he takes the opportunity of producing an argument that settles a detail in order to express his contempt for the people he is working for: ‘I ask you—who would lend these people anything?’ The whole of the ridicule in the anecdote now falls upon the parents, barely touched on in it, who think this swindle justified in order to get their daughter a husband, upon the pitiable position of girls who let themselves be married on such terms, and upon the disgracefulness of marriages contracted on such a basis. The marriage-broker is the right man to express such criticisms, for he knows most about these abuses; but he must not say them aloud, for he is a poor man whose existence depends on exploiting them. The popular mind, which created these stories, and others like them, is torn by a similar conflict; for it knows that the sacredness of

1 This is the same mechanism that governs slips of the tongue and other phenomena of self-betrayal. See The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901b) [e.g. Chapter V].

Daherühren, daß er eine Schauseite, eine— in unseren Fällen komische— Fassade hat, an welcher sich der Blick des einen erstrahlt, während ein anderer versuchen kann, hinter dieselbe zu spähen. Der Verdacht darf auch rege werden, daß diese Fassade dazu bestimmt ist, den prüfenden Blick zu blenden, daß solche Geschichten also etwas zu verbergen haben.

Jedenfalls, wenn unsere Vermittlergeschichten Witze sind, so sind sie um so bessere Witze, weil sie dank ihrer Fassade imstande sind zu verbergen, nicht nur, was sie zu sagen haben, sondern auch, daß sie etwas — Verbotenes — zu sagen haben. Die Fortsetzung der Deutung aber, welche dies Verborgene aufdeckt und diese Geschichten mit komischer Fassade als tendenziöse Witze entlarvt, wäre folgende: Jeder, der sich die Wahrheit so in einem unbewachten Moment entschlüpfen läßt, ist eigentlich froh darüber, daß er der Verstellung ledig wird. Das ist eine richtige und tiefreichende psychologische Einsicht. Ohne solche innerliche Zustimmung läßt sich niemand von dem Automatismus, der hier die Wahrheit an den Tag bringt, übermannien. Hiemit wandelt sich aber die lächerliche Person des Schadchens in eine bedauernswert-sympathische. Wie selig muß der Mann sein, die Last der Verstellung endlich abwerfen zu können, wenn er sofort die erste Gelegenheit benützt, um das letzte Stück der Wahrheit herauszuschreißen! Sowie er merkt, daß die Sache verloren ist, daß die Braut dem jungen Manne nicht gefällt, verrät er gern, daß sie noch einen versteckten Fehler hat, der jenem nicht aufgefallen ist, oder er bedient sich des Anlasses, ein für ein Detail entscheidendes Argument anzuführen, um dabei den Leuten, in deren Dienst er arbeitet, seine Vermittlung auszudrücken: Ich bitte Sie, wer borgt denn den Leuten was? Die ganze Lächerlichkeit fällt nun auf die, in der Geschichte nur gestreiften Eltern, die solchen Schwindelpfeife geschaffen, um nur ihre Töchter an diesen Mann zu bringen, auf die Erbärmlichkeit der Mütter, die sich unter solchen Veranstaltungen verheiratiren lassen, auf die Unwürdigkeit der Ehen, die nach solchen Einleitungen geschlossen werden. Der Vermittler ist der richtige Mann, der solche Kritik zum Ausdruck bringen darf, denn er weiß am meisten von diesen Mißbräuchen, er darf sie aber nicht laut verkünden, denn er ist ein armer Mann, der gerade nur von deren Ausnutzung leben kann.

In einem ähnlichen Konflikt befindet sich aber auch der Volksgeist, der diese und ähnliche Geschichten geschaffen hat; denn er weiß, die Heilig-
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marriages after they have been contracted is grievously affected by the thought of what happened at the time when they were arranged.

Let us recall, too, what we observed while we were investigating the technique of jokes; that in jokes nonsense often replaces ridicule and criticism in the thoughts lying behind the joke [p. 58]. (In this respect, incidentally, the joke-work is doing the same thing as the dream-work.) Here we find the fact confirmed once again. That the ridicule and criticism are not directed against the figure of the broker, who only appears represented, on the contrary, as a superior person, whose sophistication conceptual jokes. In one of them (p. 62 f.) the broker succeeds in arguing away the bride's defect of being lame. It is at least a thing left over from the earlier objections. There is no difficulty in showing the weak spot in the argument in these two examples, and we did so in examining their technique. But what interests us now is something different. If the broker's speech is given such a marked appearance of logic which, on careful examination, is recognizable as being only an appearance, the truth behind it is that the joke declares the broker to be in the right; the thought does not venture to do so seriously but replaces the seriousness by the appearance which the joke presents. But here, as so often, a jest betrays something serious. We shall not be mistaken if we assume of all these anecdotes with a logical façade that they really mean what they assert for reasons that are intentionally faulty. It is only this employment of sophistry...

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for the disguised representation of the truth that gives it the character of a joke, which is thus essentially dependent on its purpose. For what is hinted at in the two anecdotes is that it is really the suitor who is making himself ridiculous when he collects the bride's different advantages together with so much care, though all of them are weak, and when, in doing so, he forgets that he must be prepared to take as his wife a human being with her inevitable defects; while, on the other hand, the one characteristic that would make marriage with the woman's more or less imperfect personality tolerable—mutual attraction and readiness for affectionate adaptation—is quite left out of account in the whole transaction.

The mockery directed at the suitor in these examples, in which the broker quite appropriately plays the part of a superior, is expressed much more plainly in other anecdotes. The plainer these stories are, the less contains; they are, as it were, only marginal cases of jokes, with more or less imperfect personality tolerable—mutual attraction and readiness for affectionate adaptation—are quite left out of account in the whole transaction.

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A story of this sort, which, while possessing all the force of a tendentious joke, exhibits nothing of its technical, is the following: 'The marriage-broker asked: 'What do you require of your bride?'—Answer: 'She must be beautiful, she must be rich, and educated.'—'Very good', said the broker, 'but I count that as making three matches.' Here the rebuke to the man is delivered openly, and is no longer clothed as a joke.

In the examples we have considered hitherto, the disguised aggressiveness has been directed against people—in the broker jokes against everyone involved in the business of arranging a marriage: the bride and bridegroom and their parents. But the object of the joke's attack may equally well be institutions, people in their capacity as vehicles of institutions, dogmas of morality or religion, views of life which enjoy so much respect that objections to them can only be made under the mask of a
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A joke and indeed of a joke concealed by its façade. Though the themes at which these tendentious jokes are aimed may be few, their forms and envelopes are very many and various. I think we shall do well to distinguish this class of tendentious joke by a special name. The appropriate name will emerge after we have interpreted a few examples of the class.

I may recall the two stories—one of the impoverished gourmet who was caught eating 'salmon mayonnaise' [p. 49 f.] and the other of the dipsomaniac tutor [p. 52]—which we learnt to know as sophistical displacement jokes. I will now continue their interpretation. We have since heard that the idea that the man in the 'salmon mayonnaise' joke was right has become a serious warning. I will gladly put it.

If the theme that the man in the 'salmon mayonnaise' joke was right has such a repellent effect on us, this is only because the truth is illustrated by an enjoyment of the lowest kind, and it is more or less a matter of indifference how one obtains it. This sounds shockingly immoral and is no doubt not much better. But at bottom it is nothing other than the poet’s 'Carpe diem', which appeals to the uncertainty of life and the unfruitfulness of virtuous renunciation. If the idea that the man in the 'salmon mayonnaise' joke was right has such a repellent effect on us, this is only because the truth is illustrated by an enjoyment of the lowest kind, and it is more or less a matter of indifference how one obtains it.

Die gewählte 'Pointe' ist das richtige Kompromiß zwischen seinem 'Recht' und seinem Unrecht, was freilich keine Entscheidung ist, aber wohl dem Konflikt in uns selbst entspricht. Die beiden Geschichten sind einfach epikureisch, sie sagen: Ja, der Mann hat recht, es gibt nichts Höheres als den Genuß, und es ist ziemlich gleichgültig, auf welche Art man sich ihn verschafft. Das klingt furchtbar unmoralisch und ist wohl auch nicht viel besser, aber im Grunde ist es nichts anderes als das 'Carpe diem' des Poeten, der sich auf die Unsicherheit des Lebens und auf die Unfruchtbarkeit der tages­haften Entsagung beruft. Wenn die Idee, daß der Mann im Witz von 'Lachs mit Mayonnaise' recht haben soll, auf uns so abstößend wirkt, so rührt dies nur von der Illustration der Wahrheit an einem Genuß niedrigster Art, der uns sehr entbehrlich scheint, her. In Wirklichkeit hat jeder von uns Stunden und Zeiten gehabt, in denen er dieser Lebens­philosophie ihr Recht zugestanden und der Morallehre vorgehalten hat, daß sie nur zu fordern verstand, ohne zu entschädigen. Seitdem die Anweisung auf das Jenseits, in dem sich alle Entsagung durch Befriedigung lohnen soll, von uns nicht mehr geglaut wird – es gibt übrigens sehr wenig Fromme, wenn man die Entsagung zum Kennzeichen des Glaubens macht –, seitdem wird das 'Carpe diem' zur irdischen Mahnung. Ich will die Befriedigung gern aufschieben, aber weiß ich denn, ob ich morgen noch dasein werde?

'Di doman' non c'è certezza.'

I will gladly renounce all the methods of satisfaction proscribed

1 ['There is no certainty about tomorrow.'] Lorenzo de' Medici.

1 Lorenzo de' Medici. ([1449–1492].) 'Für morgen gibt es keine Sicherheit.' Aus Il Trionfo di Bacco und di Arianna.
by society, but am I certain that society will reward this renunciation by offering me one of the permitted methods— even after a certain amount of postponement? What these jokes whisper may be said aloud: that the wishes and desires of men have a right to make themselves acceptable alongside of exacting and ruthless morality. And in our days it has been said in forceful and stirring sentences that this morality is only a selfish regulation laid down by the few who are rich and powerful and who can satisfy their wishes at any time without any postponement. So long as the art of healing has not gone further in making our life safe and so long as social arrangements do no more to make it more enjoyable, so long will it be impossible to stifle the voice within us that rebels against the powerful and who can satisfy their wishes at any time without any postponement. Every honest man will end by making this admission, at least to himself. The decision in this conflict can only be reached by the roundabout path of fresh insight. One must bind one’s own life to that of others so closely and be able to identify oneself with others so intimately that the brevity of one’s own life can be overcome; and one must not fulfil the demands of one’s own needs illegitimately, but must leave them unfulfilled, because only the continuance of so many unfulfilled demands can develop the power to change the order of society. But not every personal need can be postponed in this way and transferred to other people, and there is no general and final solution of the conflict. We now know the name that must be given to jokes like those that we have last interpreted. They are cynical jokes and what they disguise are cynicisms.

Among the institutions which cynical jokes are in the habit of attacking none is more important or more strictly guarded by moral regulations but at the same time more inviting to attack than the institution of marriage, at which, accordingly, the majority of cynical jokes are aimed. There is no more personal claim than that for sexual freedom and at no point has civilization tried to exercise severer suppression than in the sphere of sexuality. A single example will be enough for our purposes—the one mentioned on p. 78, ‘An Entry in Prince Carnival’s Album’:

‘A wife is like an umbrella—sooner or later one takes a cab.’

We have already discussed the complicated technique of this digung verzichten, aber bin ich sicher, daß mir die Gesellschaft diese Entsagung lohnen wird, indem sie mir—wenn auch mit einem gewissen Aufschub—einen der erlaubten Wege öffnet? Es läßt sich laut sagen, was diese Witze flüstern, daß die Wünsche und Begierden des Menschen ein Recht haben, sich vernehmbar zu machen neben der anspruchsvollen und rücksichtslosen Moral, und es ist in unseren Tagen in nachdrücklichen und packenden Sätzen gesagt worden, daß diese Moral nur die eigenmächtige Vorschrift der wenigen Reichen und Mächtigen ist, welche jederzeit ohne Aufschub ihre Wünsche befriedigen können. Solange die Heilkunst es nicht weitergebracht hat, unser Leben zu sichern, und solange die sozialen Einrichtungen nicht mehr dazu tun, es erfreulicher zu gestalten, so lange kann die Stimme in uns, die sich gegen die Moralanforderungen auflehnt, nicht erstickt werden. Jeder ehre fleb Mensch wird wenigstens bei sich dieses Zugeständnisses endlich machen. Die Entscheidung in diesem Konflikt ist erst auf dem Umwege über eine neue Einsicht möglich. Man muß sein Leben so an das anderer knüpfen, sich so innig mit anderen identifizieren können, daß die Verkürzung der eigenen Lebensdauer überwindbar wird, und man darf die Forderungen der eigenen Bedürfnisse nicht unrechtmäßig erfüllen, sondern muß sie unerfüllt lassen, weil nur der Fortbestand so vieler unerfüllter Forde rungen die Macht entwickeln kann, die gesellschaftliche Ordnung abzusichern. Aber nicht alle persönlichen Bedürfnisse lassen sich in solcher Art verschieben und auf andere übertragen, und eine allgemein- und endgültige Lösung des Konflikts gibt es nicht.

Wir wissen nun, wie wir Witze wie die letztgedeuteten zu benennen haben; es sind zynische Witze, was sie verhüllen, sind Zynismen.

Unter den Institutionen, die der zynische Witz angreifen pflegt, ist keine wichtiger, eindringlicher durch Moralvorschriften geschützt, aber dennoch zum Angriff einladender als das Institut der Ehe, dem also auch die meisten zynischen Witze gelten. Kein Anspruch ist ja persönlicher als der auf sexuelle Freiheit, und nirgends hat die Kultur eine stärkere Unterdrückung zu üben versucht als auf dem Gebiete der Sexualität. Für unsere Absichten mag ein einziges Beispiel genügen, die auf S. 76 erwähnte „Eintragung in das Stammbuch des Prinzen Karneval“:

»Eine Frau ist wie ein Regenschirm — man nimmt sich dann doch einen Komfortabel.«

Die komplizierte Technik dieses Beispiels haben wir bereits erörtert:
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example: a bewildering and apparently impossible simile, which however, as we now see, is not in itself a joke; further, an allusion (a cab is a public vehicle); and, as its most powerful technical method, an omission which increases the unintelligibility. The simile may be worked out as follows. One marries in order to protect oneself against the temptations of sensuality, but it turns out nevertheless that marriage does not allow of the satisfaction of needs that are somewhat stronger than usual. In just the same way, one takes an umbrella with one to protect oneself from the rain and nevertheless gets wet in the rain. In both cases one must look around for a stronger protection: in the latter case one must take a public vehicle, and in the former a woman who is accessible in return for money. The joke has now been almost entirely replaced by a piece of cynicism. One does not venture to declare aloud and openly that marriage is not an arrangement calculated to satisfy a man's sexuality, unless one is driven to do so perhaps by the love of truth and eagerness for reform of a Christian von Ehrenfels. The strength of this joke lies in the fact that nevertheless—in all kinds of roundabout ways—it has declared it.

A particularly favourable occasion for tendentious jokes is presented when the intended rebellious criticism is directed against the subject himself, or, to put it more cautiously, against someone in whom the subject has a share—a collective person, that is (the subject's own nation, for instance). The occurrence of self-criticism as a determinant may explain how it is that a number of the most apt jokes (of which we have given plenty of instances) have grown up on the soil of Jewish popular life. They are stories created by Jews and directed against Jewish characteristics. The jokes made about Jews by foreigners are for the most part brutal comic stories in which a joke is made unnecessary by the fact that Jews are regarded by foreigners as comic figures. The Jewish jokes which originate from Jews admit this too; but they know their real faults as well as the connection between them and their good qualities, and the share which the subject has in the person found fault with.

1 See his essays (1903). [A later work of his was the starting-point of Freud's paper on "Civilized" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness (1908d). In that paper Freud himself embarked on some severe criticisms of the institution of marriage.]

III. Die Tendenzen des Witzes

Ein für den tendenziösen Witz besonders günstiger Fall wird hergestellt, wenn die beabsichtigte Kritik der Auflehung sich gegen die eigene Person richtet, vorsichtiger ausgedrückt, eine Person, an der der eigene Anteil hat, eine Sammelperson also, das eigene Volk zum Beispiel. Diese Bedingung der Selbstkritik mag uns erklären, daß gerade auf dem Boden des jüdischen Volkslebens eine Anzahl der trefflichsten Witze erwachsen sind, von denen wir ja hier reichliche Proben gegeben haben. Es sind Geschichten, die von Juden geschaffen und gegen jüdische Eignetümlichkeiten gerichtet sind. Die Witze, die von Fremden über Juden gemacht werden, sind zu allermeist brutale Schwänze, in denen der Witz durch die Tatsache erspart wird, daß der Jude den Fremden als komische Figur gilt. Auch die Judenwitze, die von Juden herrühren, geben dies zu, aber sie kennen ihre wirklichen Fehler wie deren Zusammenhang mit ihren Vorzügen, und der Anteil der eigenen Person an

1 S. dessen Aufsätze in der Politisch-anthropologischen Revue, Bd. 2, 1903. [Eine spätere Arbeit dieses Autors gab Anlaß zu Freuds Schrift "Die kulturelle" Sexualmoral und die moderne Nervosität (1908d. Dort macht Freud selbst mehrere kritische Bemerkungen über die Institution der Ehe.]
creates the subjective determinant (usually so hard to arrive at) of the joke-work. [Cf. p. 140 ff.] Incidentally, I do not know whether there are many other instances of a people making fun to such a degree of its own character.

As an example of this I may take the anecdote, quoted on p. 80 f., of a Jew in a railway train promptly abandoning all decent behaviour when he discovered that the newcomer into his compartment was a fellow-believer. We made the acquaintance of this anecdote as evidence of something being demonstrated by a detail, of representation by something very small. It is meant to portray the democratic mode of thinking of Jews, which recognizes no distinction between lords and serfs, but also, alas, upsets discipline and co-operation.

Another, especially interesting group of jokes portrays the relation of poor and rich Jews to one another. Their heroes are the 'Schnorrer' [beggar] and the charitable householder or the Baron.

'A Schnorrer, who was allowed as a guest into the same house every Sunday, appeared one day in the company of an unknown young man who gave signs of being about to sit down to table. "Who is this?" asked the householder. "He's been my son-in-law", was the reply, "since last week. I've promised him his board for the first year."

The purpose of these stories is always the same; it emerges most clearly in the next one:

"The Schnorrer begged the Baron for some money for a journey to Ostend; his doctor had recommended sea-bathing for his troubles. The Baron thought Ostend was a particularly expensive resort; a cheaper one would do equally well. The Schnorrer, however, rejected the proposal with the words: "Herr Baron, I consider nothing too expensive for my health."' This is an excellent displacement joke which we might have taken as a model for that class.1 The Baron evidently wants to save his money, but the Schnorrer answers as though the Baron's money was his own, which he may then quite well value less than his health. Here we are expected to laugh at the impertinence of

1 [This joke has in fact already appeared as an example of a displacement joke (see p. 55 f.). Freud may perhaps, as an afterthought, have added it to the earlier chapter and then omitted to make the necessary change in the present passage.]
III. THE PURPOSES OF JOKES

III. Die Tendenzen des Witzes

The demand; but it is rarely that these jokes are not equipped with a façade to mislead the understanding. The truth that lies behind is that the Scharnier, who in his thoughts treats the rich man's money as his own, has actually, according to the sacred ordinances of the Jews, almost a right to make this confusion. The indignation raised by this joke is of course directed against a Law which is highly oppressive even to pious people.

Here is another anecdote:

'A Scharnier on his way up a rich man's staircase met a fellow-member of his profession, who advised him to go no further. "Don't go up to-day," he said, "the Baron is in a bad mood to-day; he's giving nobody more than one florin." — "I'll go up all the same," said the first Scharnier. "Why should I give him a florin? Does he give me anything?"

This joke employs the technique of absurdity, since it makes the Scharnier assert that the Baron gives him nothing at the very moment at which he is preparing to beg him for a gift. But the absurdity is only apparent. It is almost true that the rich man gives him nothing, since he is obliged by the Law to give him alms and should, strictly speaking, be grateful to him for giving him an opportunity for beneficence. The ordinary, middle-class view of charity is in conflict here with the religious one; it is in open rebellion against the religious one in the other story, of the Baron, who, deeply moved by a Scharnier's tale of woe, rang for his servants: 'Throw him out! he's breaking my heart!' This open revelation of its purpose constitutes once more a marginal case of a joke. It is only in the fact that they present the matter as applied to individual cases that these last stories differ from a complaint which is no longer a joke: 'There is really no advantage in being a rich man if one is a Jew. Other people's misery makes it impossible to enjoy one's own happiness.'

Other stories, which are once again technically frontier cases of jokes, give evidence of a profoundly pessimistic cynicism. For instance:

'A man who was hard of hearing consulted the doctor, who correctly diagnosed that the patient probably drank too much brandy and was on that account deaf. He advised him against it and the deaf man promised to take his advice to heart. After

Eine andere Geschichte erzählt: Ein Scharnier begegnet auf der Treppe des Reiches einem Genossen im Gewerbe, der ihm abrät, seinen Weg fortzusetzen. »Geh heute nicht hinauf, der Baron ist heute schlecht aufgelegt, er gibt niemand mehr als einen Gulden.« — »Ich werde doch hinaufgehen,« sagt der erste Scharnier. »Warum soll ich ihm den einen Gulden schenken? Schenkt er mir 'was?«

Dieser Witz bedient sich der Technik des Widersinnes, indem er den Scharnier in demselben Moment behauptet läßt, der Baron schenke ihm nichts, in dem er sich anschickt, um das Geschenk zu betteln. Aber der Widersinn ist nur ein scheinbarer; es ist beinahe richtig, daß ihm der Reiche nichts schenkt, da er durch das Gesetz verpflichtet ist, ihm Almosen zu geben, und ihm, strenger genommen, dankbar sein muß, daß er ihm die Gelegenheit zum Wohltun verschafft. Die gemeine, bürgerliche Auffassung des Almosens liegt hier mit der religiösen im Streit; sie revolviert offen gegen die religiöse in der Geschichte vom Baron, der, durch die Leidenserzählung des Scharniers tief ergriffen, seinen Dienern schüttet: Werfs ihn hinaus; er bricht mir das Herz! Diese offene Darlegung der Tendenz stellt wieder einen Grenzfall des Witzes her. Von der nicht mehr witzigen Klage: »Es ist wirklich kein Vorzug, ein Reicher unter Juden zu sein. Das fremde Eland läßt einen nicht zum Genuß des eigenen Glücks kommen,« entfernen sich diese letzten Geschichten fast nur durch die Veranschaulichung in einer einzelnen Situation.

Von einem tief pessimistischen Zynismus zeugen andere Geschichten, die technisch wiederum Grenzfälle des Witzes darstellen, wie die nachstehende:

Ein Schwerhöriger konsultiert den Arzt, der die richtige Diagnose macht, der Patient trinke wahrscheinlich zu viel Branntwein und sei darum taub. Er rät ihm davon ab, der Schwerhörige verspricht, den Rat zu beherzigen. Nach
a while the doctor met him in the street and asked him in a loud voice how he was. “Thank you”, was the answer. “You needn’t shout so loud, doctor. I’ve given up drinking and hear quite well again.” A little while later they met once more. The doctor asked him how he was in his ordinary voice, but noticed that his question had not been understood. “Eh? What was that?” — “It seems to me you’re drinking brandy again”, shouted the doctor in his ear, “and that’s why you’re deaf again.” “You may be right,” replied the deaf man, “I have begun drinking brandy again and I’ll tell you why. So long as I didn’t drink I was able to hear. But nothing I heard was as good as the brandy.”

Technically this joke is nothing other than an object-lesson: dialect or skill in narrative are necessary for raising a laugh, but in the background lies the sad question: may not the man have been right in his choice?

It is on account of the allusion made by these pessimistic stories to the manifold and hopeless miseries of the Jews that I must class them with tendentious jokes.

Other jokes, which are in the same sense cynical and which are not only Jewish anecdotes, attack religious dogmas and even the belief in God. The story of the Rabbi’s ‘Klück’ [p. 63], the technique of which lay in the faulty thinking which equated phantasy and reality (another possible view was to regard it as a displacement), is a cynical or critical joke of this kind, directed against miracle-workers and certainly against the belief in miracles as well. Heine is said to have made a definitely blasphemous joke on his death-bed. When a friendly priest reminded him of God’s mercy and gave him hope that God would forgive him his sins, he is said to have replied: “Bien sûr qu’il me pardonnera: c’est son métier.” 1 This is a disparaging comparison (technically perhaps only having the value of an allusion), since a ‘métier’, a trade or profession, is what a workman or a doctor has—and he has only a single métier. But the force of the joke lies in its purpose. What it means to say is nothing else than: ‘Of course he’ll forgive me. That’s what he’s there for, and that’s the only reason I’ve taken him on (as one engages one’s doctor or one’s lawyer).’ So in the dying man, as he lay there powerless, a consciousness stirred that he had created God and equipped him with power so as to make use of

1 ['Of course he'll forgive me: that's his job.']
him when the occasion arose. What was supposed to be the created being revealed itself just before its annihilation as the creator.

To the classes of tendentious jokes that we have considered so far—

- exposing or obscene jokes,
- aggressive (hostile) jokes,
- cynical (critical, blasphemous) jokes—

I should like to add another, the fourth and rarest, the nature of which can be illustrated by a good example:

'Two Jews met in a railway carriage at a station in Galicia. "Where are you going?" asked one. "To Cracow", was the answer. "What a liar you are!" broke out the other. "If you say you're going to Cracow, you want me to believe you're going to Lemberg. But I know that in fact you're going to Cracow, and I'm going to Krakau. So why are you lying to me?"

This excellent story, which gives an impression of over-subtlety, evidently works by the technique of absurdity. The second Jew is reproached for lying because he says he is going to Cracow, which is in fact his destination! But the powerful technical method of absurdity is here linked with another technique, representation by the opposite, for, according to the uncontradicted assertion of the first Jew, the second is lying to a problem and is making use of the uncertainty of one of our commonest concepts. Is it the truth they are without troubling to consider how our hearer understands what we say?

Or is this only jesuitical truth, and does not genuine truth consist in taking the hearer into account and giving him a faithful picture of our own knowledge? I think that jokes of this kind are sufficiently different from the rest to be given a special position. What they are attacking is not a person or an institution but the certainty of our knowledge itself, one of our speculative possessions. The appropriate name for them would therefore be 'sceptical' jokes.

Zu den bisher behandelten Gattungen des tendenziösen Witzes,

dem entblößenden oder obszönen,
dem aggressiven (feindseligen),
dem zynischen (kritischen, blasphemischen),
möchte ich als vierte und seltenste eine neue anreißen, deren Charakter durch ein gutes Beispiel erläutert werden soll.

Zwei Juden treffen sich im Eisenbahnwagen einer galizischen Station. »Wohin fährst du?« fragt der eine. »Nach Krakau«, ist die Antwort. »Sieh' her, was du für Lügner bist«, braust der andere auf. »Wenn du sagst, du fährst nach Krakau, willst du doch, daß ich glauben soll, du fährst nach Lemberg. Nun weiß ich aber, daß du wirklich fährst nach Krakau. Also warum lügst du?«

Diese kostbare Geschichte, die den Eindruck übergroßer Spitzfindigkeit macht, wirkt offenbar durch die Technik des Widersinnes. Der Zweite soll sich Lüge vorwerfen lassen, weil er mitgeteilt, er fahre nach Krakau, was in Wahrheit sein Reiseziel ist! Dieses starke technische Mittel – der Widersinn – ist aber hier mit einer anderen Technik gepaart, der Darstellung durch das Gegenteil, denn nach der unwidersprochenen Behauptung des Ersten lügt der andere, wenn er die Wahrheit sagt, und sagt die Wahrheit mit einer Lüge. Der ernstere Gehalt dieses Witzes ist aber die Frage nach den Bedingungen der Wahrheit; der Witz deutet wiederum auf ein Problem und nutzt die Unsicherheit eines unserer gebräuchlichsten Begriffe aus. Ist es Wahrheit, wenn man die Dinge so beschreibt, wie sie sind, und sich nicht darum kümmert, wie der Hörer das Gesagte auffassen wird? Oder ist dies nur jesuitische Wahrheit, und besteht die echte Wahrhaftigkeit nicht viel mehr darin, auf den Zuhörer Rücksicht zu nehmen und ihm ein getreues Abbild seines eigenen Wissens zu vermitteln? Ich halte Witze dieser Art für genug verschieden von den anderen, um ihnen eine besondere Stellung anzuweisen. Was sie angreifen, ist nicht eine Person oder eine Institution, sondern die Sicherheit unserer Erkenntnisse selbst, eines unserer spekulativen Güter. Der Name »skeptische« Witze würde also für sie der entsprechende sein.
In the course of our discussion of the purposes of jokes we have perhaps thrown light on a number of questions and have certainly come upon plenty of suggestions for further enquiries. But the findings of this chapter combine with those of the last one to present us with a difficult problem. If it is correct to say that the pleasure provided by jokes depends on the one hand on their technique and on the other hand on their purpose, from what common point of view can such different sources of the pleasure in jokes be brought together?
B. SYNTHETIC PART

IV

THE MECHANISM OF PLEASURE AND THE PSYCHOGENESIS OF JOKES

[1]

We can now start out from an assured knowledge of the sources of the peculiar pleasure given us by jokes. We are aware that we may be deceived into confusing our enjoyment of the intellectual content of what is stated with the pleasure proper to jokes; but we know that that pleasure itself has at bottom two sources—the technique and the purposes of jokes. What we now want to discover is the way in which the pleasure arises from these sources, the mechanism of the pleasurable effect.

We shall, I think, find the explanation we are in search of easier from tendentious jokes than from innocent ones. We will therefore begin with the former.

The pleasure in the case of a tendentious joke arises from a purpose being satisfied whose satisfaction would otherwise not have taken place. That a satisfaction such as this is a source of pleasure calls for no further remark. But the manner in which a joke leads to this satisfaction is linked with particular conditions, from which we may perhaps arrive at some further information. Two cases are to be distinguished here. The simpler one is where the satisfaction of the purpose is opposed by an external obstacle which is evaded by the joke. We found this, for instance, in the reply received by Serenissimus to his question of whether the mother of the man he was speaking to had ever lived in the Palace [p. 68 f.] and in the critic’s rejoinder to the two rich rascals who showed him their portraits: ‘But where’s the Saviour?’ [P. 74.] In the former case the purpose was to answer one insult by another, and in the latter it was to hand across an insult instead of the assessment that had been asked for. What opposed the purpose were purely external factors—the powerful position of the people at whom the insults were directed. It may nevertheless strike us that, however much...
these and analogous jokes of a tendentious nature may satisfy us, they are not able to provoke much laughter.

It is otherwise when what stands in the way of the direct realization of the purpose is not an external factor but an internal obstacle, when an internal impulse opposes the purpose. This condition would seem, on our hypothesis, to be fulfilled in the jokes of Herr N., in whom a strong inclination to invective is held in check by a highly developed aesthetic culture. By the help of a joke, this internal resistance is overcome in the particular case and the inhibition lifted. By that means, as in the instance of the external obstacle, the satisfaction of the purpose is made possible and its suppression, together with the 'psychical damming-up' that this would involve, is avoided. To that extent the mechanism of the generation of pleasure would be the same in the two cases.

Nevertheless, we are inclined here to go more deeply into the distinctions between the psychological situation in the cases of an external and an internal obstacle, for we have a suspicion that the removal of an internal obstacle may make an incomparably higher contribution to the pleasure. But I suggest that at this point we should exercise moderation and be satisfied for the moment with establishing what remains the essential point for us. The cases of an external and an internal obstacle differ only in the fact that in the latter an already existing inhibition is lifted and that in the former the erection of a new one is avoided. That being so, we shall not be relying too much on speculation if we assert that both for erecting and for maintaining a psychical inhibition some 'psychical expenditure' is required. And, since we know that in both cases of the use of tendentious jokes pleasure is obtained, it is therefore plausible to suppose that this yield of pleasure corresponds to the psychical expenditure that is saved.

Here then we have once more come upon the principle of economy which we met first in discussing the technique of verbal jokes [p. 42 ff.]. But whereas in the earlier case we seemed to find the economy in the use of as few words as possible or of words as much alike as possible, we now have a suspicion of an economy in the far more comprehensive sense of psychical

1 [The phrase is from Lipps (1898, 72, etc.), See below, p. 155.]
2 [i.e. expenditure of psychical energy (p. 147 ff.).]
expenditure in general; and we must regard it as possible that a closer understanding of what is still the very obscure concept of 'psychical expenditure' may bring us nearer to the essential nature of jokes.

A certain lack of clarity which we have been unable to overcome in our handling of the mechanism of pleasure in tendentious jokes may be taken as an appropriate punishment for our having tried to clear up the more complex problem before the simpler one, tendentious jokes before innocent ones. We take note of the fact that 'economy in expenditure on inhibition or suppression' appears to be the secret of the pleasurable effect of tendentious jokes, and pass on to the mechanism of pleasure in innocent jokes.

On the basis of suitable specimens of innocent jokes, in which there was no fear of our judgement being disturbed by their content or purpose, we were driven to conclude that the techniques of jokes are themselves sources of pleasure; and we shall now try to discover whether it may perhaps be possible to trace that pleasure back to economy in psychical expenditure. In one group of these jokes (play upon words) the technique consisted in focusing our psychical attitude upon the sound of the word instead of upon its meaning—in making the (acoustic) word-presentation itself take the place of its significance as given by its relations to thing-presentations. It may really be suspected that in doing so we are bringing about a great relief in psychical work and that when we make serious use of words we are obliged to hold ourselves back with a certain effort from that in focusing our psychical attitude upon the word—die (akustische) Wortvorstellung selbst an Stelle ihrer durch Relationen zu den Dingvorstellungen gegebenen Bedeutung treten zu lassen. In einer Gruppe dieser Witze (den Wortspielen) bestand die Technik darin, unsere psychische Einstellung auf den Wortklang anstatt auf den Sinn des Wortes zu richten, die (akustische) Wortvorstellung selbst an Stelle ihrer durch Relationen zu den Dingvorstellungen gegebenen Bedeutung treten zu lassen. Wir dürfen wirklich vermuten, daß damit eine große Erleichterung der psychischen Arbeit gegeben ist und daß wir uns bei der ernsthaften Verwendung der Worte durch eine gewisse Auswärtsentfernung von diesem bequemen Verfahren abhalten müssen. Wir können beobachtet, daß kranzhafte Zustände der Denktätigkeit, in denen die Möglichkeit, psychischen Aufwand auf eine Stelle zu konzentrieren, wahrscheinlich ein-

1 [It was not until ten years later, in his metapsychological papers that Freud dealt at greater length with the fact that 'the conscious presentation of the object can be split up into the presentation of the word and the presentation of the thing', and enlarged on the importance of the distinction from the standpoint of psychopathology, as is indicated in the present passage. See in particular Section VIII of the paper on 'The Unconscious' (1915e), Standard Ed., 14, 201 ff. His interest in the question, however, goes back much earlier—to the time of his monograph on aphasia (1891b). A quotation from that work dealing with the subject will be found printed as an appendix to 'The Unconscious', Standard Ed., 14, 209.]
restricted, do in fact give this sort of sound-presentation of the word greater prominence than its meaning, and that sufferers in such states proceed in their speech on the lines (as the formula runs) of the 'external' instead of the 'internal' associations of the word-presentation. We notice, too, that children, who, as we know, are in the habit of still treating words as things, tend to expect words that are the same or similar to have the same meaning behind them—which is a source of many mistakes that are laughed at by grown-up people. If, therefore, we derive unmistakable enjoyment in jokes from being transported by the use of the same or a similar word from one circle of ideas to another, remote one (in the 'Home-Roulard', for instance [p. 94], from the kitchen to politics), this enjoyment is no doubt correctly to be attributed to economy in psychical expenditure. The pleasure in a joke arising from a 'short-circuit' like this seems to be the greater the more alien the two circles of ideas that are brought together by the same word—the further apart they are, and thus the greater the economy which the joke's technical method provides in the train of thought. We may notice, too, that here jokes are making use of a method of linking things up which is rejected and studiously avoided by serious thought.2

In a second group of technical methods used in jokes—unification, similarity of sound, multiple use, modification of familiar phrases, allusions to quotations—we can single out as their common characteristic the fact that in each of them something familiar is rediscovered, where we might instead have expected something new. This rediscovery of what is familiar is pleasurable, and once more it is not difficult for us to recognize this pleasure as a pleasure in economy and to relate it to economy in psychical expenditure.

1[ Cf. a passage in Chapter VI, Section A, of The Interpretation of Dreams (1900a), Standard Ed., 4, 303. An example of this phenomenon is given in the 'Little Hans' case history (1908b), ibid., 10, 59 n.]

2 If I may be allowed to anticipate the exposition in the text, I can at this point throw light on the condition which seems to determine whether a joke is to be called a 'good' or a 'bad' one. If, by means of a word with two meanings or a word that is only slightly modified, I take a short cut from one circle of ideas to another, and if there is not at the same time a link between those circles of ideas which has a significant sense, then I shall have made a 'bad' joke. In a bad joke like this the

geschränkt ist, tatsächlich die Wortklangvorstellung solcher Art gegen die Wortbedeutung in den Vordergrund rücken lassen und daß solche Kranke in ihren Reden nach den »äußeren« anstatt nach den »inneren« Assoziationen der Wortvorstellung, wie die Formel lautet, fortschreiten. Auch beim Kinde, welches ja die Worte noch als Dinge zu behandeln gewohnt ist, bemerken wir die Neigung, hinter gleichem oder ähnlichem Wortlaut gleichen Sinn zu suchen, die zur Quelle vieler von den Erwachsenen belachter Irrtümer wird. Wenn es uns dann im Witz ein unverkennbares Vergnügen bereitet, durch den Gebrauch des nämlichen Wortes oder eines ihm ähnlichen aus dem einen Vorstellungskreis in einen anderen, entfernten zu gelangen (wie bei Home-Roulard [S. 90] aus dem der Küche in den der Politik), so ist dies Vergnügen wohl mit Recht auf die Ersparung an psychischem Aufwand zurückzuführen. Die Witzeslust aus solchem »Kurzschluß« scheint auch um so größer zu sein, je fremder die beiden durch das gleiche Wort in Verbindung gebrachten Vorstellungskreise einander sind, je weiter ab sie voneinander liegen, je größer also die Ersparung an Gedankenweg durch das technische Mittel des Witzes ausfällt. Merken wir übrigens an, daß sich der Witz hier eines Mittels der Verknüpfung bedient, welches vom ernsthaften Denken verworfen und sorgfältig vermieden wird.

Eine zweite Gruppe technischer Mittel des Witzes — Unifizierung, Gleichklang, mehrfache Verwendung, Modifikation bekannter Redensarten, Anspielung auf Zitate — läßt als gemeinsamen Charakter herausheben, daß jedesmal etwas Bekanntes wiedergefunden wird, wo man anstatt dessen etwas Neues hätte erwarten können. Dieses Wiederfinden des Bekannten ist lustvoll, und es kann uns wiederum nicht schwerfallen, solche Lust als Ersparungslust zu erkennen, auf die Ersparung an psychischem Aufwand zu beziehen.

1 Wenn ich mir hier gestatten darf, der Darstellung im Texte vorzugehen, so kann ich an dieser Stelle ein Licht auf die Bedingung werfen, welche für den Sprachgebrauch maßgebend scheint, um einen Witz einen »guten« oder einen »schlechten« zu heissen. Wenn ich mittels eines doppelsinnigen oder wenig modifizierten Wortes auf kurzem Wege aus einem Vorstellungskreis in einen anderen geraten bin, während sich zwischen den beiden Vorstellungskreisen nicht auch gleichzeitig eine sinnvolle Verknüpfung ergibt, dann habe ich einen »schlechten« Witz gemacht. In diesem schlechten Witz ist das
It seems to be generally agreed that the rediscovery of what is familiar, "recognition", is pleasurable. Groos (1899, 153) writes: "Recognition is always, unless it is too much mechanized (as, for instance, in dressing . . .), linked with feelings of pleasure. The mere quality of familiarity is easily accompanied by the quiet sense of comfort which Faust felt when, after an uncanny encounter, he entered his study once again [Faust, Part I, Scene 3] . . . If the act of recognition thus gives rise to pleasure, we might expect that men would hit on the idea of exercising this capacity for its own sake—that is, would experiment with it in play. And in fact Aristotle regarded joy in recognition as the basis of the enjoyment of art, and it cannot be disputed that this principle should not be overlooked, even if it does not possess such far-reaching significance as Aristotle attributes to it.\footnote{Groos goes on to discuss games whose characteristic lies in the fact that they intensify the joy in recognition by putting obstacles in its way—that is to say, by creating a 'psychical damming up', which is got rid of by the act of recognition. His attempt at an explanation, however, abandons the hypothesis that recognition is pleasurable in itself, since, by referring to these games, he is tracing back the enjoyment of recognition to a joy in power, a joy in the overcoming of a difficulty. I regard only existing link between the two disparate ideas is the one word—"the 'point' of the joke. The example of 'Home-Roulard' quoted above is a joke of this kind. A 'good' joke, on the other hand, comes about when what children expect [see above, p. 120] proves correct and the similarity between the words is shown to be really accompanied by another, important similarity in their sense. Such, for instance, is the example 'Traduttore—Traditore' [p. 34]. The two disparate ideas, which are here linked by an external association, are also united in a significant relation which indicates an essential kinship between them. The external association merely takes the place of the internal connection; it serves to point it out or make it clear. A 'translator' is not only called by a similar name to a 'traitor'; he actually is a kind of traitor and bears the name, as it were by right. The distinction that is here developed coincides with the one which is to be introduced later [p. 129 ff.] between a 'jest' and a 'joke'. But it would be unjust to exclude examples like 'Home-Roulard' from the discussion of the nature of jokes. As soon as we take into consideration the peculiar pleasure derived from jokes, we find that the 'bad' jokes are by no means bad as jokes—that is, unsuitable for producing pleasure.

\[\text{Daß das Wiederfinden des Bekannten, das »Wiedererkennen« lustvoll ist, scheint allgemein zugestanden zu werden. Groos\footnote{Groos erörtert dann die Spiele, deren Charakter darin besteht, die Freude am Wiedererkennen dadurch zu steigern, daß man demselben Hindernisse in den Weg legt, also eine »psychische Staunung« herbeiführt, die mit dem Akt des Erkennens beseitigt ist. Sein Erklärungsversuch verläuft aber die Annahme, daß das Erkennen an sich lustvoll sei, indem er das Vergnügen am Erkennen mit Berufung auf diese Spiele auf die »Freude an der Macht«, an der Überwindung einer Schwierigkeit, eine Waffe, die »Scheiner« und »Witz« zusammen [vgl. S. 122 ff.]. Es wäre aber umgekehrt. Beispiele wie Home-Roulard von der Erörterung über die Natur des Witzes auszuschließen. Soweit wir die eigen tümliche Lust des Witzes in Betracht ziehen, finden wir, daß die »schlechten« Witzkeineswegs als Witz schlecht, d. h. ungeeignet zur Erzeugung von Lust sind.}

\[\text{\footnote{Die Spiele der Menschen, 1899.}}\]"
the latter factor as secondary, and I see no reason to depart from the simpler view that recognition is pleasurable in itself—i.e., through relieving psychical expenditure—and that the games founded on this pleasure make use of the mechanism of damming up only in order to increase the amount of such pleasure.

It is also generally acknowledged that rhymes, alliterations, refrains, and other forms of repeating similar verbal sounds which occur in verse, make use of the same source of pleasure—the rediscovery of something familiar. The 'sense of power' plays no perceptible part in these techniques, which show so much similarity to that of 'multiple use' in the case of jokes.

In view of the close connection between recognizing and remembering, it is not rash to suppose that there may also be a pleasure in remembering—that the act of remembering is in itself accompanied by a feeling of pleasure of similar origin. Groos seems not to be averse to such a hypothesis, but he derives it once again from the 'sense of power', to which he attributes (wrongly, in my view) the chief reason for enjoyment in almost all games.

The 'rediscovery of what is familiar' is the basis for the use of another technical resource in jokes, which we have not yet mentioned. I refer to the factor of 'topicality', which is a fertile source of pleasure in a great many jokes and which explains a few jokes which are completely independent of this condition, and in almost all games.

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of obtaining pleasure coincide—in the main at all events—with the distinction between verbal and conceptual jokes.

The preceding discussion has given us unawares an insight into the evolution or psychogenesis of jokes, which we will now examine more closely. We have made the acquaintance of preliminary stages of jokes, and their development into tendentious jokes will probably uncover fresh relations between the various characteristics of jokes. Before there is such a thing as a joke, there is something that we may describe as ‘jest’.

Play—let us keep to that name—appears in children while they are learning to make use of words and to put thoughts together. This play probably obeys one of the instincts which compel children to practise their capacities (Groos [1899]). In doing so they come across pleasurable effects, which arise from a repetition of what is similar, a rediscovery of what is familiar, similarity of sound, etc., and which are to be explained as unsuspected economies in psychical expenditure. It is not to be wondered at that these pleasurable effects encourage children in the pursuit of play and cause them to continue it without regard for the meaning of words or the coherence of sentences. Play with words and thoughts, motivated by certain pleasurable effects of economy, would thus be the first stage of jokes.

This play is brought to an end by the strengthening of a factor that deserves to be described as the critical faculty or reasonableness. The play is now rejected as being meaningless or actually absurd; as a result of criticism it becomes impossible. Now, too, there is no longer any question of deriving pleasure, except accidentally, from the sources of rediscovery of what is familiar, etc., unless it happens that the growing individual is overtaken by a pleasurable mood which, like the child’s cheer-

1 [The pleasure taken by children in repetition (to which there is a further reference below, p. 226, and on which Freud has already commented in a footnote to The Interpretation of Dreams (1900a), Standard Ed., 4, 268) is a subject to which Freud recurred much later, in his discussion of his hypothesis of a ‘compulsion to repeat’ in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920g), Standard Ed., 18, 35.]

[2]

Die vorstehenden Erörterungen haben uns unverkennbar eine Einsicht in eine Entwicklungsgeschichte oder Psychogenese des Witzes gegeben, welcher wir nun näherheren wollen. Wir haben Vorstufen des Witzes kennengelernt, deren Entwicklung bis zum tendenziösen Witz wahrscheinlich neue Beziehungen zwischen den verschiedenen Charakteren des Witzes aufdecken kann. Vor allem Witz gibt es etwas, was wir als Spiel oder Seherz bezeichnen können.


Dieses Spiel macht die Erstärkung eines Moments ein Ende, das als Kritik oder Vernünftigkeit bezeichnet zu werden verdient. Das Spiel wird nun als sinnlos oder direkt widersinnig verworfen; es wird infolge der Kritik unmöglich. Es ist nun auch ausgeschlossen, anders als zufallsweise aus jenen Quellen des Wiederfindens des Bekannten usw. Lust zu beziehen, es sei denn, daß den Heranwachsenden eine lustvolle Stimmung befalle, welche der Heiterkeit des Kindes ähnlich die kritische

1 [Die Lust des Kindes an der Wiederholung (auf die weiter unten, S. 210, noch einmal Bezug genommen wird) ist ein Thema, auf das Freud viel später, nämlich bei der Erörterung seiner Hypothese des Wiederholungszwanges, in Jenseits des Lustprinzips (1920g) zu Beginn des V. Kapitels, zurückkommt. Es wird auch in Das Unheimliche, S. 261 des vorliegenden Bandes, berührt.]
IV. PLEASURE AND THE GENESIS OF JOKES

fulness, lifts the critical inhibition. Only in such a case does the old game of getting pleasure become possible once more; but the individual does not want to wait for this to happen nor to renounce the pleasure that is familiar to him. He thus looks about for means of making himself independent of the pleasurable mood, and the further development towards jokes is governed by the two endeavours: to avoid criticism and to find a substitute for the mood.

And with this the second preliminary stage of jokes sets in—the jest. It is now a question of prolonging the yield of pleasure from play, but at the same time of silencing the objections raised by criticism which would not allow the pleasurable feeling to emerge. There is only one way of reaching this end: the meaningless combination of words or the absurd putting together of thoughts must nevertheless have a meaning. The whole ingenuity of the joke-work is summoned up in order to find words and aggregations of thoughts in which this condition is fulfilled. All the technical methods of jokes are already employed here—in jests; moreover linguistic usage draws no consistent line between a jest and a joke. What distinguishes a jest from a joke is that the meaning of the sentence which escapes criticism need not be valuable or new or even good; it need merely be permissible to say the thing in this way, even though it is unusual, unnecessary or useless to say it in this way. In jests what stands in the foreground is the satisfaction of having made possible what was forbidden by criticism.

It is, for instance, simply a jest when Schleiermacher [see p. 35] defines Eifersucht [jealousy] as the Leidenschaft [passion] which mit Eifer sucht [with eagerness seeks] what Leiden schafft [causes pain]. It was a jest when Professor Kästner, who taught physics (and made jokes) at Göttingen in the eighteenth century, asked a student named Kriegk, when he was enrolling himself for his lectures, how old he was. 'Thirty years old' was the reply, whereupon Kästner remarked: 'Ah! so I have the honour of meeting the Thirty Years' War [Krieg].' (Kleinpaul, 1890.) It was with a jest that the great Rokitansky replied to the question of what were the professions of his four sons: 'Two

2 [In the 1905 edition only, this is misspelled 'sixteenth'.]
3 [Carl Rokitansky (1804–78) was the founder of the Vienna school of pathological anatomy.]
and offers him a compensation for the fresh addition to his intellectual inhibition.

The *Bierschweifel* and the *Kneipzeitung* give evidence by their names to the fact that the criticism which has repressed pleasure in nonsense has already grown so powerful that it cannot be put aside even temporarily without toxic assistance. A change in mood is the most precious thing that alcohol achieves for mankind, and on that account this 'poison' is not equally indispensable for everyone. A cheerful mood, whether it is produced endogenously or toxically, reduces the inhibiting forces, criticism among them, and makes accessible once again sources of pleasure which were under the weight of suppression. It is most instructive to observe how the standards of joking sink as spirits rise.

For high spirits replace jokes, just as jokes must try to replace high spirits, in which possibilities of enjoyment which are otherwise inhibited—among them the pleasure in nonsense—can come into their own: 'Mit wenig Witz und viel Behagen.' Under the influence of alcohol the grown man once more becomes a child, who finds pleasure in having the course of his thoughts freely at his disposal without paying regard to the compulsion of logic.

I hope I have now also shown that the absurdity-techniques of jokes are a source of pleasure. It need only be repeated that this pleasure arises from an economy in psychical expenditure or a relief from the compulsion of criticism.

If we look back once more at the three separate groups of joke-techniques, we see that the first and third of these groups—the replacement of thing-associations by word-associations and the use of absurdity—can be brought together as re-establishing old liberties and getting rid of the burden of intellectual upbringing; they are psychical reliefs, which can in a sense be contrasted with the economizing which constitutes the technique of the second group. Relief from psychical expenditure that is already there and economizing in psychical expenditure that is only about to be called for—from these two principles all the techniques of jokes, and accordingly all pleasure from these techniques, are derived. The two species of technique and

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1 ['With little wit and much enjoyment.' (Mephistopheles in Auerbach's Cellar *Faust*, Part 1, Scene 5.)]
begin these games, I believe that in his later development he gives himself up to them with the consciousness that they are nonsensical, and that he finds enjoyment in the attraction of what is forbidden by reason. He now uses games in order to withdraw from the pressure of critical reason. But there is far more potency in the restrictions which must establish themselves in the course of a child’s education in logical thinking and in distinguishing between what is true and false in reality; and for this reason the rebellion against the compulsion of logic and reality is deep-going and long-lasting. Even the phenomena of imaginative activity must be included in this [rebellious] category. The power of criticism has increased so greatly in the later part of childhood and in the period of learning which extends over puberty that the pleasure in ‘liberated nonsense’ only seldom dares to show itself directly. One does not venture to say anything absurd. But the characteristic tendency of boys to do absurd or silly things seems to me to be directly derived from the pleasure in nonsense. In pathological cases we often see this tendency so far intensified that once more it dominates the schoolboy’s talk and answers. I have been able to convince myself in the case of a few boys of secondary school age who had developed neuroses that the unconscious workings of their pleasure in the nonsense they produced played no less a part in their inefficiency than did their real ignorance.

Nor, later on, does the University student cease these demonstrations against the compulsion of logic and reality, the dominance of which, however, he feels growing ever more intolerant and unrestricted. A large amount of student ‘rags’ are a part of this reaction. For man is a ‘tireless pleasure-seeker’—I forget where I came across this happy expression—and any renunciation of a pleasure he has once enjoyed comes hard to him. With the cheerful nonsense of his Bierschwefel,\(^1\) for instance, the student tries to rescue his pleasure in freedom of thinking, of which he is being more and more deprived by the schooling of academic instruction. Much later still, indeed, when as a grown man he meets others in scientific congresses and once more feels himself a learner, after the meeting is over there comes the Kneipzeitung,\(^2\) which distorts the new discoveries into nonsense,

\(^1\) [‘Bierschwefel’; ludicrous speech delivered at a beer party.]
\(^2\) [A comic set of minutes. Literally, ‘tavern newspaper.’]
the political columns of our daily papers. In attempting to estimate the merits of this joke I now attribute them to the fact that a single word has transported us, with the economy of a long détour in thought, from the circle of ideas of the kitchen to the remote one of politics. But at the time my account would have had to be different, and I should have said that this word transported us from the circle of ideas of the kitchen to that of politics, which was remote from it but was certain of our lively interest because we were constantly concerned with it. Another joke, 'This girl reminds me of Dreyfus; the army doesn't believe in her innocence' [p. 40], has also faded to-day, though its technical methods must have remained unaltered. The bewilderment caused by the comparison and the double-entendre in the word 'innocence' cannot compensate for the fact that the allusion, which at the time touched on an event cathected with oblivion. The need which men feel for deriving pleasure from a certain length of life: their life runs a course made up of a period of flowering and a period of decay and it ends in complete oblivion. The need which men feel for deriving pleasure from an event cathected with a joke which once already.' A joke like this is not wittily constructed; it will lose its effect if it is not repeated without adding a commentary to explain who Princess Louise was and the sense in which she was durchgebrannt.

Thus a great number of the jokes in circulation have a topical jokes and after a long detour in thought, remains a joke without the remote one of politics. But at the time my account would have had to be different, and I should have said that this word transported us from the circle of ideas of the kitchen to that of politics, which was remote from it but was certain of our lively interest because we were constantly concerned with it. Another joke, 'This girl reminds me of Dreyfus; the army doesn't believe in her innocence' [p. 40], has also faded to-day, though its technical methods must have remained unaltered. The bewilderment caused by the comparison and the double-entendre in the word 'innocence' cannot compensate for the fact that the allusion, which at the time touched on an event cathected with oblivion. The need which men feel for deriving pleasure from a certain length of life: their life runs a course made up of a period of flowering and a period of decay and it ends in complete oblivion. The need which men feel for deriving pleasure from an event cathected with an joke which once already.' A joke like this is not wittily constructed; it will lose its effect if it is not repeated without adding a commentary to explain who Princess Louise was and the sense in which she was durchgebrannt.

Thus a great number of the jokes in circulation have a certain length of life: their life runs a course made up of a period of flowering and a period of decay and it ends in complete oblivion. The need which men feel for deriving pleasure from their processes of thought is therefore constantly creating new jokes based on the new interests of the day. The vital force of topical jokes is not their own; it is borrowed, by the method of allusion, from those other interests, the expiry of which determines the fate of the joke as well. The factor of topicality is a 

1 [It must accordingly be explained that Princess Louise was the Crown Princess of Saxony who left her husband in 1903. For an account of the strange circumstances, see her autobiography (1911).]
source of pleasure, ephemeral it is true but particularly abundant, which supplements the sources inherent in the joke itself. It cannot be simply equated with the rediscovery of what is familiar. It is concerned rather with a particular category of what is familiar, which must in addition possess the characteristic of being fresh, recent and untouched by forgetting. In the formation of dreams, too, we come across a special preference for what is recent and we cannot escape a suspicion that association with what is recent is rewarded, and so facilitated, by a peculiar bonus of pleasure.

Unification, which is after all no more than repetition in the sphere of thought-connections instead of in that of subject-matter, was given special recognition by Fechner as a source of the pleasure in jokes. He writes (Fechner, 1897, I, Chapter XVII): 'In my opinion the chief part in the field we are now considering is played by the principle of the unified linking of multiplicities; it requires support, however, from auxiliary determinants in order that the enjoyment which can be derived from these cases, with its peculiar character, may be carried over the threshold.'

In all these cases of repeating the same connections or the same subject-matter in the words, or of rediscovering what is familiar or recent, it seems impossible to avoid deriving the pleasure felt in them from economy in psychical expenditure—provided that this line of approach turns out to be fruitful in throwing light on details and in arriving at new generalities. We are aware that we have still to make it clear how the economy comes about and what the meaning is of the expression 'psychical expenditure'.

The third group of techniques of jokes—for the most part of conceptual jokes—which comprises faulty thinking, displacements, absurdity, representation by the opposite, etc., may at a first glance seem to bear a special impress and to betray no kinship with the techniques of rediscovery of what is familiar or the replacement of object-associations by word-associations.

1 [See The Interpretation of Dreams, e.g. Standard Ed., 4, 179-81 and 5, 562-4.]

2 The title of Chapter XVII is 'On significant and joking similes, play upon words and other cases which bear the character of being amusing, funny or ridiculous.'

Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten

gängliche Lustquelle zwar, aber als besonders ergiebige zu den eigenen des Witzes hinzutritt, kann nicht einfach dem Wiederfinden des Bekannten gleichgesetzt werden. Es handelt sich vielmehr um eine besondere Qualifikation des Bekannten, dem die Eigenschaft des Frischen, Rezenten, nicht vom Vergessen Berührten zukommen muß. Auch bei der Traumbildung begegnet man einer besonderen Bevorzugung des Rezenten 2 und kann sich der Vermutung nicht erwählen, daß die Assoziation mit dem Rezenten durch eine eigenartige Lustprämie belohnt, also erleichtert wird.

Die Unifizierung, die ja nur die Wiederholung auf dem Gebiete des Gedankenzusammenhanges anstatt des Materials ist, hat bei G. Th. Fechner eine besondere Anerkennung als Lustquelle des Witzes gefunden. Fechner äußert (Vorschule der Ästhetik [1897], Bd. 1, XVII): 'Meines Erachtens spielt in dem Felde, was wir hier vor Augen haben, das Prinzip der einheitlichen Verknüpfung des Mannigfaltigen die Hauptrolle, bedarf aber noch unterstützender Nebenbedingungen, um das Vergnügen, was die hierher gehörigen Fälle gewähren können, mit seinem eigentümlichen Charakter über die Schwelle zu treiben.'


Die dritte Gruppe der Techniken des Witzes—zumeist des Gedankenwitzes—welche die Denkfehler, Verschiebungen, den Widersinn, die Darstellung durch das Gegenteil u. a. umfaßt, mag für den ersten Anschlag ein besonderes Gepräge tragen und keine Verwandtschaft mit den Techniken des Wiederfindens des Bekannten oder des Ersatzes der Gegenstandsassoziationen durch die Wortassoziationen verraten; es ist

2 S. Die Traumdeutung (1900 a), insbesondere die Diskussion über »Das Rezente und das Indifferente im Traum«, im zweiten Drittel von Abschnitt A des V. Kapitels, sowie eine weitere Passage etwa in der Mitte von Abschnitt C des VII. Kapitels.

1 Abschnitt XVII ist überschrieben: Von sinreichiten und witzigen Vergleichen, Wortspielen u. a. Fällen, welche den Charakter der Ergötzeldiskeit, Lustigkeit, Lächerlichkeit tragen.
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Nevertheless it is particularly easy here to bring into play the theory of economy or relief in psychical expenditure.

It cannot be doubted that it is easier and more convenient to diverge from a line of thought we have embarked on than to keep to it, to jumble up things that are different rather than to contrast them—and, indeed, that it is specially convenient to admit as valid methods of inference that are rejected by logic and, lastly, to put words or thoughts together without regard to the condition that they ought also to make sense. This cannot be doubted; and these are precisely the things that are done by the joke-techniques which we are discussing. But the hypothesis that behaviour of this kind by the joke-work provides a source of pleasure will strike us as strange, since apart from jokes all such inefficient intellectual functioning produces in us nothing but unpleasurable defensive feelings.

‘Pleasure in nonsense’, as we may call it for short, is concealed in serious life to a vanishing point. In order to demonstrate it we must investigate two cases—one in which it is still visible and one in which it becomes invisible again: the behaviour of a child in learning, and that of an adult in a toxically altered state of mind.

During the period in which a child is learning how to handle the vocabulary of his mother-tongue, it gives him obvious pleasure to ‘experiment with it in play’, to use Groos’s words [p. 121]. And he puts words together without regard to the condition that they should make sense, in order to obtain from them the pleasurable effect of rhythm or rhyme. Little by little he is forbidden this enjoyment, till all that remains permitted to him are significant combinations of words. But when he is older attempts still emerge at disregarding the restrictions that have been learnt on the use of words. Words are disfigured by particular little additions being made to them, their forms are altered by certain manipulations (e.g. by reduplications or ‘Zittersprache’), or a private language may even be constructed for use among playmates. These attempts are found again among certain categories of mental patients.

Whatever the motive may have been which led the child to

\[1\] [This was a particular form of secret language in which the sound ‘zitter’ played a part. The topic had been touched on by Freud in the passage in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900a), Standard Ed., 4, 303, already referred to (p. 120n.).]
JOKES AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

heilen [heal] and two *heulen [howl]* (two doctors and two singers). The information was correct and therefore not open to criticism; but it added nothing to what might have been expressed in the words in brackets. There can be no mistaking the fact that the answer was given the other form only on account of the pleasure which was produced by the unification and the similar sound of the two words.

I think now at length we see our way clearly. All through our consideration of the techniques of jokes we have been disturbed by the fact that they were not proper to jokes only; and yet the essence of jokes seemed to depend on them, since when they were got rid of by reduction the characteristics and the pleasure of the joke were lost. We now see that what we have described as the techniques of jokes—and we must in a certain sense continue to describe them so—are rather the sources from which jokes provide pleasure; and we feel that there is nothing strange in other procedures drawing from the same sources for the same end. The technique which is characteristic of jokes and peculiar to them, however, consists in their procedure for safeguarding the use of these methods of providing pleasure against the objections raised by criticism which would put an end to the pleasure. There is little that we can say in general about this procedure. The joke-work, as we have already remarked, shows itself in a choice of verbal material and conceptual situations which will allow the old play with words and thoughts to withstand the scrutiny of criticism; and with that end in view every peculiarity of vocabulary and every combination of thought-sequences must be exploited in the most ingenious possible way. We may be in a position later to characterize the joke-work by a particular property; for the moment it remains unexplained how the selection favourable for jokes can be made. The purpose and function of jokes, however—namely, the protection of sequences of words and thoughts from criticism—can already be seen in jests as their essential feature. Their function consists from the first in lifting internal inhibitions and in making sources of pleasure fertile which have been rendered inaccessible by those inhibitions; and we shall find that they remain loyal to this characteristic throughout their development.

We are also in a position now to assign its correct place to...
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the factor of 'sense in nonsense' (cf. the introduction, p. 12), to which the authorities attribute such great importance as a distinguishing mark of jokes and as an explanation of their pleasurable effect. The two fixed points in what determines the nature of jokes—their purpose of continuing pleasurable play and their effort to protect it from the criticism of reason—immediately explain why an individual joke, though it may seem senseless from one point of view, must appear sensible, or at least allowable, from another. How it does so remains the affair of the joke-work; if it fails to do so, it is simply rejected as 'nonsense'. But there is no necessity for us to derive the pleasurable effect of jokes from the conflict between the feelings which arise (whether directly or along the path of 'bewilderment and enlightenment' [p. 12 f.]) from the simultaneous sense and nonsense of jokes. Nor have we any need to enter further into the question of how pleasure could arise from the alternation between 'thinking it senseless' and 'recognizing it as sensible'. The psychogenesis of jokes has taught us that the pleasure in a joke is derived from play with words or from the liberation of nonsense, and that the meaning of the joke is merely intended to protect that pleasure from being done away with by criticism.

In this way the problem of the essential character of jokes is already explained in jests. We may now turn to the further development of jests, to the point at which they reach their height in tendentious jokes. Jests still give the foremost place to the purpose of giving us enjoyment, and are content if what they say does not appear senseless or completely devoid of substance. If what a jest says possesses substance and value, it turns into a joke. A thought which would deserve our interest even if it were expressed in the most unpretentious form is now clothed in a form which must give us enjoyment on its own account.1

1 As an example which shows the difference between a jest and a joke proper we may take the excellent joking remark with which a member of the 'Bürger' Ministry in Austria answered a question about the cabinet's solidarity: 'How can we einstehen [stand up] for one another if we can't ausstehen [stand] one another?' Technique: use of the same material with slight (contrary) modification. Logical and apposite thought: there can be no solidarity without mutual understanding. The contrary nature of the modification (ein [in]—aus [out]) corresponds to the incompatibility asserted in the thought and serves as a

IV. Der Lustmechanismus und die Psychogenese des Witzes


Somit wäre das Problem des wesentlichen Charakters des Witzes bereits am Scherz erklärt. Wir dürfen uns der weiteren Entwicklung des Scherzes bis zu ihrer Höhe im tendenziösen Witz zuwenden. Der Scherz stellt noch die Tendenz voran, uns Vernünftigen zu bereiten, und begnügt sich damit, daß seine Aussage nicht unsinnig oder völlig gehaltlos erscheine. Wenn diese Aussage selbst eine gehalt- und wertvolle ist, wandelt sich der Scherz zum Witz. Ein Gedanke, der unseres Interesses würdig gewesen wäre, auch in schlichtester Form ausgedrückt, ist nun in eine Form gekleidet, die an und für sich unser Wohlgefallen erregen muß.1 Gewiß

A combination like this can certainly not, we must suppose, have come about unintentionally; and we must try to discover the intention underlying the construction of the joke. An observation which we made earlier (in passing, as it seemed) will put us on the track. We said above (p. 94) that a good joke makes, as it were, a total impression of enjoyment on us, without our being able to decide at once what share of the pleasure arises from its joking form and what share from its apt thought-content. We are constantly making mistakes in this apportionment. Sometimes we over-estimate the goodness of the joke on account of our admiration of the thought it contains; and so to spoil the source of a pleasure. If the joke has made us laugh, moreover, a disposition most unfavourable for criticism and confusion them. We are inclined to give the thought the benefit of what has pleased us in the form of the joke; and we are no longer inclined to find anything wrong that has given us enjoyment and so to spoil the source of a pleasure. If the joke has made us laugh, moreover, a disposition most unfavourable for criticism will have been established in us; for in that case something will have forced us into the mood which play has previously sufficed to produce, and for which the joke has tried by every possible means to make itself a substitute. Even though we have earlier asserted that such jokes are to be described as innocent and not yet tendentious, we must not forget that strictly speaking only jests are non-tendentious—that is, serve solely the aim of producing pleasure. Jokes, even if the thought contained in them is non-tendentious and thus only serves theoretical intellectual interests, are in fact never non-tendentious. They pursue the representation of it.—[The 'Bürger' (Middle-Class) Ministry took office after the new Austrian constitution was established in 1867, but owing to internal disharmony only lasted for a couple of years. Cf. The Interpretation of Dreams, Standard Ed., 4, 193.]
IV. PLEASURE AND THE GENESIS OF JOKES

Second aim: to promote the thought by augmenting it and guarding it against criticism. Here they are once again expressing their original nature by setting themselves up against an inhibiting and restricting power—which is now the critical judgement.

This, the first use of jokes that goes beyond the production of pleasure, points the way to their further uses. A joke is now seen to be a psychical factor possessed of power: its weight, thrown into one scale or the other, can be decisive. The major purposes and instincts of mental life employ it for their own ends. The originally non-tendentious joke, which began as play, is secondarily brought into relation with purposes from which nothing that takes form in the mind can ultimately keep away. We know already what it is able to achieve in the service of the purpose of exposure, and of hostile, cynical and sceptical purposes. In the case of obscene jokes, which are derived from smut, it turns the third person who originally interfered with the sexual situation into an ally, before whom the woman must feel shame, by bribing him with the gift of its yield of pleasure. In the case of aggressive purposes it employs the same method in order to turn the hearer, who was indifferent to begin with, into a co-hater or co-despiser, and creates for the enemy a host of opponents where at first there was only one. In the first case it overcomes the inhibitions of shame and respectability by means of the bonus of pleasure which it offers; in the second it upsets the critical judgement which would otherwise have examined the dispute. In the third and fourth cases, in the service of cynical and sceptical purposes, it shatters respect for institutions and truths in which the hearer has believed, on the one hand by reinforcing the argument, but on the other by practising a new species of attack. Where argument tries to draw the hearer's criticism over on to its side, the joke endeavours to push the criticism out of sight. There is no doubt that the joke has chosen the method which is psychologically the more effective.

In this survey of the achievements of tendentious jokes, most prominence has been assumed by—what is more easily seen—the effect of jokes on the person who hears them. More important, however, from the point of view of our understanding, are the functions accomplished by jokes in the mind of the
we should try to study the psychical phenomena of jokes with inhibition in the maker of the joke. At the least the expectation in the hearer corresponds to an internal obstacle which is overcome in the person to whom they occur. We have already proposed a provisional suggestion that the psychical process provoked by the joke in the hearer is in most cases modelled on that which occurs in its creator. The external obstacle which is to be overcome in the hearer corresponds to an internal obstacle which is overcome in its creator. In certain cases the internal obstacle which is overcome by the tendentious joke is obvious; in Herr N.'s jokes, for instance, we were able to assume that not only did they make it possible for their hearers to enjoy aggressiveness in the form of insults, but that above all they made it possible for him to produce them. Among the various kinds of internal inhibition or suppression there is one which deserves our special interest, because it is the most far-reaching. It is given the name of 'repression', and is recognized by its function of preventing the impulses subjected to it, and their derivatives, from becoming conscious. Tendentious jokes, as we shall see, are able to release pleasure even from sources that have undergone repression. If, as has been suggested above, the overcoming of external obstacles can in this way be traced back to the overcoming of internal inhibitions and repressions, we may say that tendentious jokes exhibit the main characteristic of the jokework—that of liberating pleasure by getting rid of inhibitions—more clearly than any other of the developmental stages of jokes. Either they strengthen the purposes which they serve, by bringing assistance to them from impulses that are kept suppressed, or they put themselves entirely at the service of suppressed purposes.

We may be ready to admit that this is what tendentious jokes achieve; yet we must bear in mind that we do not understand how they are able to put these achievements into effect. Their power lies in the yield of pleasure which they draw from the sources of play upon words and of liberated nonsense; but if we are to judge by the impressions gained from non-tendentious jests, we cannot possibly think the amount of this pleasure great enough to explain the seemingly immense popularity of these forms of jest. Either they strengthen the purposes which they serve, and we may be ready to admit that this is what tendentious jokes achieve; yet we must bear in mind that we do not understand how they are able to put these achievements into effect. Their power lies in the yield of pleasure which they draw from the sources of play upon words and of liberated nonsense; but if we are to judge by the impressions gained from non-tendentious jests, we cannot possibly think the amount of this pleasure great enough to explain the seemingly immense popularity of these forms of jest.
IV. PLEASURE AND THE GENESIS OF JOKES

IV. Der Lustmechanismus und die Psychogenese des Witzes

enough to attribute to it the strength to lift deeply-rooted inhibitions and repressions. What we have before us here is in fact no simple effect of force but a more complex situation of release. Instead of setting out the long détour by which I reached an understanding of this situation, I will try to give a short synthetic exposition of it.

Fechner (1897, I, Chapter V) has put forward a 'principle of aesthetic assistance or intensification', which he has expressed as follows: 'If determinants of pleasure that in themselves produce little effect converge without mutual contradiction, there results a greater, and often a much greater, outcome of pleasure than corresponds to the pleasure-value of the separate determinants—a greater pleasure than could be explained as the sum of the separate effects. Indeed, a convergence of this kind can even lead to a positive resultant of pleasure and the threshold of pleasure may be crossed, where the separate factors are too weak to do so: though they must, in comparison with others, show a perceptible advantage in enjoyableness.' (Ibid., 51. The italics are Fechner's.)

The topic of jokes does not, I think, give us much opportunity of confirming the correctness of this principle, which can be shown to hold good in many other aesthetic structures. As regards jokes we have learnt something else, which at least fringes upon this principle: namely, that where several pleasure-giving factors operate together we are not able to attribute to each of them the share it has really taken in this situation, I will try to give a short synthetic exposition of it.

IV. Der Lustmechanismus und die Psychogenese des Witzes

G. Th. Fechner has in seiner Vorschule der Ästhetik (Bd. 1, Kapitel V) das Prinzip der ästhetischen Hilfe oder Steigerung aufgestellt, das er in folgenden Worten ausführt: 'Aus dem widerspruchlosen Zusammen­ treffen von Lustbedingungen, die für sich wenig leisten, geht ein größerer, oft viel größeres Lustresultat hervor, als dem Lustwerte der einzelnen Bedingungen für sich entspricht, ein größeres, als daß es als Summe der Einzelwirkungen erklärt werden könnte; ja es kann selbst durch ein Zusammen treffen dieser Art ein positives Lustergebnis erzielt, die Schwelle der Lust übersteigen werden, wo die einzelnen Faktoren zu schwach dazu sind; nur daß sie vergleichungweise mit anderen einen Vorteil der Wohlgefälligkeit spürbar werden lassen müssen.'

Ich meine, das Thema des Witzes gibt uns nicht viel Gelegenheit, die Richtigkeit dieses Prinzips, der sich an vielen anderen künstlerischen Bildungen erweisen läßt, zu bestätigen. Am Witz haben wir etwas anderes gelernt, was wenigstens in die Nähe dieses Prinzips gehört, daß wir beim Zusammenwirken mehrerer lusterzeugender Faktoren nicht imstande sind, jedem derselben den ihm am Ergebnis wirklich zukommenden Anteil zuzuweisen (siehe S. 89). Man kann aber die in dem Prinzip der Hilfe angenommene Situation variieren und für diese neuen Bedingungen eine Reihe von Fragestellungen erzielen, die der Beantwortung würdig wären. Was geschieht allgemein, wenn in einer Konstellation Lustbedingungen mit Unlustbedingungen zusammentreffen? Wovon hängt dann das Ergebnis und das Vorzeichen desselben ab?

Der Fall des tendenzösen Witzes ist ein spezieller unter diesen Möglichkeiten. Es ist eine Regung oder Strebung vorhanden, welche Lust aus einer bestimmten Quelle entbinden wollte und bei ungehindertem Gewähren auch entbinden würde, außerdem besteht eine andere Strebung, welche dieser Lustentwicklung entgegenwirkt, sie also hemmt oder unterdrückt. Die unterdrückende Strömung muß, wie der Erfolg zeigt, um ein Gewisses stärker sein als die unterdrückte, die darum doch nicht aufgehoben ist.
Now let us suppose that yet another urge makes its appearance which would release pleasure through the same process, though from other sources, and which thus operates in the same sense as the suppressed urge. What can the result be in such a case?

An example will give us our bearings better than this schematic discussion. Let us assume that there is an urge to offend or of aesthetic culture that the insult cannot take place. If, for instance, it were able to break through as a result of some change of emotional condition or mood, this break-through by the insulting purpose would be felt subsequently with unpleasure. Thus the insult does not take place. Let us now suppose, however, that the possibility is presented of deriving a good joke from the material of the words and thoughts used for the insult—the possibility, that is, of releasing pleasure from other sources which are not obstructed by the same suppression. This second development of pleasure could, nevertheless, not occur unless the insult were permitted; but as soon as the latter is permitted the new release of pleasure is also joined to it. Experience with tendentious jokes shows that in such circumstances the suppressed purpose can, with the assistance of the pleasure from the joke, gain sufficient strength to overcome the inhibition, which would otherwise be stronger than it. The insult takes place, because the joke is thus made possible. But the enjoyment obtained is not only that produced by the joke: it is incomparably greater. It is so much greater than the pleasure from the joke that we must suppose that the hitherto suppressed purpose has succeeded in making its way through, perhaps without any diminution whatever. It is in such circumstances that the tendentious joke is received with the heartiest laughter.¹

An examination of the determinants of laughing will perhaps lead us to a plainer idea of what happens when a joke affords assistance against suppression. [Cf. p. 145 ff. below.] Even now, however, we can see that the case of tendentious jokes is a special case of the 'principle of assistance'. A possibility of generating pleasure supervenes in a situation in which another...

¹ [Freud had already propounded a parallel theory, to explain the often exaggerated amount of affect experienced in dreams, in Chapter VI, Section H, of The Interpretation of Dreams (1900a), Standard Ed., 5, 478 ff.]
possibility of pleasure is obstructed so that, as far as the latter alone is concerned, no pleasure would arise. The result is a generation of pleasure far greater than that offered by the supervening possibility. This has acted, as it were, as an incentive bonus; with the assistance of the offer of a small amount of pleasure, a much greater one, which would otherwise have been hard to achieve, has been gained. I have good reason to suspect that this principle corresponds with an arrangement that holds good in many widely separated departments of mental life and it will, I think, be expedient to describe. the pleasure that serves purposes in order that, by means of using the pleasure from its perfecting it remains true to its essential nature. It begins as play, in order to derive pleasure from the liberation of nonsense. Next, as a joke proper, its use in aesthetic creations at the end of his 'Autobiographical Study' (1925d), ibid., 20, 65.]
sources of verbal pleasure and, from the stage of the jest onwards, opens new sources of pleasure for itself by lifting inhibitions. The pleasure that it produces, whether it is pleasure in play or pleasure in lifting inhibitions, can invariably be traced back to economy in psychical expenditure, provided that this view does not contradict the essential nature of pleasure and that it proves itself fruitful in other directions.  

1 Nonsense jokes, which have not had due attention paid to them in my account, deserve some supplementary consideration.

The importance which our views attach to the factor of 'sense in nonsense' might lead to a demand that every joke must be a nonsense joke. But this is not necessary, because it is only playing with thoughts that inevitably leads to nonsense; the other source of pleasure in jokes, playing with words, only gives that impression occasionally and does not invariably provoke the implied criticism. The twofold root of the pleasure in jokes—from playing with words and playing with thoughts, which corresponds to the very important distinction between verbal and conceptual jokes—makes it perceptibly more difficult to arrive at a concise formulation of general statements about jokes. Playing with words produces manifest pleasure as a result of the factors that have been enumerated above (recognition, and so on), and is consequently only to a small degree liable to suppression. Playing with thoughts cannot have its motive in this kind of pleasure; it meets with very energetic suppression, and the pleasure which it can yield is only to a small degree liable to suppression. Playing with thoughts cannot have its motive in lifting inhibitions. The pleasure which it produces, whether it is pleasure in lifting inhibitions, can invariably be provoking the implied criticism. The twofold root of the pleasure in jokes—playing with words and playing with thoughts—implies that inevitably leads to nonsense; the other source of pleasure in jokes, which corresponds to the essential nature of pleasure.

In addition to this, nonsense in a joke can be used to represent a mental attitude; whereas we see that our pleasure in a nonsense joke arises from our having succeeded in expressing a mental attitude.

1 Eine kurze nachdrückliche Berücksichtigung verdienen noch die Unsinnswitze, die in der Darstellung nicht zu ihrem vollen Recht gelangt sind.


[Added 1912:] A number of productions resembling jokes can be classed alongside of nonsense jokes. There is no appropriate name for them, but they might well be described as 'idiocty masquerading as a joke'. There are countless numbers of them, and I will only select two samples:

1 A man at the dinner table who was being handed fish dipped his two hands twice in the mayonnaise and then ran them through his hair. When his neighbour looked at him in astonishment, he seemed to

Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten

und eröffnet sich von der Stufe des Scherzes an neue Lustquellen durch die Aufhebung von Hemmungen. Die Lust, die er erzeugt, sei es nun Spiellust oder Aufhebungslust, können wir alle Male von Ersparung an psychischem Aufwand ableiten, falls solche Auffassung nicht dem Wesen der Lust widerspricht und sich noch anderweitig fruchtbar erweist.

[ Zusatz 1912:] An die Unsinnswitze kann man eine Reihe von witzähnlichen Produktionen anschließen, für die es an einem passenden Namen fehlt, die aber auf der Bedeutung 'witzig scheinen' der Bildstätte Anspruch haben könnten. Es gibt deren ungezählte viele; ich will nur zwei als Proben herausheben:

Ein Mann griff bei Tische, als ihm der Fisch serviert wird, zweimal mit beiden Händen in die Mayonnaise und streicht sie dann durch die Haare. Vom Nachbar erstaunt angesehen, scheint er
notice his mistake and apologized: "I'm so sorry, I thought it was spinach."

Or: "Life is a suspension bridge", said one man.—"Why is that?" asked the other.—"How should I know?" was the reply.

These extreme examples have an effect because they rouse the expectation of a joke, so that one tries to find a concealed sense behind the nonsense. But one finds none; they really are nonsense. The pretence makes it possible for a moment to liberate the pleasure in nonsense. These jokes are not entirely without a purpose; they are a 'take-in', and give the person who tells them a certain amount of pleasure in misleading and annoying his hearer. The latter then damps down his annoyance by determining to tell them himself later on.
THE MOTIVES OF JOKES—JOKES AS A SOCIAL PROCESS

It might seem superfluous to talk about the motives of jokes, since the aim of getting pleasure must be recognized as a sufficient motive for the joke-work. But on the one hand the possibility cannot be excluded of other motives as well having a share in the production of jokes, and on the other hand, bearing in mind some familiar experiences, we must raise the general question of the subjective determinants of jokes.

Two facts in particular make this necessary. Although the joke-work is an excellent method of getting pleasure out of psychical processes, it is nevertheless evident that not everyone is equally capable of making use of that method, the joke-work is not at everyone's command, and altogether only a few people have a plentiful amount of it; and these are distinguished by being spoken of as having 'wit' [Witz].1 'Wit' appears in this connection as a special capacity—rather in the class of the old mental faculties; and it seems to emerge fairly independently of the others, such as intelligence, imagination, memory, etc. We must therefore presume the presence in these 'witty' people of special inherited dispositions or psychical determinants which permit or favour the joke-work.

I fear that we shall not get very far in exploring this question. We can only succeed here and there in advancing from an understanding of a particular joke to a knowledge of the subjective determinants in the mind of the person who made it. It is a remarkable coincidence that precisely the example of the Ganz joker on which we began our investigations of the technique of jokes also gives us a glimpse into the subjective determinants of jokes. I refer to Heine's joke, which has also been considered by Heymans and Lipps [p. 16]:

'... I sat beside Salomon Rothschild and he treated me quite as his equal—quite famillionairely,' ('Bäder von Lucca.')

Heine puts this remark into the mouth of a comic character,

1 [See the Editor's Preface, p. 7.]
Hirsch-Hyacinth, a Hamburg lottery-agent, extractor of corns and professional valuer, the valet of the aristocratic Baron Cristoforo Gumpelino (formerly Gumpel). The poet evidently takes the greatest satisfaction in this creation of his, for he makes Hirsch-Hyacinth into a great talker and gives him the most amusing and plain-spoken speeches, and even lets him display the practical philosophy of a Sancho Panza. It is a pity that Heine, who seems to have had no taste for dramatic construction, dropped this delightful character so soon. There are not a few passages in which the poet himself seems to be speaking, under a thin disguise, through the mouth of Hirsch-Hyacinth, and it soon becomes a certainty that this character is only a self-parody. Hirsch explains his reasons for having given up his former name and why he now calls himself 'Hyacinth'. He goes on: 'There's the further advantage that I already have an "H" on my signet, so that I don't need to have a new one cut.' But Heine himself effected the same economy when, at his baptism, he changed his first name from 'Harry' to 'Heinrich'. Everyone, too, who is familiar with the poet's biography, will recall that Heine had an uncle of the same name in Hamburg (a place which provides another connection with the figure of Hirsch-Hyacinth) who, as the rich man of the family, played a large part in his life. This uncle was also called 'Salomon', just like the old Rothschild who treated Hirsch so famillionarily. What seemed in Hirsch-Hyacinth's mouth no more than a jest soon reveals a background of serious bitterness if we ascribe it to the nephew, Harry-Heinrich. After all, he was one of the family, and we know that he had a burning wish to marry a daughter of this uncle's; but his cousin rejected him, and his uncle always treated him a little famillionarily, as a poor relation. His rich cousins in Hamburg never took him seriously. I recall a story told by an old aunt of my own, who had married into the Heine family, how one day, when she was an attractive young woman, she found sitting next her at the family dinner-table a person who struck her as uninviting and whom the rest of the company treated contemptuously. She herself felt no reason to be any more affable towards him. It was only many years later that she realized that this negligent and neglected cousin had been the poet Heinrich Heine. There is not a little evidence to

1 [Heine was baptized a Christian at the age of 27.]
show how much Heine suffered both in his youth and later from this rejection by his rich relations. It was from the soil of this subjective emotion that the 'famillionairely' joke sprang.

The presence of similar subjective determinants may be suspected in some other of the great scoffer's jokes; but I know of no other one in which this can be demonstrated so convincingly. For this reason it is not easy to try to make any more definite statement about the nature of these personal determinants. Indeed, we shall be disinclined in general to claim such complicated determinants for the origin of every individual joke. Nor are the jokes produced by other famous men any more easily accessible to our examination. We get an impression that the subjective determinants of the joke-work are often not far removed from those of neurotic illness—when we learn, for instance, of Lichtenberg that he was a severely hypochondriacal man, with all kinds of eccentricities. The great majority of jokes, and especially those that are constantly being newly produced in connection with the events of the day, are circulated anonymously; one would be curious to learn from what sort of people such productions originate. If one has occasion as a doctor to make the acquaintance of one of those people who, though not remarkable in other ways, are well known in their circle as jokers and the originators of many viable jokes, one may be surprised to discover that the joker is a disunited personality, disposed to neurotic disorders. The insufficiency of documentary evidence, however, will certainly prevent our setting up a hypothesis that a psychoneurotic constitution of this kind is a habitual or necessary subjective condition for the construction of jokes.

A more transparent case is offered, once more, by the Jewish jokes, which, as I have already mentioned (p. 111), are ordinarily made by Jews themselves, while the anecdotes about them from other sources scarcely ever rise above the level of comic stories or of brutal derision. What determines their participating in the jokes themselves seems to be the same as in the case of Heine's 'famillionairey' joke; and its significance seems to lie in the fact that the person concerned finds criticism or aggressiveness difficult so long as they are direct, and possible only along circuitous paths.

Other subjective factors which determine or favour the joke-

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Other subjective factors which determine or favour the joke-
work are less wrapped in obscurity. The motive force for the production of innocent jokes is not infrequently an ambitious urge to show one's cleverness, to display oneself—an instinct that may be equated with exhibitionism in the sexual field. The presence of numerous inhibited instincts, whose suppression has retained a certain degree of instability, will provide the most favourable disposition for the production of tendentious jokes. Thus individual components of a person's sexual constitution, in particular, can appear as motives for the construction of a joke. A whole class of obscene jokes allows one to infer the presence of a concealed inclination to exhibitionism in their inventors; aggressive tendentious jokes succeed best in people in whose sexuality a powerful sadistic component is demonstrable, which is more or less inhibited in real life.

The second fact which makes an enquiry into the subjective determination of jokes necessary is the generally recognized experience that no one can be content with having made a joke for himself alone. An urge to tell the joke to someone is inextricably bound up with the joke-work; indeed, this urge is so strong that often enough it is carried through in disregard of serious misgivings. In the case of the comic as well, telling it to someone else produces enjoyment; but the demand is not peremptory. If one comes across something comic, one can enjoy it by oneself. A joke, on the contrary, must be told to someone else. The psychical process of constructing a joke seems not to be completed when the joke occurs to one: something remains over which seeks, by communicating the idea, to bring the unknown process of constructing the joke to a conclusion.

We cannot in the first instance guess what the basis may be of this urge to communicate the joke. But we can see another peculiarity in jokes which distinguishes them from the comic. If I come across something comic, I myself can laugh heartily at it, though it is true that I am also pleased if I can make someone else laugh by telling it to him. But I myself cannot laugh at a joke that has occurred to me, that I have made, in spite of the unmistakable enjoyment that the joke gives me. It is possible that my need to communicate the joke to someone else is in some way connected with the laughter produced by it, which is denied to me but is manifest in the other person.

1 [Cf. above, p. 140.]
JOKES AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

Why is it, then, that I do not laugh at a joke of my own? And what part is played in this by the other person?

Let us take the second question first. In the case of the comic, two persons are in general concerned: besides myself, the person in whom I find something comic. If inanimate things seem to me comic, that is on account of a kind of personification which is not of rare occurrence in our ideational life. The comic process is content with these two persons: the self and the person who is the object; a third person may come into it, but is not essential. Joking as a play with one's own words and thoughts is to begin with without a person as an object. But already at the preliminary stage of the jest, if it has succeeded in making play and nonsense safe from the protests of reason, it demands another person to whom it can communicate its result. But this second person in the case of jokes does not correspond to the person who is the object, but to the third person, the 'other' person in the case of the comic. It seems as though in the case of a jest the other person has the decision passed over to him on whether the joke-work has succeeded in its task—as though the self did not feel certain in its judgement on the point.

Innocent jokes, too, jokes that serve to reinforce a thought, are content with these two persons: the self and the object; a third person may come into it, but is not essential. Joking as a play with one's own words and thoughts is to begin with without a person as an object. But already at the preliminary stage of the jest, if it has succeeded in making play and nonsense safe from the protests of reason, it demands another person to whom it can communicate its result. But this second person in the case of jokes does not correspond to the person who is the object, but to the third person, the 'other' person in the case of the comic. It seems as though in the case of a jest the other person has the decision passed over to him on whether the joke-work has succeeded in its task—as though the self did not feel certain in its judgement on the point.

A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
Of him that makes it ...

A person who is dominated by a mood concerned with serious thoughts is not fitted to confirm the fact that a jest has succeeded

Warum lache ich nun nicht über meinen eigenen Witz? Und welches ist dabei die Rolle des anderen?

Wenden wir uns zuerst der letzteren Frage zu. Beim Komischen kommen im allgemeinen zwei Personen in Betracht, außer meinem Ich die Person, an der ich das Komische finde; wenn mir Gegenstände komisch erscheinen, geschieht dies durch eine in unserem Vorstellungsleben nicht seltene Art von Personifizierung. Mit diesen beiden Personen, dem Ich und der Objektperson, begnügt sich der komische Vorgang; eine dritte Person kann hinzukommen, wird aber nicht erfordert. Der Witz als ein Spiel mit den eigenen Worten und Gedanken entbehrt zunächst einer Objektperson, aber schon auf der Vorstufe des Scherzes verlangt er, wenn es ihm gelungen ist, Spiel und Unsinne gegen die Einrede der Vernunft sicherzustellen, nach einer anderen Person, welcher er sein Ergebnis mitteilen kann. Diese zweite Person beim Witz entspricht aber nicht der Objektperson, sondern der dritten Person, dem anderen bei der Komik. Es scheint, daß beim Scherz der anderen Person die Entscheidung übertragen wird, ob die Witzarbeit ihre Aufgabe erfüllt hat, als ob das Ich sich seines Urteils darüber nicht sicher wüßte. Auch der harmlose, den Gedanken verstärkende Witz bedarf des anderen, um zu erproben, ob er seine Absicht erreicht hat. Begibt sich der Witz in den Dienst entblößender oder feindseliger Tendenzen, so kann er als psychischer Vorgang zwischen drei Personen beschrieben werden, welche die nämlichen sind wie bei der Komik, aber die Rolle der dritten Person ist eine andere dabei; der psychische Vorgang des Witzes vollendet sich zwischen der ersten, dem Ich, der dritten, dem fremden Person, nicht wie beim Komischen zwischen dem Ich und der Objektperson.

Auch bei der dritten Person des Witzes stößt der Witz auf subjektive Bedingungen, die das Ziel der Lusterregung unerreichbar machen können. Wie Shakespeare mahnt (Love's Labour's Lost, V. Akt, 2. Szene):

»A jest’s prosperity lies in the ear
of him that hears it, never in the tongue
of him that makes it...

Wen eine an ernste Gedanken geknüpft Stimmung beherrscht, der ist ungeeignet, dem Scherz zu bestätigen, daß es ihm geglückt ist, die Wort-
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in rescuing the verbal pleasure. He must himself be in a cheerful or at least in an indifferent state of feeling in order to act as the jest's third person. The same obstacle applies to innocent and to tendentious jokes; but in the latter there is a further obstacle in the form of opposition to the purpose which the joke is trying to serve. The third person cannot be ready to laugh at an excellent obscene joke if the exposure applies to a highly respected relative of his own; before a gathering of priests and ministers no one would venture to produce Heine's comparison of catholic and protestant clerics to retail tradesmen and employees of a wholesale business [p. 87]; and an audience composed of my opponent's devoted friends would receive my most successful pieces of joking invective against him not as jokes but as invective, and would meet them with indignation and not with pleasure. Some degree of benevolence or a kind of neutrality, an absence of any factor that could provoke feelings opposed to the purpose of the joke, is an indispensable condition if the third person is to collaborate in the completion of the process of making the joke.

Where there are no such obstacles to the operation of the joke, the phenomenon which is now the subject of our enquiry emerges: the pleasure which the joke has produced is more evident in the third person than in the creator of the joke. We must be content to say more 'evident' where we should be inclined to ask whether the hearer's pleasure is not more 'intense' than that of the maker of the joke, since we naturally have no means of measuring and comparing. We see, however, that the hearer gives evidence of his pleasure with a burst of laughter, after the first person has as a rule produced the joke with a tensely serious look. If I repeat a joke that I have heard myself, I must, if I am not to spoil its effect, behave in telling it exactly like the person who made it. The question now arises whether we can draw any conclusions about the psychical process of constructing jokes from this factor of laughing at jokes.

It cannot be our design to consider at this point all that has been propounded and published on the nature of laughter. We may well be deterred from any such plan by the remarks with which Dugas, a pupil of Ribot's, prefaces his book La psychologie du rire (1902, 1): 'Il n'est pas de fait plus banal et plus étudié que le rire; il n'en est pas qui ait eu le don d'exciter davantage lust zu retten. Er muß selbst in heiterer oder wenigstens in indifferenter Stimmungslage sein, um für den Scherz die dritte Person abzugeben. Dasselbe Hindernis setzt sich für den harmlosen und für den tendenziösen Witz fort; bei letzterem tritt aber als neues Hindernis der Gegen- satz zur Tendenz auf, welcher der Witz dienen will. Die Bereitschaft, über einen ausgezeichneten obszönen Witz zu lachen, kann sich nicht einstellen, wenn die Entblösung eine hochgehaltene Angehörige der dritten Person betrifft; in einer Versammlung von Pfarrern und Pastoren dürfte niemand wagen, die Heineschen Vergleiche katholischer und protestantischer Pfaffen mit Kleinändlern und Angestellten einer Großhandlung vorzubringen [s. S. 84], und vor einem Parterre von ergebenen Freunden meines Gegners würden die witzigsten Invektiven, die ich gegen ihn vorbringen kann, nicht als Witze, sondern als Invektiven zur Geltung kommen, Entrüstung und nicht Lust bei den Hörern erzeugen. Ein Grad von Geneigung oder eine gewisse Indifferenz, die Abwesenheit aller Momente, welche starke, der Tendenz gegeniéranter Gefühle hervorrufen können, ist unerlässliche Bedingung, wenn die dritte Person zur Vollendung des Witzvorganges mitwirken soll.

Wo solche Hindernisse für die Wirkung des Witzes entfallen, da tritt das Phänomen auf, dem nun unsere Untersuchung gilt, daß die Lust, welche der Witz bereitet hat, sich an der dritten Person deutlicher er- weist als an dem Urheber des Witzes. Wir müssen uns begnügen zu sagen: deutlicher, wo wir geneigt wären zu fragen, ob die Lust des Hörers nicht intensiver ist als die des Witzbildners, weil uns, wie be- greiflich, die Mittel zur Abmessung und Vergleichung fehlen. Wir sehen aber, daß der Hörer seine Lust durch explosives Lachen bezeugt, nach- dem die erste Person den Witz meist mit ernsthaft gespannter Miene vorgebracht hat. Wenn ich einen Witz weitererzähle, den ich selbst ge- hört habe, muß ich, um seine Wirkung nicht zu verderben, mich bei der Erzählung genauso benehmen wie jener, der ihn gemacht hat. Es ist nun die Frage, ob wir aus dieser Bedingtheit des Lachens über den Witz Rückschlüsse auf den psychischen Vorgang bei der Witzbildung ziehen können.

Es kann nun nicht unsere Absicht sein, hier alles in Betracht zu ziehen, was über die Natur des Lachens behauptet und veröffentlicht worden ist. Von solchem Vorhaben mag uns der Satz abschrecken, den Dugas, ein Schüler Ribots, an die Spitze seines Buches La psychologie du rire (1902, S.1) gestellt hat. »Il n'est pas de fait plus banal et plus étudié que le rire; il n'en est pas qui ait eu le don d'exciter davantage
la curiosité du vulgaire et celle des philosophes; il n’en est pas sur lequel on ait recueilli plus d’observations et bâti plus de théories, et avec cela il n’en est pas qui demeure plus inexpliqué. On serait tenté de dire avec les sceptiques qu’il faut être content de rire et de ne pas chercher à savoir pourquoi on rit, d’autant que peut-être la réflexion tue le rire, et qu’il serait alors contradictoire qu’elle en découvrit les causes.\(^1\)

On the other hand we shall not miss the opportunity of making use for our purposes of an opinion on the mechanism of laughter which fits in excellently with our own line of thought. I have in mind the attempt at an explanation made by Herbert Spencer in his essay on ‘The Physiology of Laughter’ (1860). According to Spencer, laughter is a phenomenon of the discharge of mental excitation and a proof that the psychical employment of this excitation has suddenly come up against an obstacle. He describes the psychological situation which ends in laughter in the following words: ‘Laughter naturally results only when consciousness is unawares transferred from great things to small—only when there is what we may call a descending incongruity.’\(^2\)

\(^1\) ‘There is no action that is more commonplace or that has been more widely studied than laughter. There is none that has succeeded more in exciting the curiosity both of ordinary people and of philosophers. There is none on which more observations have been collected and more theories built. But at the same time there is none that remains more unexplained. It would be tempting to say with the sceptics that we must be content to laugh and not try to know why we laugh, since it may be that reflection kills laughter and it would thus be a contradiction to think that it could discover its causes.’

\(^2\) Various points in this definition would call for detailed examination in an investigation of comic pleasure; this has already been undertaken by other authors and in any case does not concern us here.—I do not think Spencer has been happy in his explanation of why the discharge takes the particular paths whose excitation produces the somatic picture of laughter. The theme of the physiological explanation of laughter—that is, the tracing back or interpretation of the muscular actions characteristic of laughter—has been treated at length both before and since Darwin, but has still not been finally cleared up. I have one contribution to make to this theme. So far as I know, the grimace characteristic of smiling, which twists up the corners of the mouth, appears first in an infant at the breast when it is satisfied and satiated and lets go of the breast as it falls asleep. Here it is a genuine expression of the emotions, for it corresponds to a decision to


1 Verschiedene Punkte dieser Bestimmung würden bei einer Untersuchung über die komische Lust eine eingehende Prüfung verlangen, die bereits von anderen Autoren vorliegend worden ist und jedenfalls nicht auf unserem Wege liegt.—In der Erklärung, warum die Abfuhr gerade jene Wege findet, deren Erregung das somatische Bild des Lachens ergibt, scheint mir Spencer nicht glücklich gewesen zu sein. Zu dem vor und seit Darwin ausführlich behandelter, aber immer noch nicht endgültig erledigten Themas der physiologischen Aufklärung des Lachens, also der Ableitung oder Deutung der für das Lachen charakteristischen Muskelaaktionen, möchte ich einen einzigen Beitrag liefern. Meines Wissens tritt die für das Lächeln bezeichnende Grimasse der Mundwinkelverziehung zuerst beim befriedigten und übersättigten Säugling auf, wenn er eingeschlafft die Brust fahren läßt. Sie ist dort eine richtige Ausdrucksbewegung, da sie dem Entschlaf werden, keine Nahrung mehr aufzunehmen, entspricht, gleichsam ein
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In a quite similar sense French authors (e.g., Dugas) describe laughter as a 'démente', a phenomenon of relaxation of tension. So too the formula proposed by Bain [1865, 250]—‘laughter a release from constraint’—seems to me to diverge from Spencer's view much less than some authorities would have us believe.

Nevertheless, we feel a need to modify Spencer's notion, in part to give a more definite form to the ideas contained in it and in part to change them. We should say that laughter arises if a quota of psychical energy which has earlier been used for the cathexis of particular psychical pathways has become unusable, so that it can find free discharge. We are well aware what 'evil looks' we are inviting with such a hypothesis; but we will venture to quote in our defence an opposite sentence from Lipps's book Komik und Humor (1898, 71), from which illumination is to be derived on more subjects than that of the comic and humour: 'Finally, specific psychological problems always lead fairly deep into psychology, so that at bottom no psychological problem can be treated in isolation.' The concepts of 'psychical energy' and 'discharge' and the treatment of psychical energy as a quantity have become habitual in my thoughts since I began to arrange the facts of psychopathology philosophically; and already in my Interpretation of Dreams (1900a) I tried (in the same sense as Lipps) to establish the fact that what are 'really psychically effective' are psychical processes which are unconscious in themselves, not the contents of consciousness. It is only when I speak of the 'cathexis of take no more nourishment, and represents as it were an 'enough' or rather a 'more than enough'. This original meaning of pleasurable satiety may have brought the smile, which is after all the basic phenomenon of laughter, into its later relation with pleasurable processes of discharge.

2 Cf. the sections 'On Psychological Force', etc. in Chapter VIII of Lipps's book quoted above. 'Thus the following general statement holds good: The factors of psychical life are not the contents of consciousness but the psychical processes which are in themselves unconscious. The task of psychology, if it does not merely wish to describe the contents of consciousness, must therefore consist in inferring the nature of these unconscious processes from the character of the contents of consciousness and their temporal connections. Psychology must be a theory of these processes. But a psychology of this kind will very soon find that there are quite a number of characteristics of these processes which are not represented in the corresponding contents of consciousness.' (Lipps, 1900a, 139.)


2 [Dieser Ausspruch Bains ist in allen früheren Ausgaben von Der Witz fehlerhaft zitiert, nämlich »... a relief from restraint«. Der leichte Bedeutungsunterschied wirkt sich jedoch auf das, was Freud beweisen will, nicht aus.]

3 Vgl. die Absehnitte in dem zitierten Buch von Lipps, Kapitel VIII.»Über die psychische Kraft usf. (Dazu Traumdeutung, VII.*) – »Es gilt also der allgemeine Satz: Die Faktoren des psychischen Lebens sind nicht die Bewußtseinsinhalte, sondern die an sich unbewußten psychischen Vorgänge. Die Aufgabe der Psychologie, falls sie nicht bloß Bewußtseinsinhalt beschreiben will, muß dann darin bestehen, aus der Beschaffenheit der Bewußtseinsinhalte und ihres zeitlichen Zusammenhanges die Natur dieser unbewußten Vorgänge zu erschließen. Die Psychologie muß sein eine Theorie dieser Vorgänge. Eine solche Psychologie wird aber sehr bald finden, daß es gar mancherlei Eigenschaften dieser Vorgänge gibt, die in den entsprechenden Bewußtseinsinhalten nicht repräsentiert sind.« (Lipps, loc. cit. S. 123[-4].)]

* [Der in G. W. gegebene Hinweis auf Traumdeutung VIII ist offensichtlich ein Irr- tum. Die Passage, an die Freud hier zweifellos gedacht hat, steht am Anfang von Abschnitt F der VII. Kapitel.)
psychical paths’ that I seem to depart from the analogies commonly used by Lipps. My experiences of the displaceability of psychical energy along certain paths of association, and of the almost indestructible persistence of the traces of psychical processes, have in fact suggested to me an attempt at picturing the unknown in some such way. To avoid misunderstanding, I must add that I am making no attempt to proclaim that the cells and nerve fibres, or the systems of neurones which are taking their place today, are these psychical paths, even though it would have to be possible in some manner which cannot yet be indicated to represent such paths by organic elements of the nervous system.

In laughter, therefore, on our hypothesis, the conditions are present under which a sum of psychical energy which has hitherto been used for cathexis is allowed free discharge. And since laughter—not all laughter, it is true, but certainly laughter at a joke—is an indication of pleasure, we shall be inclined to relate this pleasure to the lifting of the cathexis which has previously been present. If we see that the hearer of a joke laughs but that its creator cannot laugh, this may amount to telling us that in the hearer a cathetic expenditure has been lifted and discharged, while in the construction of the joke there have been obstacles either to the lifting or to the possibility of discharge. The psychical process in the hearer, the joke's third person, can scarcely be more aptly described than by stressing the fact that he has bought the pleasure of the joke with very small expenditure on his own part. He might be said to have been presented with it. The words of the joke he hears necessarily bring about in him the idea or train of thought to the construction of which great internal inhibitions were opposed in him too. He would have had to make an effort of his own in order to bring it about spontaneously as the first person, he would have had to use at least as much psychical expenditure on doing so as would correspond to the strength of the inhibition, suppression or repression of the idea. He

ibid., 123–4. See also Chapter VII of my Interpretation of Dreams [Standard Ed., 5, 611-14].

[Some ten years earlier Freud had in fact made an elaborate but abortive attempt to prove precisely this in his posthumously published ‘Project for a Scientific Psychology’ (Freud, 1950a).]
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has saved this psychical expenditure. On the basis of our earlier discussions (p. 118) we should say that his pleasure corresponds to this economy. Our insight into the mechanism of laughter leads us rather to say that, owing to the introduction of the proscribed idea by means of an auditory perception, the cathetic energy used for the inhibition has now suddenly become superfluous and has been lifted, and is therefore now ready to be discharged by laughter. The two ways of expressing the facts amount to the same thing in essentials, since the expenditure economized corresponds exactly to the inhibition that has become superfluous. But the second method of expression is the more illuminating, since it allows us to say that the hearer of the joke laughs with the quota of psychical energy which has become free through the lifting of the inhibitory cathexis; we might say that he laughs this quota off.

If the person in whom the joke is formed cannot laugh, this, as we have already said [p. 148], points to a divergence from what happens in the third person that lies either in the lifting of the inhibitory cathexis or in the possibility of its discharge. But the first of these alternatives will not meet the case, as we shall see at once. The inhibitory cathexis must have been lifted in the first person as well, or otherwise no joke would have come about, since its formation was precisely in order to overcome a resistance of that kind; otherwise, too, it would be impossible for the first person to feel the pleasure in the joke which we have been obliged to trace back precisely to the lifting of the inhibition. All that remains, then, is the other alternative, namely that the first person cannot laugh, although he feels pleasure, because there is an interference with the possibility of discharge. An interference of this kind with the possibility of discharge, which is a necessary precondition of laughter, may arise from the liberated cathetic energy being immediately applied to some other endopsychic use. It is a good thing that our attention has been drawn to that possibility; and our interest in it will very soon be further engaged. Another condition, however, leading to the same result, may be realized in the first person of a joke. It is possible that no quota of energy at all is capable of being manifested may be liberated, in spite of the lifting of the inhibitory cathexis. In the first person of a joke the joke-work is performed, which must correspond

Wenn die Person, bei der der Witz sich bildet, nicht lachen kann, so deute dies, sagten wir eben, auf eine Abweichung vom Vorgang bei der dritten Person, der entweder die Aufhebung der Hemmungsvorgänge oder die Abfuhrmöglicheit derselben betrüft. Aber der erstere der beiden Fälle ist unzutreffend, wie wir sofort einsehen müssen. Die Hemmungsvorgänge muß auch bei der ersten Person aufgehoben worden sein, sonst wäre kein Witz geworden, dessen Bildung ja einen solchen Widerstand zu überwinden hatte. Auch wäre es unmöglich, daß die erste Person die Witzeslust empfinde, die wir ja von der Aufhebung der Hemmung ableiten mußten. Es erübrigt also nur der andere Fall, daß die erste Person nicht lachen kann, obwohl sie Lust empfindet, weil die Abfuhrmöglichkeiten gestört ist. Eine solche Störung in der Ermöglichung der Abfuhr, welche fürs Lachen Bedingung ist, kann sich daraus ergeben, daß die frei gewordene Besetzungenergie sofort einer anderen endopsychischen Verwendung zugeführt wird. Es ist gut, daß wir auf diese Möglichkeit aufmerksam geworden sind; wir werden ihr abseits weiteres Interesse zuwenden. Bei der ersten Person des Witzes kann aber eine andere Bedingung, die zum gleichen Ergebnis führt, verwirklicht sein. Es ist vielleicht überhaupt kein äußerungsfähiger Betrag von Energie frei geworden, trotz der erfolgten Aufhebung der Hemmungsvorgänge. Bei der ersten Person des Witzes geht ja die Witzarbeit vor sich, die
to a certain quota of new psychical expenditure. Thus the first person himself produces the force which lifts the inhibition. This no doubt results in a yield of pleasure for him, and even, in the case of tendentious jokes, a very considerable one, since the fore-pleasure obtained by the joke-work itself takes over the lifting of further inhibitions; but the expenditure on the joke-work is in every case deducted from the yield resulting from the lifting of the inhibition—an expenditure which is the same as the one which the hearer of the joke avoids. What I have just said may be confirmed by observing that a joke loses its effect of laughter even in the third person as soon as he is required to make an expenditure on intellectual work in connection with it. The allusions made in a joke must be obvious and the omissions easy to fill; an awakening of conscious intellectual interest usually makes the effect of the joke impossible. There is an important distinction here between jokes and riddles. Perhaps the psychical constellation during the joke-work is in general not favourable to the free discharge of what has been gained. We are not, it seems, in a position to see further on this point; we have been more successful in throwing light on one part of our problem—on why the third person laughs—than on its other part—on why the first person does not laugh.

Nevertheless, if we firmly accept these views on the determinants of laughter and on the psychical process in the third person, we are now in a position to give a satisfactory explanation of a whole number of peculiarities which jokes have been known to possess but which have not been understood. If a quota of cathetic energy capable of discharge is to be liberated in the third person, there are several conditions which must be fulfilled or which are desirable in order to act as encouragements: (1) It must be ensured that the third person is really making this cathetic expenditure. (2) It is necessary to guard against the cathetic expenditure, when it is liberated, finding some other psychical use instead of offering itself for motor discharge. (3) It cannot but be an advantage if the cathexis which is to be liberated in the third person is intensified beforehand, raised to a greater height. All these aims are served by particular methods of the joke-work, which may be classed together as secondary or auxiliary techniques:

[1] The first of these conditions lays down one of the neces-

[1] Die erste dieser Bedingungen legt eine der Eignungen der dritten
sary qualifications of the third person as hearer of the joke. It is essential that he should be in sufficient psychical accord with the first person to possess the same internal inhibitions, which the joke-work has overcome in the latter. A person who is responsive to smut will be unable to derive any pleasure from witty jokes of exposure; Herr N.'s attacks will not be understood by uneducated people who are accustomed to give free play to their desire to insult. Thus every joke calls for a public of its own and laughing at the same jokes is evidence of far-reaching psychical conformity. Here moreover we have arrived at a point which enables us to guess still more precisely what takes place in the third person. He must be able as a matter of habit to erect in himself the same inhibition which the first person's joke has overcome, so that, as soon as he hears the joke, the readiness for this inhibition will compulsively or automatically awaken. This readiness for inhibition, which I must regard as a real expenditure, analogous to mobilization in military affairs, will at the same moment be recognized as superfluous or too late, and so be discharged in statu nascendi by laughter.¹

¹ The notion of the statu nascendi has been used by Heymans (1896) in a somewhat different connection.

[2] The second condition for making free discharge possible—that the liberated energy shall be prevented from being used in any other way—seems very much the more important. It provides the theoretical explanation of the uncertainty of the effect of jokes when the thoughts expressed in a joke arouse powerfully exciting ideas in the hearer; in that case the question whether the purposes of the joke agree with or contradict the circle of thoughts by which the hearer is dominated will decide whether his attention will remain with the joking process or be withdrawn from it. Of still greater theoretical interest, however, are a class of auxiliary techniques which clearly serve the end of entirely detaching the hearer's attention from the joking process, and of allowing that process to run its course automatically. I deliberately say 'automatically' and not 'unconsciously', because the latter description would be misleading. It is only a question here of holding back an increased cathectis of attention from the psychical process when the joke is heard; and the usefulness of these auxiliary techniques rightly

V. Die Motive des Witzes. Der Witz als sozialer Vorgang

Person als Hörer des Witzes fest. Sie muß durchaus so viel psychische Übereinstimmung mit der ersten Person besitzen, daß sie über die nählichen inneren Hemmungen verfügt, welche die Witzarbeit bei der ersten überwunden hat. Wer auf Zoten eingestellt ist, der wird von geistreichen entblößten Witzenden keine Lust ableiten können; die Aggressionen des Herrn N. werden bei Ungebildeten, die gewohnt sind, ihrer Schimpflust freien Lauf zu lassen, kein Verständnis finden. Jeder Witz verlangt so sein eigenes Publikum, und über die gleichen Witze zu lachen ist ein Beweis weitgehender psychischer Übereinstimmung. Wir sind hier übrigens an einem Punkte angelangt, der uns gestattet, den Vorgang bei der dritten Person noch genauer zu erraten. Dieselbe muß die nähliche Hemmung, welche der Witz bei der ersten Person überwunden hat, gewohnheitsmäßig in sich herstellen können, so daß in ihr, sobald sie den Witz hört, die Bereitschaft zu dieser Hemmung zwangsartig oder automatisch erwacht. Diese Hemmungsbereitschaft, die ich als einen wirklichen Aufwand analog einer Mobilmachung im Armeewesen fassen muß, wird gleichzeitig als überflüssig oder als verspätet erkannt und somit in statu nascendi durch Lachen abgeführt.¹

¹ Die zweite Bedingung für die Herstellung der freien Abfuhr, daß eine andersartige Verwendung der frei gewordenen Energie hintangehalten werde, erscheint als die weitaus wichtigere. Sie gibt die theoretische Aufklärung für die Unsicherheit der Witzwirkung, wenn bei dem Hörer durch den im Witze ausgedrückten Gedanken stark erregende Vorstellungen wachgerufen werden, wobei es dann von der Übereinstimmung oder dem Widerspruch zwischen den Tendenzen des Witzes und der den Hörer beherrschenden Gedankenreihe abhängt, ob dem Witzvorgang die Aufmerksamkeit belassen oder entzogen wird. Von noch größerem theoretischen Interesse sind aber eine Reihe von Hilfstechniken des Witzes, welche offenbar der Absicht dienen, die Aufmerksamkeit des Hörers überhaupt vom Witzvorgang abzuziehen, den letzteten automatisch verlaufen zu lassen. Ich sage absichtlich: automatisch und nicht: unbewußt, weil letztere Bezeichnung irreführend wäre. Es handelt sich hier nur darum, die Mehrbesetzung der Aufmerksamkeit von dem psychischen Vorgang beim Anhören des Witzes fernzuhalten, und die Brauchbarkeit dieser Hilfstechniken läßt uns mit Recht ver-
leads us to suspect that precisely the cathexis of attention has a great share in the supervision and fresh employment of liberated cathetic energy.

It appears to be far from easy to avoid the endopsychic employment of cathexes that have become superfluous, for in our thought-processes we are constantly in the habit of displacing such cathexes from one path to another without losing any of their energy by discharge. Jokes make use of the following methods with that aim in view. Firstly, they try to keep their expression as short as possible, so as to offer fewer points of attack to the attention. Secondly, they observe the condition of being easy to understand (see above [p. 150]); as soon as they call for intellectual work which would demand a choice between different paths of thought, they would endanger their effect not only by the unavoidable expenditure of thought but also by the awakening of attention. But besides this they employ the device of distracting attention by putting forward something in the joke’s form of expression which catches it, so that in the meantime the liberation of the inhibitory cathexis and its discharge may be completed without interruption. This aim is already fulfilled by the omissions in the joke’s wording; they offer an incitement to filling up the gaps and in that way succeed in withdrawing the joking process from attention. Here the technique of riddles, which attract the attention [p. 150], is, as it were, brought into the service of the joke-work. Far more effective even are the façades which we have found especially in some groups of tendentious jokes (p. 105 ff.). The syllogistic façades admirably fulfil the aim of holding the attention by setting it a task. While we are beginning to wonder what was wrong with the reply, we are already laughing; our attention has been caught unawares and the discharge of the liberated inhibitory cathexis has been completed. The same is true of jokes with a comic façade, in which the comic comes to the help of the joke-technique. A comic façade encourages the effectiveness of a joke in more than one way; not only does it make the automatism of the joking process possible, by holding the attention, but it also facilitates the discharge by the joke, by sending on ahead a discharge of a comic kind. The comic is here operating exactly like a bribing fore-pleasure, and we can in this way understand how some jokes are able to renounce

muten, daß gerade die Aufmerksamkeitsbesetzung an der Überwachung und Neuverwendung von frei gewordener Besetzungenergie einen großen Anteil hat.

Es scheint überhaupt nicht leicht zu sein, die endopsychische Verwendung entbehrlieh gewordener Besetzungen zu vermeiden, denn wir sind ja bei unseren Denkvorgängen beständig in der Übung, solche Besetzungen von einem Weg auf den anderen zu verschieben, ohne von deren Energie etwas durch Abfuhr zu verlieren. Der Witz bedient sich hierzu folgender Mittel. Erstens strebt er einen möglichst kurzen Ausdruck an, um der Aufmerksamkeit weniger Angriffs punkte zu bieten. Zweitens hält er die Bedingung der leichten Verständlichkeit ein (vgl. oben [S. 141]); sowie er Denkarbeit in Anspruch nehmen, eine Auswahl unter verschiedenen Gedankenwegen erforderlich wäre, müßte er die Wirkung nicht nur durch den unvermeidlichen Denkaufwand, sondern auch durch die Erwirkung der Aufmerksamkeit gefährden. Außerdem aber bedient er sich des Kunstgriffs, die Aufmerksamkeit abzuleiten, indem er ihr im Ausdruck des Witzes etwas darbietet—was sie fesselt, so daß sich unterdessen die Befreiung der Hemmungsbesetzung und deren Abfuhr ungestört durch sie vollziehen kann. Bereits die Auslassungen im Wortlaut des Witzes erfüllen diese Absicht; sie regen zur Ausfüllung der Lücken an und bringen es auf diese Weise zustande, den Witzvorgang von der Aufmerksamkeit zu befreien. Hier wird gleichsam die Technik des Rätsels, welches die Aufmerksamkeit anzieht [S. 141], in den Dienst der Witzarbeit gestellt. Noch viel wirksamer sind die Fassadenbildungen, die wir zumal bei manchen Gruppen von tendenziösen Witzen gefunden haben (vgl. S. 100 ff.). Die syllogistischen Fassaden erfüllen den Zweck, die Aufmerksamkeit durch eine ihr gestellte Aufgabe festzuhalten, in ausgezeichneter Weise. Während wir nachzudenken beginnen, worin wohl diese Antwort gefehlt haben mag, laden wir bereits; unsere Aufmerksamkeit ist überrumpelt worden, die Abfuhr der frei gewordenen Hemmungsbesetzung ist vollzogen. Das nämliche gilt für die Witze mit komischer Fassade, bei denen die Komik der Witztechnik Hilfsdienste leistet. Eine komische Fassade fördert die Wirkung des Witzes auf mehr als eine Weise, sie ermöglicht nicht nur den Automatismus des Witzvorganges durch die Fesselung der Aufmerksamkeit, sondern erleichtert auch die Abfuhr vom Witz her, indem sie eine Abfuhr vom Komischen her vorausschickt. Die Komik wirkt hier ganz wie eine bestehende Vorlust, und so mögen wir es verstehen, daß manche Witze
entirely the fore-pleasure produced by the ordinary methods of joking and make use only of the comic for fore-pleasure. Among the joke-techniques proper, it is in particular displacement and representation by something absurd which, apart from their other qualifications, give rise, too, to a distraction of the attention which is desirable for the automatic course of the joking process.\(^1\)

As we can already guess, and as we shall see more clearly later on, we have discovered in the condition of distracting the attention a by no means unessential feature of the psychical process in the hearer of a joke.\(^2\) In connection with this there

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\(^1\) I should like to discuss yet another interesting characteristic of joke-technique, in connection with an example of a displacement joke. Once when Gallmeyer, that actress of genius, was asked [in the course of an official examination] the unwelcome question 'Your age?' she replied in the tone of voice of a Gretchen and with her eyes bashfully cast down: 'At Brün!'. This is a model displacement. When she was asked her age she replied by giving the place of her birth. She was thus anticipating the next question and was letting it be understood that she would be glad to know that this one question had been passed over. Yet we feel that in this instance the characteristic of jokes is not expressed in all its purity. It is too clear that the question is being evaded, the displacement is too obvious. Our attention understands at once that what is in question is an intentional displacement. In the other displacement jokes the displacement is disguised; our attention is held by the effort to detect it. In the displacement joke recorded on p. 54, in the reply made to a recommendation of a riding-horse 'What should I be doing in Pressburg at half-past six?' the displacement is also prominent. But to make up for this it has a confusing effect on the attention through its nonsensical nature, whereas in the actress's examination we are able to recognize her displacement-reply immediately.\(\text{[Added 1912:]}\) What are known as 'Scherzfragen' [facetious questions] deviate from jokes in another direction, though apart from this they may make use of the best techniques. Here is an example of one of them, which uses the technique of displacement: 'What is a cannibal who has eaten his father and his mother?' - 'An orphan.' - 'And if he has eaten all his other relations as well?' - 'The sole heir.' - 'And where will a monster of that kind find sympathy?' - 'In the dictionary under 'S'. 'Facetious questions' of this kind are not proper jokes because the joking answers that they call for cannot be guessed in the same way as are the allusions, omissions, etc. of jokes.\(\text{[Josefine Gallmeyer (1838-1884) was a soubrette actress, extremely popular in Vienna.]}\)

\(^2\) [Freud pointed out later that the device of distracting the attention is a technique that is also used in hypnotic suggestion. Cf. Chapter X of V. Die Motive des Witzes. Der Witz als sozialer Vorgang]
are still other things that we can understand. Firstly, there is the question why we scarcely ever know what we are laughing at in a joke, though we can discover it by an analytic investigation. The laughter is in fact the product of an automatic process which is only made possible by our conscious attention’s being kept away from it. Secondly, we are able to understand the peculiar fact about jokes that they only produce their full effect if and when the hearer is new to the joke. This characteristic of jokes (which determines the shortness of their life and stimulates the constant production of new jokes) is evidently due to the fact that the very nature of a joke makes on a new-comer some of the possibility of surprising someone or taking him unawares implies that it cannot succeed a second time. When a joke is repeated, the attention is led back to the first occasion of hearing it as the memory of it arises. And from this we are carried on to an understanding of the urge to tell a joke one has heard to other people who have not yet heard it. One probably recovers from the impression the joke makes on a new-comer some of the possibility of enjoyment that has been lost owing to its lack of novelty. And it may be that it was an analogous motive that drove the creator of the joke in the first instance to tell it to someone else.

[3] In the third place I shall bring forward—but this time not as necessary conditions but only as encouragements to the process of joking—the auxiliary technical methods of the joke-work which are calculated to increase the quota which obtains discharge and in that way intensify the effect of the joke. These, it is true, also for the most part increase the attention that is paid to the joke, but they make this effect innocuous once more by simultaneously holding it and inhibiting its mobility. Anything that provokes interest and bewilderment works in these two directions—thus, in particular, nonsense, and contradiction, too, the ‘contrast of ideas’ [p. 11 f.] which some authorities have tried to make into the essential characteristic of jokes, but which I can only regard as a means of intensifying their Group Psychology (1921c), Standard Ed., 18, 125. He expressed his opinion, too, in a posthumously published paper on ‘Psycho-Analysis and Telepathy’ (1941d [1921]), ibid., 184, that the same procedure was at work in certain cases of thought-reading. A first hint at the idea of the device is probably to be seen in Freud’s technical contribution to the Studies on Hysteria (1895d), ibid., 2, 271, in his explanation of the mechanism of his own ‘pressure’ technique.]
V. JOKES AS A SOCIAL PROCESS

effect. Anything that bewilders calls up in the hearer the state of distribution of energy which Lipps has called 'psychical damming up' [p. 118]; and he is no doubt also correct in supposing that the discharge is the more powerful, the higher was the preceding damming up, Lipps's account, it is true, does not relate specifically to jokes but to the comic in general; but we may regard it as most probable that in jokes, too, the discharge of an inhibitory cathexis is similarly increased by the height of the damming up.

It now begins to dawn on us that the technique of jokes is in general determined by two sorts of purposes—those that make the construction of the joke possible in the first person and those that are intended to guarantee the joke the greatest possible pleasurable effect on the third person. The Janus-like, two-way-facing character of jokes, which protects their original yield of pleasure from the attacks of critical reason, and the mechanism of fore-pleasure belong to the first of these purposes; the further complication of the technique by the conditions that have been enumerated in the present chapter takes place out of regard for the joke's third person. A joke is thus a double-dealing rascal who serves two masters at once. Everything in jokes that is aimed at gaining pleasure is calculated with an eye to the third person, as though there were internal and unsurmountable obstacles to it in the first person. And this gives us a full impression of how indispensable this third person is for the completion of the joking process. But whereas we have been able to obtain a fairly good insight into the nature of this process in the third person, the corresponding process in the first person seems still to be veiled in obscurity. Of the two questions we asked [p. 143–4], 'Why are we unable to laugh at a joke we have made ourselves?' and 'Why are we driven to tell our own joke to someone else?', the first has so far evaded our reply. We can only suspect that there is an intimate connection between the two facts that have to be explained: that we are compelled to tell our joke to someone else because we are unable to laugh at it ourselves. Our insight into the conditions for obtaining and discharging pleasure which prevail in the third person enables us to infer as regards the first person that in him the conditions for discharge are lacking and those for obtaining pleasure only incompletely fulfilled. That being so, it cannot be disputed that we supplement blicken kann. Alles Verblüffende ruft beim Hörer jenen Zustand der Energieverteilung hervor, den Lipps als »psychische Stauung« bezeichnet hat [vgl. oben, S. 112], und er hat wohl auch recht anzunehmen, daß die »Entladung« um so stärker ausfällt, je höher die vorherige Stauung war. Die Darstellung von Lipps bezieht sich zwar nicht ausdrücklich auf den Witz, sondern auf das Komische überhaupt; aber es kann uns sehr wahrscheinlich vorkommen, daß die Abfuhr beim Witz, welche eine Hemmungsbesetzung entlädt, in gleicher Weise durch die Stauung in die Höhe gebracht wird.

Es leuchtet uns nun ein, daß die Technik des Witzes überhaupt von zweierlei Tendenzen bestimmt wird, solchen, welche die Bildung des Witzes bei der ersten Person ermöglichen, und anderen, welche dem Witz eine möglichst große Lustwirkung bei der dritten Person gewährleisten sollen. Die janusartige Doppelgesichtigkeit des Witzes, welche dessen ursprünglichen Lustgewinn gegen die Anfechtung der kritischen Vernünftigkeit sicherstellt, und der Vorluxmechanismus gehören der ersteren Tendenz an; die weitere Komplikation der Technik durch die in diesem Abschnitt ausgeführten Bedingungen ergibt sich aus der Rücksicht auf die dritte Person des Witzes. Der Witz ist so ein an sich doppelsätziger Schelm, der gleichzeitig zwei Herren dient. Alles, was auf Lustgewinnung abzielt, ist beim Witz auf die dritte Person berechnet, als ob innere, nicht zu überwindende Hindernisse bei der ersten Person einer solchen im Wege stünden. Man bekommt so den vollen Eindruck von der Unentbehrlichkeit dieser dritten Person für die Vollendung des Witzvorganges. Während wir aber ziemlich guten Einblick in die Natur dieses Vorganges bei der dritten Person gewinnen konnten, verspüren wir, daß der entsprechende Vorgang bei der ersten Person uns noch durch ein Dunkel verhüllt wird. Von den beiden Fragen [S. 135]: Warum können wir über den selbstgemachten Witz nicht lachen? und: Warum sind wir getrieben, den eigenen Witz dem anderen zu erzählen? hat sich die erste bisher unserer Beantwortung entzogen. Wir können nur vermuten, daß zwischen den beiden aufzuklärenden Tatsachen ein inniger Zusammenhang besteht, daß wir darum genötigt sind, unseren Witz dem anderen mitzuteilen, weil wir selbst über ihn nicht zu lachen vermögen. Aus unseren Einsichten in die Bedingungen der Lustgewinnung und -abfuhr bei der dritten Person können wir für die erste den Rückschluß ziehen, daß bei ihr die Bedingungen für die Abfuhr fehlen, die für die Lustgewinnung etwa erst unvollständig erfüllt sind. Es ist dann nicht abzuweisen, daß wir unsere Lust ergänzen,
our pleasure by attaining the laughter that is impossible for us by the roundabout path of the impression we have of the person who has been made to laugh. As Dugas has put it, we laugh as it were 'par ricochet [on the rebound]'. Laughter is among the highly infectious expressions of psychical states. When I make the other person laugh by telling him my joke, I am actually making use of him to arouse my own laughter; and one can in fact observe that a person who has begun by telling a joke with a serious face afterwards joins in the other person's laughter with a moderate laugh. Accordingly, telling my joke to another person would seem to serve several purposes: first, to give me objective certainty that the joke-work has been successful; secondly, to complete my own pleasure by a reaction from the other person upon myself; and thirdly—where it is a question of repeating a joke that one has not produced oneself—to make up for the loss of pleasure owing to the joke's lack of novelty.

At the conclusion of these discussions of the psychical processes in jokes so far as they take place between two persons, we may glance back at the factor of economy, which has been in our mind as being of importance in arriving at a psychological view of jokes ever since our first explanation of their technique. We have long since abandoned the most obvious but simplest view of this economy—that it is a question of an avoidance of psychical expenditure in general, such as would be involved by the greatest possible restriction in the use of words and in the establishment of chains of thought. Even at that stage we told ourselves that being concise or laconic was not enough to make a joke [p. 44]. A joke's brevity is of a peculiar kind—'joking' brevity. It is true that the original yield of pleasure, produced by playing with words and thoughts, was derived from mere economy in expenditure; but with the development of play into a joke the tendency to economy too must alter its aims, for the amount that would be saved by the use of the same word or the avoidance of a new way of joining ideas together would certainly count for nothing as compared with the immense expenditure on our intellectual activity. I may perhaps venture on a comparison between psychical economy and a business enterprise. So long as the turnover in the business is very small, the important thing is that outlay...
in general shall be kept low and administrative costs restricted to the minimum. Economy is concerned with the absolute height of expenditure. Later, when the business has expanded, the importance of the administrative cost diminishes; the height reached by the amount of expenditure is no longer of significance provided that the turnover and profits can be sufficiently increased. It would be niggling, and indeed positively detrimental, to be conservative over expenditure on the administration of the business. Nevertheless it would be wrong to assume that when expenditure was absolutely great there would be no room left for the tendency to economy. The mind of the manager, over details. He will feel satisfaction if a piece of work can be carried out at smaller cost than previously, however small the saving may seem to be in comparison with the size of the total expenditure. In a quite analogous fashion, in our complex psychical business too, economy in details remains a source of pleasure, as may be seen from everyday happenings. Anyone who used to have his room lighted by gas and has now had electricity installed will feel quite a time be aware of a definite feeling of pleasure when he switches on the electric light; he will feel it as long as the memory is revived in him at that moment of the complicated manoeuvres that were necessary for lighting the gas. Similarly, the economies in psychical inhibitory expenditure brought about by a joke—though they are small in comparison with our total psychical expenditure—will remain a source of pleasure for us because they save us a particular expenditure which we have been accustomed to make and which we were already prepared to make on this occasion as well. The factor of the expenditure's being one that was expected and prepared for moves unmistakably into the foreground.

A localized economy, such as we have just been considering, will not fail to give us momentary pleasure; but it will not bring a lasting relief so long as what has been saved at this point can be put to use elsewhere. It is only if this disposal elsewhere can be avoided that this specialized economy is transformed into a general relief of psychical expenditure. Thus, as we come to a better understanding of the psychical processes of jokes, the factor of relief takes the place of economy. It is obvious that the

Eine lokализированная Ерспарение, wie die eben betrachtete, wird nicht verfehlen, uns momentane Lust zu bereiten, aber eine dauernde Erleichterung wird durch sie nicht herbeigeführt, solange das hier Ersparne an anderer Stelle zur Verwendung kommen kann. Erst wenn diese anderweitige Verfügung vermieden werden kann, wandelt sich die spezielle Ersparung wieder in eine allgemeine Erleichterung des psychischen Aufwandes um. So tritt für uns mit besserer Einsicht in die psychischen Vorgänge des Witzes das Moment der Erleichterung an die Stelle der Ersparung.
former gives a greater feeling of pleasure. The process in the joke's first person produces pleasure by lifting inhibition and diminishing local expenditure; but it seems not to come to rest until, through the intermediary of the interpolated third person, it achieves general relief through discharge.

Erstere ergibt offenbar das größere Lustgefühl. Der Vorgang bei der ersten Person des Witzes erzeugt Lust durch Aufhebung von Hemmung, Verringerung des lokalen Aufwandes; er scheint nun nicht eher zur Ruhe zu kommen, als bis er durch die Vermittlung der eingeschobenen dritten Person die allgemeine Erleichterung durch die Abfuhr erzielt hat.
C. THEORETIC PART

VI

THE RELATION OF JOKES TO DREAMS
AND TO THE UNCONSCIOUS

At the end of the chapter in which I was concerned with discovering the technique of jokes, I remarked (p. 88 f.) that the processes of condensation, with or without the formation of substitutes, of representation by nonsense and by the opposite, of indirect representation, and so on, which, as we found, play a part in producing jokes, show a very far-reaching agreement with the processes of the 'dream-work'. I further promised on the one hand that we would study these similarities more closely and on the other hand that we would examine the common element in jokes and dreams which seems to be thus suggested. It would be much easier for me to carry out this comparison if I could assume that one of the two objects of comparison—the 'dream-work'—was already familiar to my readers. But it will probably be wiser not to make that assumption. I have an impression that my Interpretation of Dreams, published in 1900, provoked more 'bewilderment' than 'enlightenment' among my fellow-specialists; and I know that wider circles of readers have been content to reduce the contents of the book to a catch-word ('wish-fulfilment') which can be easily remembered and conveniently misused.

Continued concern with the problems treated there—for which my medical practice as a psychotherapist has given me abundant opportunity—has not brought me up against anything that might have called for alterations or improvements in my lines of thought; I can therefore wait quietly till my readers' understanding catches up with me or till judicious criticism has shown me the fundamental errors in my view. For the purpose of making the comparison with jokes, I will now repeat, briefly and concisely, the most essential information about dreams and the dream-work.

We know a dream from what seems as a rule a fragmentary

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C. Theoretischer Teil

VI

DIE BEZIEHUNG DES WITZES ZUM TRAUM
UND ZUM UNBEWUSSTEN


In der fortgesetzten Beschäftigung mit den dort behandelten Problemen, zu der mir meine ärztliche Tätigkeit als Psychotherapeut reichlich Anlaß gibt, bin ich aber auf nichts gestoßen, was eine Veränderung oder Verbesserung meiner Gedankengänge von mir gefordert hätte, und kann darum in Ruhe abwarten, bis das Verständnis der Leser mir nachgekommen ist oder bis eine einsichtige Kritik mir die Grundirrtümer meiner Auffassung nachgewiesen hat. Zum Zwecke der Vergleichung mit dem Witz werde ich hier das Notwendigste über den Traum und die Traumarbeit in gedrängter Kürze wiederholen.

Wir kennen den Traum aus der uns meist fragmentarisch scheinenden

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memory of it which we have after waking. It appears as a mesh-
work of sense-impressions, mostly visual but also of other kinds,
which have simulated an experience, and with which thought-
processes (‘knowledge’ in the dream) and expressions of affect
may be mingled. What we thus remember of the dream I call
‘the dream’s manifest content’. It is often entirely absurd and con-
fused—sometimes only the one or the other. But even if it is
quite coherent, as it is in the case of some anxiety-dreams, it
confronts our mental life as something alien, for whose origin
one cannot in any way account. The explanation of these
dissociated and so to say ‘sleepy’ activity of the nervous elements:
quite coherent, as it is in the case of some
content of the dream can regularly be made intelligible as a
mutilated and altered transcript of certain rational psychical
structures which deserve the name of ‘latent dream-thoughts’. We
arrive at a knowledge of these by dividing the dream’s manifest
content into its component parts, without considering any
apparent meaning it may have [as a whole], and by then
following the associative threads which start from each of what
are now isolated elements. These interweave with one another
and finally lead to a tissue of thoughts which are not only per-
fectly rational but can also be easily fitted into the known con-
text of our mental processes. In the course of this ‘analysis’, the
content of the dream will have cast off all the peculiarities that
puzzled us. But if the analysis is to succeed, we must, while it
proceeds, firmly reject the critical objections which will un-
ceasingly arise to the reproduction of the various intermediary
associations.

A comparison of the recollected manifest content of the
dream with the latent dream-thoughts thus discovered gives
rise to the concept of the ‘dream-work’. The dream-work is the
name for the whole sum of transforming processes which have
converted the dream-thoughts into the manifest dream. The
surprise with which we formerly regarded the dream now
attaches to the dream-work.

The achievements of the dream-work can, however, be de-
scribed as follows. A tissue of thoughts, usually a very compi-
licated one, which has been built up during the day and has not

Erinnerung, die sich nach dem Erwachen an ihn einstellt. Er ist dann
ein Gefühl von meist visuellen (aber auch andersartigen) Sinnesein-
dröcken, die uns ein Erleben vorgetäuscht haben und unter welchen
Denkvorgänge (das »Wissen« im Traum) und Affektauslegungen ge-
mengt sein mögen. Was wir so als Traum erinnern, das heißt ich den
»manifesten Trauminhalt«. Derselbe ist häufig völlig absurd und ver-
worren, andere Male nur das eine oder das andere; aber auch wenn er
ganz kohärent ist wie in manchen Angsträumen, steht er unserem
Seelenleben als etwas Fremdes gegenüber, von dessen Herkunft man
sich keine Rechenschaft zu geben vermag. Die Aufklärung für diese
Charaktere des Traumes wurde bisher in ihm selbst gesucht, indem man
dieselben als Anzeichen einer unordentlichen, dissozierten und sozu-
sagen »verschlafenen« Tätigkeit der nervösen Elemente ansah.

Dagegen habe ich gezeigt, daß der so sonderbare »manifeste« Traum-
inhalt regelmäßig verständlich gemacht werden kann als die verstra-
ßten, abgeänderten Umschriebe, die den Namen »latente Traumgedanken« verdienen. Man ver-
schafft sich die Kenntnis derselben, indem man den manifesten Traum-
inhalt ohne Rücksicht auf seinen eigentümlichen Sinn in seine Be-
standteile zerlegt und dann die Assoziationsfärden verfolgt, die von
dem der, nun isolierten Elemente ausgehen. Diese verflechten sich mit-
einander und leiten endlich zu einem Gefühl von Gedanken, welches
turn nicht völlig korrekt sind, sondern auch leicht in den uns bekannten
Zusammenhang unserer seelischen Vorgänge eingereiht werden. Auf
dem Wege dieser »Analyse« hat der Trauminhalt all seine uns befreie-
denden Sonderbarkeiten abgestreift; wenn uns aber die Analyse gelin-
gen soll, müssen wir während derselben die kritischen Einwendungen,
die sich unaufgesetzt gegen die Reproduktion der einzelnen vermittel-
den Assoziationen erheben, standhaft zurückweisen.

Aus der Vergleichung des erinnerten manifesten Traum inhalts mit dem
so gefundenen latenten Träumgedanken ergibt sich der Begriff der
»Traumarbeit«. Als Traumarbeit wird die ganze Summe der umwan-
delnden Vorgänge zu bezeichnen sein, welche die latenten Traumgedan-
ken in den manifesten Traum überführt haben. An der Traumarbeit
haftet nun das Befremden, welches vorhin der Traum in uns erreicht
hatte.

Die Leistung der Traumarbeit kann aber folgender Art beschrieben
werden: Ein meist sehr kompliziertes Gefühl von Gedanken, welches
während des Tages aufgebaut worden ist und nicht zur Erledigung ge-

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been completely dealt with—'a day's residue'—continues during the night to retain the quota of energy—the 'interest'—claimed by it, and threatens to disturb sleep. This 'day's residue' is transformed by the dream-work into a dream and made innocuous to sleep. In order to provide a fulcrum for the dream-work, the 'day's residue' must be capable of constructing a wish—which is not a very hard condition to fulfil. The wish arising from the dream-thoughts forms the preliminary stage and later the core of the dream. Experience derived from analyses—and not the theory of dreams—informs us that in children any wish left over from waking life is sufficient to call up a dream, which emerges as connected and ingenious but usually short, and which is easily recognized as a 'wish-fulfilment'. In the case of adults it seems to be a generally binding condition that the wish which creates the dream shall be one that is alien to conscious thinking—a repressed wish—or will possibly at least have reinforcements that are unknown to consciousness. Without assuming the existence of the unconscious in the sense explained above [p. 147], I should not be able to develop the theory of dreams further or to interpret the material met with in dream-analyses. The action of this unconscious wish upon the consciously rational material of the dream-thoughts produces the dream. While this happens, the dream is, as it were, dragged down into the unconscious, or, more precisely, is submitted to a treatment such as is met with at the level of unconscious thought-processes and is characteristic of that level. Hitherto it is only from the results of the 'dream-work' that we are in fact acquainted with the characteristics of unconscious thinking and its differences from thinking that is capable of becoming conscious—'preconscious' thinking.

A theory which is novel, which lacks simplicity and which runs counter to our habits of thought, can scarcely gain in clarity from a concise presentation. All I can aim at in these remarks, therefore, is to draw attention to the fuller treatment of the unconscious in my Interpretation of Dreams and to the writings of Lipps, which seem to me of the highest importance. I am aware that anyone who is under the spell of a good academic philosophical education, or who takes his opinions at long range from a so-called system of philosophy, will be opposed to the assumption of an 'unconscious psychical' in the sense in which

Eine neuartige, nicht einfache und den Denkgewohnheiten widersprechende Lehre kann bei gedrängter Darstellung an Klarheit kaum gewinnen. Ich kann mit diesen Auseinandersetzungen also nichts anderes bezwecken, als auf die ausführlichere Behandlung des Unbewussten in meiner Traumdeutung und auf die mir höchst bedeutungsvoll erscheinenden Arbeiten von Lipps zu verweisen. Ich weiß, daß wer im Banne einer guten philosophischen Schulbildung steht oder entfernt von einem sogenannten philosophischen System abhängt, der Annahme des »Unbewußt Psychischen«

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Lipps and I use the term, and will prefer to prove its impossi-
bility on the basis of a definition of the psychical. But definitions
are a matter of convention and can be altered. I have often
found that people who dispute the unconscious as being some-
thing absurd and impossible have not formed their impressions
from the sources from which I at least was brought to the neces-
sity of recognizing it. These opponents of the unconscious had
never witnessed the effect of a post-hypnotic suggestion, and
when I have told them examples from my analyses with non-
hypnotized neurotics they have been filled with the
astonishment. They had never realized the idea that the
conscious is something which we really do not know, but
understood it as being something capable of becoming conscious
in the optative mood, to a most strange revision. First, it takes
the step from the optative to the present indicative; it replaces
'the focal point of attention'. Nor had
they ever tried
with non...

Die Traumarbeit also, zu der ich nach dieser Abschweifung zurückkehre,
setzt das in den Optativ gebrachte Gedankenmaterial einer ganz eigen-
tümlichen Bearbeitung aus. Zunächst macht sie den Schritt vom Optativ
zum Präsens, ersetzt das: »O möchte doch« — durch ein: Es ist. Dies
»Es ist« ist zur hallucinatorischen Darstellung bestimmt, was ich als die
»Regression« der Traumarbeit bezeichnet habe; der Weg von den Gedanken
den zu den Wahrnehmungsbildern, oder wenn man mit Bezug auf
die noch unbekannte — nicht-anatomisch zu verstehende — Topik des
seelischen Apparats sprechen will, von der Gegend der Denkbildungen
der sinnlichen Wahrnehmungen. Auf diesem Wege, welcher der
Entwicklungsrichtung der seelischen Komplikationen entgegengesetzt
ist, gewinnen die Traumgedanken Anschaulichkeit; es stellt sich schließ-
lieh eine plastische Situation heraus als Kern des manifesten »Traum-
bildes«.
possible for the dream-thoughts to be represented in sensory form, their expression has to undergo far-reaching modifications. But while the thoughts are being changed back into sensory images still further alterations occur in them, some of which can be seen to be necessary while others are surprising. We can understand that, as a subsidiary result of regression, almost all the internal relations between the thoughts which linked them together will be lost in the manifest dream. The dream-work, as we might say, only undertakes to represent the raw material of the ideas and not the logical relations in which they stand to one another; or at all events it reserves the other part of the dream-work which we cannot attribute to the raw material of the dream-thoughts is subjected to a quite extraordinary compression or condensation. A starting point for it is provided by any common elements that may be present in the dream-thoughts, whether by chance or from the nature of their content. Since these are not as a rule sufficient for any considerable condensation, new artificial and transient common elements are created in the dream-work, and to this end there is actually a preference for the use of words the sound of which expresses different meanings. The newly-created common elements of condensation enter the manifest content of the dream as representatives of the dream-thoughts, so that an element in the dream corresponds to a nodal point or junction in the dream-thoughts, and, as compared with these latter, must quite generally be described as 'overdetermined'. The fact of condensation is the piece of the dream-work which can be most easily recognized; it is only necessary to compare the text of a dream as it is noted down with the record of the dream-thoughts arrived at by analysis in order to get a good impression of the extensiveness of dream-condensation.

It is less easy to convince oneself of the second great modification of the dream-thoughts that is brought about by the dream-work—the process that I have named 'dream-displacement'. This is exhibited in the fact that things that lie on the periphery of the dream-thoughts and are of minor importance
occupy a central position and appear with great sensory intensity in the manifest dream, and *vice versa*. This gives the dream the appearance of being displaced in relation to the dream-thoughts, and this displacement is precisely what brings it about that the dream confronts waking mental life as something alien and incomprehensible. In order that a displacement of this kind may occur, it must be possible for the cathetic energy to pass over uninhibited from the important ideas to the unimportant ones—which, in normal thought that is capable of being conscious, can only give an impression of 'faulty reasoning'.

Transformation with a view to the possibility of representation, condensation and displacement are the three major achievements that may be ascribed to the dream-work. A fourth, which was perhaps too shortly considered in The Interpretation of Dreams, is not relevant for our present purposes.\(^1\) If the ideas of a 'topography of the mental apparatus' and of 'regression' are consistently followed up (and only in that way could these working hypotheses come to have any value), we must attempt to determine the stages of regression at which the various transformations of the dream-thoughts take place. This attempt has not yet been seriously undertaken; but it can at least be stated with certainty that displacement must take place in the thought-material while it is at the stage of the unconscious processes, while condensation must probably be pictured as a process stretching over the whole course of events till the perceptual region is reached. But in general we must be content to assume that all the forces which take part in the formation of dreams operate simultaneously. Though one must, as will be realized, exercise reserve in dealing with such problems, and though there are fundamental doubts, which cannot be entered into here, as to whether the question should be framed in this manner,\(^2\) yet I should like to venture on the assertion peripherisch-lag und nebensächlich war; und ebenso umgekehrt. Der Traum erscheint dadurch gegen die Traumgedanken verschoben, und gerade durch diese Verschiebung wird erreicht, daß er dem wachen Seelenleben fremd und unverständlich entgegtritt. Damit solche Verschiebung zustande kam, mußte es möglich sein, daß die Besetzungsenergie von den wichtigen Vorstellungen umgekehrt auf die unwichtigen übergehe, was im normalen bewußtseinsfähigen Denken nur den Eindruck eines 'Denkfehlers' hervorrufen kann.

Unwandlung zur Darstellungsfähigkeit, Verdichtung und Verschiebung sind die drei großen Leistungen, die wir der Traumarbeit zuschreiben dürfen. Eine vierte, in der Traumdeutung vielleicht zu kurz gewürdigte, kommt für unsere Zwecke hier nicht in Betracht.\(^3\) Bei einer konsequenten Ausführung der Ideen von der 'Topik des seelischen Apparates' und der 'Regression' — und nur eine solche würde diese Arbeitshypothesen wertvoll machen — müßte man zu bestimmen versuchen; an welchen Stationen der Regression die verschiedenen Umwandlungen der Traumgedanken vor sich gehen. Dieser Versuch ist noch nicht ernsthaft unternommen worden; es läßt sich aber wenigstens von der Verschiebung mit Sicherheit angeben, daß sie an dem Gedankenmaterial erfolgen muß, während es sich auf der Stufe der unbewußten Vorgänge befindet. Die Verdichtung wird man sich wahrscheinlich als einen über den ganzen Verlauf sich erstreckenden Vorgang bis zum Anlangen in der Wahrnehmungsregion vorzustellen, in allgemeinen aber sich mit der Annahme einer gleichzeitig erfolgenden Wirkung aller bei der Traumbildung beteiligten Kräfte begnügen. Bei der Zurückhaltung, die man verständigerweise in der Behandlung solcher Probleme bewahren muß, und mit Rücksicht auf die hier nicht zu erörternden prinzipiellen Denken solcher Fragestellung, möchte ich mich etwa der Aufstellung

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1 [Secondary revision.' Cf. The Interpretation of Dreams, Chapter VI, Section I (Standard Ed., 5, 248 ff.). Elsewhere, however, Freud (1923a) considers that this is not part of the dream-work (ibid., 18, 241 n.).] 

2 [Gründlich hat Freud diese Bedenken erst viel später erörtert, nämlich in der Arbeit 'Das Unbewußte' (1915 e), in den Abschnitten II und VII.]
that the process of the dream-work preparatory to the dream must be located in the region of the unconscious. Thus, speaking roughly, there would in all be three stages to be distinguished in the formation of a dream: first, the transplanting of the roughly, there would in all be three stages to be distinguished in the formation of a dream: first, the transplanting of the unconscious, in which the conditions governing the state of sleep must play a part; then, the dream-work proper in the unconscious; and thirdly, the regression of the dream-material, thus revised, to perception, in which form the dream becomes conscious.

The following forces may be recognized as having a share in the formation of dreams: the wish to sleep, the cathexis of energy that still remains in the day’s residues after it has been lowered by the state of sleep, the psychical energy of the dream-construction unconscious wish and the opposing force of the ‘censorship’, which dominates daytime life and is not completely lifted during sleep. The task of dream-formation is above all to overcome the inhibition from the censorship; and it is precisely this task which is solved by the displacements of psychic energy within the material of the dream-thoughts.

Let us now recall what it was during our investigation of jokes that gave us occasion to think of dreams. We found that the characteristics and effects of jokes are linked with certain forms of expression or technical methods, among which the most striking are condensation, displacement and indirect representation. Processes, however, which lead to the same results—condensation, displacement and indirect representation—have become known to us as peculiarities of the dream-work. Does not this agreement suggest the conclusion that joke-work and dream-work must, at least in some essential respects, be identical? The dream-work has, I think, been revealed to us as regards its most important characteristics. Of the psychical processes in jokes the part that is hidden from us is precisely the one that may be compared to the dream-work—namely, what happens during the formation of a joke in the first person. Shall we not yield to the temptation to construct that process on the analogy of the formation of a dream? A few of the characteristics of dreams are so alien to jokes that the part of the dream-work corresponding to those characteristics cannot be transferred to the formation of jokes. There is no doubt that the regression of the train of thought to perception is absent in

getrauen, daß der den Traum vorbereitende Vorgang der Traumarbeit in die Region des Unbewussten zu verlegen ist. Im ganzen wären also bei der Traumbildung, grob genommen, drei Stadien zu unterscheiden: erstens die Versetzung der vorbewussten Tagesreste ins Unbewusste, woran die Bedingungen des Schlafzustandes mitbeteiligt sein müßten, sodann die eigentliche Traumarbeit im Unbewussten, und drittens die Regression des so bearbeiteten Traummaterials auf die Wahrnehmung, als welche der Traum bewußt wird.

Als Kräfte, welche bei der Traumbildung beteiligt sind, lassen sich erkennen: Der Wunsch zu schlafen, die den Tagesresten nach der Ernüdierung durch den Schlafzustand noch verbliebene Energiebesetzung, die psychische Energie des trauembildenden unbewussten Wunsches und die widerstrebende Kraft der im Wachleben herrschenden, während des Schlafes nicht völlig aufgehobenen »Zensur«. Aufgabe der Traumbildung ist es vor allem, die Hemmung der Zensur zu überwinden, und gerade diese Aufgabe wird durch die Verschiebungen der psychischen Energie innerhalb des Materials der Traumgedanken gelöst.

jokes. But the other two stages of dream-formation, the sinking of a preconscious thought into the unconscious and its unconscious revision, if they could be supposed to occur in joke-formation, would present the precise outcome that we can observe in jokes. Let us decide, then, to adopt the hypothesis that this is the way in which jokes are formed in the first person: a preconscious thought is given over for a moment to unconscious revision and the outcome of this is at once grasped by conscious perception.

Before we examine this hypothesis in detail, we will consider an objection which might threaten our premiss. We have started from the fact that the techniques of jokes indicate the same processes that are known to us as peculiarities of the dream-work. Now it is easy to argue against this that we should not have described the techniques of jokes as condensation, displacement, etc., and should not have arrived at such far-reaching conformities between the methods of representation in jokes and dreams, if our previous knowledge of the dream-work had not prejudiced our view of the technique of jokes; so that at bottom we are only finding in jokes a confirmation of the expectations with which we approached them from dreams. If this was the basis of the conformity, there would be no certain guarantee of its existence apart from our prejudice. Nor indeed have condensation, displacement and indirect representation been taken by any other author as explaining the forms of expression of jokes. This would be a possible objection, but not on that account a just one. We have arrived at such far-reaching conformities between the methods of representation in jokes and dreams if the techniques of jokes indicate the same processes that are known to us as peculiarities of the dream-work. Now it is easy to argue against this that we should not have described the techniques of jokes as condensation, displacement, etc., and should not have arrived at such far-reaching conformities between the methods of representation in jokes and dreams, if our previous knowledge of the dream-work had not prejudiced our view of the technique of jokes; so that at bottom we are only finding in jokes a confirmation of the expectations with which we approached them from dreams. If this was the basis of the conformity, there would be no certain guarantee of its existence apart from our prejudice. Nor indeed have condensation, displacement and indirect representation been taken by any other author as explaining the forms of expression of jokes. This would be a possible objection, but not on that account a just one.
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work, we had a perfect right to do so and it was in fact nothing more than an easily justifiable simplification.

There is another objection which would not affect our case so seriously but which is also not so open to a fundamental dis-proof. It might be said that, while it is true that these techniques of joking which fit in so well with our scheme deserve to be recognized, they are nevertheless not the only possible techniques of joking nor the only ones used in practice. It might be argued that under the influence of the model of the dream-work we have only looked for techniques of joking which fitted in with it, while others, overlooked by us, would have proved that this conformity was not invariably present. I really cannot venture to assert that I have succeeded in elucidating the technique of every joke in circulation; and I must therefore leave open the possibility that my enumeration of joke-techniques will show some incompleteness. But I have not intentionally excluded from discussion any kind of technique that was clear to me, and I can declare that the commonest, most important and most characteristic methods of joking have not escaped my attention.

Jokes possess yet another characteristic which fits satisfactorily into the view of the joke-work which we have derived from dreams. We speak, it is true, of 'making' a joke; but we are aware that when we do so our behaviour is different from what it is when we make a judgement or make an objection. A joke has quite outstandingly the characteristic of being a notion that has occurred to us 'involuntarily'. What happens is not that we know a moment beforehand what joke we are going to make, and that all it then needs is to be clothed in words. We have an indefinable feeling, rather, which I can best compare with an 'absence', a sudden release of intellectual tension, and then all at once the joke is there—as a rule ready-clothed in words. Some of the techniques of jokes can be employed apart from them in the expression of a thought—for instance, the techniques of analogy or allusion. I can deliberately decide to make an allusion. In such a case I begin by having a direct expression of my thought in my mind (in my inner ear); I inhibit myself from expressing it owing to a misgiving related to the external situation, and can almost be said to make up

unser gutes Recht, eigentlich nichts anderes als eine leicht zu recht
tertigende Vereinfachung.

Ein anderer Einwand trage unsere Sache nicht so schwer, wäre aber auch

nicht so gründlich zu widerlegen. Man könnte meinen, daß die zu unse-

ren Absichten so gut stimmenden Techniken des Witzes zwar Anerken-
nung verdienen, aber doch nicht alle möglichen oder in der Praxis ver-
wendeten Techniken des Witzes wären. Wir hätten eben, von dem Vor-
bild der Traumarbeit beeinflußt, nur die zu ihr passenden Witztech-
niken herausgesucht, während andere, von uns übersehene, eine solche
Übereinstimmung als nicht allgemein vorhanden erweise hätten. Ich
gentreue mich nun wirklich nicht der Behauptung, daß es mir gelungen
ist, alle in Umlauf befindlichen Witze in bezug auf ihre Technik auf-
zuklären, und lasse darum die Möglichkeit offen, daß meine Aufzählung
der Witztechniken manche. Unvollständigkeit erkennen lassen wir,
aber ich habe keine Art der Technik, die mir durchsichtig wurde, ab-
sichtlich von der Erörterung ausgeschlossen und kann die Behauptung
vertreten, daß die häufigsten, wichtigsten, am meisten charakteristischen
technischen Mittel des Witzes sich meiner Aufmerksamkeit nicht ent-
zogen haben.

Der Witz besitzt noch einen anderen Charakter, welcher sich unserer
vom Traum herstammenden Auffassung der Witzarbeit befriedigend
fügte. Man sagt zwar, daß man den Witz »macht«, aber man verspürt,
dass man sich dabei anders benimmt, als wenn man ein Urteil fällt, einen
Einwand macht. Der Witz hat in ganz hervorragender Weise den
Charakter eines ungewollten »Einfalls«. Man weiß nicht etwa einen
Moment vorher, welchen Witz man machen wird, den man dann nur
in Worte zu kleiden braucht. Man verspürt vielmehr etwas Undefinier-
bares, das ich am ehesten einer Absenz, einem plötzlichen Auslassen der
intellektuellen Spannung vergleichen möchte, und dann ist der Witz
mit einem Schlage da, meist gleichzeitig mit seiner Einkleidung. Manche
Mittel des Witzes finden auch außerhalb desselben im Gedanken-
ausdruck Verwendung, z. B. das Gleichnis und die Anspielung. Ich kann

1 [The French term.]
my mind to replace the direct expression by another form of indirect expression; and I then produce an allusion. But the allusion which arises in this way and which is formed under my continuous supervision is never a joke, however serviceable it may be in other ways. A joking allusion, on the other hand, emerges without my being able to follow these preparatory stages in my thoughts. I will not attach too much importance to this behaviour; it is scarcely decisive, though it agrees well with our hypothesis that in the formation of a joke one drops association.

When we want them; but at other times, to make up for this, they appear involuntarily, as it were, and at points in our train of thought where we cannot see their relevance. These; again, from the unconscious.

It is to be expected that in the process of condensation a few of normal (non-tendentious) forgetting. Unique impressions offer difficulties to forgetting; those that are analogous in any way are forgotten by being condensed in regard to their points of resemblance. Confusion between analogous impressions is one of the preliminary stages of forgetting. [Freud enlarged on this in a footnote added in 1907 to Section F of Chapter XII of The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901b).]
of the elements subjected to it will be lost, while others, which take over the cathetic energy of the former, will become intensified or over-intensified through the condensation. Thus the brevity of jokes, like that of dreams, would be a necessary concomitant of the condensations which occur in both of them—in both cases a result of the process of condensation. This origin would also account for the special character of the brevity of jokes, a character that cannot be further defined but which is felt as a striking one.

In an earlier passage (p. 124) we regarded one of the outcomes of condensation—multiple use of the same material, play upon words, and similarity of sound—as a localized economy, and the pleasure produced by an (innocent) joke as derived from that economy, and later [p. 128 f.] we inferred that the original intention of jokes was to obtain a yield of pleasure during the stage of play but had been dammed up by rational criticism. Have we not before us here two different views of the same fact which seem incompatible with each other? I do not think so. It is true that they are two different views, and that they need to be brought into harmony with each other; but they are not contradictory. One of them is merely foreign to the other; and when we have established a connection between them, we shall probably have made some advance in knowledge. The fact that such condensations are sources for a yield of pleasure is far from incompatible with the hypothesis that conditions for their production are easily found in the unconscious. We can, on the contrary, see a reason for the plunge into the unconscious in the circumstance that the pleasure-yielding condensations of which jokes are in need arise there easily. There are, moreover, two other factors which at a first glance seem to be completely foreign to each other and to have come together as though by some undesired chance, but which on deeper investigation turn out to be intimately linked and indeed essentially one. I have in mind the two assertions that, on the one hand, jokes during their development at the stage of play (that is, during the

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VI. Die Beziehung des Witzes zum Traum und zum Unbewussten

gang einige der ihm unterworffenen Elemente verlorengehen, während andere, welche deren Besetzungsenergie übernehmen, durch die Verdichtung erstarken oder überstark aufgebaut werden. Die Kürze des Witzes wäre also wie die des Traumes eine notwendige Begleiterscheinung der in beiden vorkommenden Verdichtungen, beide Male ein Ergebnis des Verdichtungsvorganges. Dieser Herkunft verdankte auch die Kürze des Witzes ihren besonderen, nicht weiter angebbaren, aber der Empfindung auffälligen Charakter.

Wir haben vorhin (S. 118) das eine Ergebnis der Verdichtung, die mehrfache Verwendung desselben Materials, das Wortspiel, den Gleichklang, als lokализierte Ersparung aufgefaßt und die Lust, die der (harmlose) Witz schafft, aus solcher Ersparung abgeleitet; späterhin [S. 121 f.] haben wir die ursprüngliche Absicht des Witzes darin gefunden, derartigen Lustgewinn an Worten zu machen, was ihm auf der Stufe des Spieles unverwehrt war, im Verlaufe der intellektuellen Entwicklung aber durch die vernünftige Kritik eingedämmt wurde. Nun haben wir uns zu der Annahme entschlossen, daß derartige Verdichtungen, wie sie der Technik des Witzes dienen, automatisch, ohne besondere Absicht, während des Denkvorganges im Unbewußten entstehen. Liegen da nicht zwei verschiedene Auffassungen derselben Tatsache vor, die miteinander unverträglich scheinen? Ich glaube nicht; es sind allerdings zwei verschiedene Auffassungen, und sie verlangen miteinander in Einklang gebracht zu werden, aber sie widersprechen einander nicht. Die eine ist bloß der anderen fremd, und wenn wir eine Beziehung zwischen ihnen hergestellt haben, werden wir wahrscheinlich um ein Stück Erkenntnis weitergekommen sein. Daß solche Verdichtungen Quellen von Lustgewinn sind, verträgt sich sehr wohl mit der Voraussetzung, daß sie im Unbewußten leicht die Bedingungen zu ihrer Entstehung finden; wir sehen im Gegenteil die Motivierung für das Eintauchen ins Unbewußte in dem Umstande, daß dort die lustbringende Verdichtung, welcher der Witz bedarf, sich leicht ergibt. Auch zwei andere Momente, welche für die erste Betrachtung einander völlig fremd scheinen und wie durch einen unerwünschten Zufall zusammentreffen, werden sich bei tieferem Eingehen als innig verknüpft, ja wesenseinig erkennen lassen. Ich meine die beiden Aufstellungen, daß der Witz einerseits während seiner Entwicklung auf der Stufe des Spieles, also im
childhood of reason) are able to bring about these pleasurable condensations and that, on the other hand, at higher stages they accomplish the same effect by plunging the thought into the unconscious. For the infantile is the source of the unconscious, and the unconscious thought-processes are none other than those—the one and only ones—produced in early childhood. The thought which, with the intention of constructing a joke, plunges into the unconscious is merely seeking there for the ancient dwelling-place of its former play with words. Thought is put back for a moment to the stage of childhood so as once more to gain possession of the childish source of pleasure. If we did not already know it from research into the psychology of the neuroses, we should be led by jokes to a suspicion that the strange unconscious revision is nothing else than the infantile type of thought-activity. It is merely that it is not very easy for us to catch a glimpse in children of this infantile way of thinking, with its peculiarities that are retained in the unconscious of adults, because it is for the most part corrected, as it were, in statu nascendi. But in a number of cases we succeed in doing so, and we then laugh at the children’s ‘silliness’. Any uncovering of unconscious material of this kind strikes us in general as ‘comic’.1

It is easier to perceive the characteristics of these unconscious thought-processes in the remarks made by sufferers from certain mental diseases. We should most probably be able (as Griesinger suggested long ago2) to understand the deliria of the insane and to make use of them as pieces of information, if we ceased to apply the demands of conscious thinking to them and if we treated them, like dreams, with our interpretative technique.3

1 Many of my neurotic patients who are under psycho-analytic treatment are regularly in the habit of confirming the fact by a laugh when I have succeeded in giving a faithful picture of their hidden unconscious to their conscious perception; and they laugh even when the content of what is unveiled would by no means justify this. This is subject, of course, to their having arrived close enough to the unconscious material to grasp it after the doctor has detected it and presented it to them.

2 [W. Griesinger (1817–68) had pointed out the wish-fulfilling character of both dreams and psychoses. One particular passage of his (Griesinger, 1845, 89) is referred to several times by Freud. See an Editor’s footnote to Freud’s paper on the two principles of mental functioning (1911b), Standard Ed., 12, 218.]

3 In doing so we should not forget to take into account the distortion due to the censorship which is still at work even in psychoses.

Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten.

Kindesalter der Vernunft, solche lustbringende Verdichtungen hervorbringen konnte und daß er anderseits auf höheren Stufen dieselbe Leistung durch das Eintauchen des Gedankens ins Unbewußte vollbringt. Das Infantile ist nämlich die Quelle des Unbewußten, die unbewußten Denkvorgänge sind keine anderen, als welche im frühen Kindesalter einzig und allein hergestellt werden. Der Gedanke, der zum Zweck der Witzbildung ins Unbewußte eintaucht, sucht dort nur die alte Heimstatt des einstigen Spieles mit Worten auf. Das Denken wird für einen Moment auf die kindliche Stufe zurückversetzt, um so der kindlichen Lustquelle wieder haft zu werden. Wüßte man es nicht bereits aus der Erforschung der Neurosenpsychologie, so müßte man beim Witz auf die Annahme geraten, daß die sonderbare unbewußte Bearbeitung nichts anderes als der infantile Typus der Denkarbeit ist. Es ist bloß nicht sehr leicht, dieses infantile Denken mit seinen im Unbewußten des Erwachsenen erhaltenen Eigen tümlichkeiten beim Kinde zu erhaschen, weil es meist sozusagen in statu nascendi korrigiert wird. In einer Reihe von Fällen gelingt es aber doch, und dann lachen wir jedesmal über die »Kinderdummheit«. Jede Aufdeckung eines solchen Unbewußten wirkt auf uns überhaupt als »komisch«.

Leichter zu fassen sind die Charaktere dieser unbewußten Denkvorgänge in den Äußerungen der Kranken bei manchen psychischen Störungen. Es ist sehr wahrscheinlich, daß wir nach des alten Griesinger2 Vermutung imstande wären, die Delirien der Geisteskranken zu verstehen und als Mitteilungen zu verwerten, wenn wir nicht die Anforderungen des bewußten Denkens an sie stellen, sondern sie mit unserer Deutungskunst behandeln würden wie etwa die Träume4.

1 Viele meiner neurotischen, in psychoanalytischer Behandlung stehenden Patienten pflegen regelmäßig durch ein Lachen zu bezeugen, daß es gelungen ist, ihrer bewußten Wahrnehmung das verbüßte Unbewußte getreu zu zeigen, und sie lachen auch dann, wenn der Inhalt des Enthüllten es keineswegs rechtfertigen würde. Bedingung dafür ist allerdings, daß sie diesem Unbewußten nahe genug gekommen sind, um es zu erfassen, wenn der Arzt es erraten und ihnen vorgeführt hat.

2 [W. Griesinger hatte auf den wunschbefriedigenden Charakter der Träume wie der Psychosen hingewiesen (1845).]

4 Dabei dürfen wir nicht vergessen, der Entstehung infolge der auch in der Psychose noch wirksamen Zensur Rechnung zu tragen.
Indeed we have confirmed the fact that 'there is a return of the mind in dreams to an embryonic point of view'.

We have entered so closely, in connection with the processes of condensation, into the importance of the analogy between jokes and dreams that we may be briefer in what follows. As we know, the displacements in the dream-work point to the operation of the censorship of conscious thinking, and accordingly, when we come across displacement among the techniques of jokes, we shall be inclined to suppose that an inhibitory force plays a part in the formation of jokes as well. And we already know that this is quite generally the case. The effort made by jokes to recover the old pleasure in nonsense or the old pleasure in words finds itself inhibited in normal moods by objections raised by critical reason; and in every individual case this has to be overcome. But the manner in which the joke-work accomplishes this task shows a sweeping distinction between jokes and dreams. In the dream-work it is habitually accomplished by displacements, by the selection of ideas which are sufficiently remote from the objectionable one for the censorship to allow them to pass, but which are nevertheless derivatives of that idea and have taken over its psychical cathexis by means of a complete transference. For this reason displacements are never absent in a dream and are far more comprehensive.

Among displacements are to be counted not merely diversions from a train of thought but every sort of indirect representation as well, and in particular the replacement of an important but objectionable element by one that is indifferent and that appears innocent to the censorship, something that seems like a very remote allusion to the other one—substitution by a piece of symbolism, or an analogy, or something small. It cannot be disputed that portions of such indirect representation are already present in the dream's preconscious thoughts—for instance, representation by symbols or analogies—because otherwise the thought would not have reached the stage of preconscious

1 The Interpretation of Dreams (1900a). [Standard Ed., 5, 591. The phrase occurs there as a quotation; but its source is not specified.]

2 ['Transference' is not, of course, used here in the commoner sense in which it is used of a phenomenon in psychotherapy. See an Editor's footnote to Chapter VII (C) of The Interpretation of Dreams, Standard Ed., 5, 562.]
expression at all. Indirect representations of this kind, and allusions whose reference to the thing intended is easy to discover, are indeed permissible and much-used methods of expression in our conscious thinking as well. The dream-work, however, exaggerates this method of indirect expression beyond all bounds. Under the pressure of the censorship, any sort of connection is good enough to serve as a substitute by allusion, and displacement is allowed from any element to any other. Replacement of internal associations (similarity, causal connection, etc.) by what are known as external ones (simultaneity in time, contiguity in space, similarity of sound) is quite specially striking and characteristic of the dream-work. All these methods of displacement appear too as techniques of joking. But when they appear, they usually respect the limits imposed on their employment in conscious thinking; and they may be altogether absent, although jokes too have invariably a task to accomplish of dealing with an inhibition. We can understand the subordinate place taken by displacements in the joke-work when we recall that jokes always have another technique at their command for keeping off inhibition and indeed that we have found nothing more characteristic of them than precisely this technique. For jokes do not, like dreams, create compromises; they do not evade the inhibition, but they insist on maintaining play with words or with nonsense unaltered. They restrict themselves, however, to a choice of occasions in which this play or this nonsense can at the same time appear allowable (in jests) or sensible (in jokes), thanks to the ambiguity of words and the multiplicity of conceptual relations. Nothing distinguishes jokes more clearly from all other psychical structures than this double-sidedness and this duplicity in speech. From this point of view at least the authorities come closest to an understanding of the nature of jokes when they lay stress on 'sense in nonsense' [p. 12].

In view of the universal predominance in jokes of this peculiar technique for overcoming their inhibitions, it might be thought superfluous for them ever to make use in particular cases of the technique of displacement. But, on the one hand, certain species of that technique remain of value to jokes as aims and as sources of pleasure—for instance, displacement proper (diversion of thoughts), which indeed partakes of the

Indirekte Darstellungen dieser Art und Anspielungen, deren Beziehung zum Eigentlichen leicht auffindbar ist, sind ja zulässige und vielgebrauchte Ausdrucksmitte auch in unserem bewussten Denken. Die Traumarbeit überreibt aber die Anwendung dieser Mittel der indirekten Darstellung ins Schrankenlose. Jede Art von Zusammenhang wird unter dem Drucke der Zensur zum Ersatz durch Anspielung gut genug, die Verschiebung von einem Element her ist auf jedes andere gestattet. Ganz besonders auffällig und für die Traumarbeit charakteristisch ist die Ersetzung der inneren Assoziationen (Ähnlichkeit, Kausalzusammenhang usw.) durch die sogenannten äußeren (Gleichzeitigkeit, Kontiguität im Raum, Gleichklang).

Alle diese Verschiebungsmitte kommen auch als Techniken des Witzes vor; aber wenn sie vorkommen, halten sie zumeist die Grenzen ein, die ihrer Anwendung im bewussten Denken gezogen sind, und sie können überhaupt fehlen, obwohl ja auch der Witz regelmäßig eine Hemmungsaufgabe zu erledigen hat. Man versteht dies Zurücktreten der Verschiebungen bei der Witzarbeit, wenn man sich erinnert, daß dem Witz ganz allgemein eine andere Technik zu Gebote steht, mit welcher er sich der Hemmung erwehrt, ja daß wir nichts gefunden haben, was charakteristischer für ihn wäre als gerade diese Technik. Der Witz schafft nämlich nicht Kompromisse wie der Traum, er weicht der Hemmung nicht aus, sondern er besteht darauf, das Spiel mit dem Wort oder dem Un­­sinn unverändert zu erhalten, beschränkt sich aber auf die Auswahl von Fällen, in denen dieses Spiel oder dieser Un­­sinn doch gleichzeitig zulässig (Scherz) oder sinnreich (Witz) erscheinen kann, dank der Vieldeutigkeit der Worte und der Mannigfaltigkeit der Denkrelationen. Nichts scheidet den Witz besser von allen anderen psychischen Bildungen als diese seine Doppelseitigkeit und Doppelzügigkeit, und wenigstens von dieser Seite haben sich die Autoren durch die Betonung des »Sinnes im Unsinn« der Erkenntnis des Witzes am meisten genähert [S. 15 f].

Bei der ausnahmslosen Vorherrschaft dieser dem Witz besonderen Technik zur Überwindung seiner Hemmungen könnte man es überflüssig finden, daß er sich überhaupt noch in einzelnen Fällen der Verschiebungstechnik bedient, allein einerseits bleiben gewisse Arten dieser Technik als Ziele und Lustquellen für den Witz wertvoll; wie z. B. die eigentliche Verschiebung (Gedankenablenkung), die ja die Natur des
nature of nonsense. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the highest stage of jokes, tendentious jokes, often have to overcome two kinds of inhibition, those opposed to the joke itself and those opposed to its purpose (p. 101), and that allusions and displacements are well qualified to make this latter task possible.

The abundant and unrestrained use in the dream-work of indirect representation, of displacements, and especially of allusions, has a result which I mention not for its own importance but because it became my subjective reason for taking up the problem of jokes. If one gives an account to an uninformed or unaccustomed person of a dream-analysis, in which are set out, therefore, the strange processes of allusions and displacements—processes so obnoxious to waking life—of which the dream-work has made use, the reader receives an uncomfortable impression and declares that these interpretations are 'in the nature of a joke'. But he clearly does not regard them as successful jokes, but as forced, and in some way violating the rules of jokes. It is easy to explain this impression. It arises from the fact that the dream-work operates by the same methods as jokes, but in its use of them it transgresses the limits that are respected by jokes.1 We shall presently [p. 179] learn that, as a result of the part played by the third person, jokes are bound by a certain condition which does not apply to dreams.

Among the techniques common to jokes and dreams, representation by the opposite and the use of nonsense claim some amount of our interest. The former is one of the more effective methods employed in jokes, as may be seen among others by the examples of 'overstatement jokes' (p. 72 f.). Incidentally, representation by the opposite is not able, like most other joke-techniques, to escape conscious attention. A person

1 [The gist of this passage had already been included by Freud in a footnote in the first edition of The Interpretation of Dreams (1900a). Standard Ed., 4, 209–8. A question had in fact been raised by Fliess, who had read the book in proof, and Freud replied to it in very much the same terms as those used above in a letter to him of September 11, 1899 (Freud, 1900a, Letter 118). It may be noted that, in the Standard Edition translation of the footnote here referred to, the German word 'witzig' is rendered by 'ingenious and amusing'. In the present volume (as, for instance, in the passage in the text above) it is often rendered 'in the nature of a joke'. Cf. the Editor's Preface, p. 7 f.

Unsinn teilt, anderseits darf man nicht vergessen, daß die höchste Stufe des Witzes, der tendenziose Witz, häufig zweierlei Hemmungen zu überwinden hat, die ihm selbst und die seiner Tendenz entgegenstehenden (S. 96), und daß die Anspielungen und Verschiebungen ihm die letztere Aufgabe zu ermöglichen geeignet sind.

Die reichliche und zügellose Anwendung der indirekten Darstellung, der Verschiebungen und insbesondere Anspielungen in der Traumarbeit hat eine Folge, die ich nicht ihrer eigenen Bedeutung wegen erwähne, sondern weil sie der subjektive Anlaß für mich wurde; mich mit dem Problem des Witzes zu beschäftigen. Wenn man einem Unkundigen oder Ungewöhnten eine Traumanalyse mitteilt, in welcher also die sonderbaren, dem Wachdenken anstößigen Wege der Anspielungen und Verschiebungen dargelegt werden, deren sich die Traumarbeit bedient hat, so unterliegt der Leser einem ihm unbequemlichen Eindruck, erklärt diese Deutungen für »witzig«, erblickt aber in ihnen offenbar nicht gelungene Witze, sondern gezwungene und irgendwie gegen die Regeln, des Witzes verstoßende 3. Dieser Eindruck ist nun leicht aufzuklären: er rührt daher, daß die Traumarbeit mit derselben Mitteln arbeitet wie der Witz, aber in der Anwendung derselben die Grenzen überschreitet, welche der Witz einhält. Wir werden auch bald hören [S. 162 f.], daß der Witz infolge der Rolle der dritten Person an eine gewisse Bedingung gebunden ist, welche den Traum nicht berührt.

Ein gewisses Interesse nehmen unter den Techniken, die Witz und Traum gemeinsam sind, die Darstellung durch das Gegenteil und die Verwendung des Widersinnes in Anspruch. Die erstere gehört zu den kräftig wirksenden Mitteln des Witzes, wie wir unter anderen an den Beispielen von »Überbietungswitz« ersehen konnten (S. 70 f.). Die Darstellung durchs Gegenteil vermochte sich übrigens der bewußten Aufmerksamkeit nicht wie die meisten anderen Witztechniken zu entziehen;
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who tries to bring the joke-work into operation in himself as deliberately as possible—a professional wag—soon discovers as a rule that the easiest way of replying to an assertion by a joke is by asserting its contrary and by leaving it to the inspiration of the moment to get rid of the objection which his contradiction is likely to provoke, by giving what he has said a fresh interpretation. It may be that representation by the opposite owes the favour it enjoys to the fact that it forms the core of another pleasurable way of expressing a thought, which can be understood without any need for bringing in the unconscious. I am thinking of irony, which comes very close to joking [see p. 73 above] and is counted among the sub-species of the comic. Its essence lies in saying the opposite of what one intends to convey to the other person, but in sparing him contradiction by making him understand—by one's tone of voice, by some accompanying gesture, or (where writing is concerned) by some small stylistic indications—that one means the opposite of what one says. Irony can only be employed when the other person is prepared to hear the opposite, so that he cannot fail to feel an inclination to contradict. As a result of this condition, irony is exposed particularly easily to the danger of being misunderstood. It brings the person who uses it the advantage of enabling him readily to evade the difficulties of direct expression, for instance in invectives. It produces comic pleasure in the hearer, probably because it stirs him into a contradictory expenditure of energy which is at once recognized as being unnecessary. A comparison like this between jokes and a closely related type of the comic may confirm our assumption that what is peculiar to jokes is their relation to the unconscious and that this may perhaps distinguish them from the comic as well.

In the dream-work, representation by the opposite plays a far greater part even than in jokes. Dreams are not merely fond of representing two contraries by one and the same composite structure, but they so often change something in the dream-thoughts into its opposite that this leads to a great difficulty in the work of interpretation. "There is no way of deciding at first glance whether any element that admits of a contrary is

\[1\] The characteristic of the comic which is described as its 'dryness' depends likewise on the distinction between a statement and the gestures (in the widest sense of the word) accompanying it.

}\[1\] Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten

wer den Mechanismus der Witzarbeit bei sich möglichst absichtlich in Tätigkeit zu bringen sucht, der habituelle Witzling, pflegt bald herauszufinden, daß man auf eine Behauptung am leichtesten mit einem Witz erwidert, wenn man deren Gegenteil festhält und es dem Einfall überläßt, den gegen dies Gegenteil zu befürchtenden Einspruch durch eine Umdeutung zu beseitigen; Vielleicht verdankt die Darstellung durchs Gegenteil solche Bevorzugung dem Umstande, daß sie den Kern einer anderen lustbringenden Ausdrucksweise des Gedankens bildet, für deren Verständnis wir das Unbewußte nicht zu bemühen brauchen. Ich meine die Ironie, die sich dem Witze sehr annähert [vgl. S. 71] und zu den Untertanen der Komik gerechnet wird. Ihr Wesen besteht darin, das Gegenteil von dem, was man dem anderen mitzuteilen beabsichtigt, auszusagen, diesem aber den Widerspruch dadurch zu ersetzen, daß man im Tonfall, in den begleitenden Gesten, in kleinen stilistischen Anzeichen — wenn es sich um schriftliche Darstellung handelt — zu verstecken sich, meinetwegen sei ihm nicht zu unverschämt, man meine selbst das Gegenteil seiner Aussage. Die Ironie ist nur dort anwendbar, wo der andere das Gegenteil zu hören vorbereitet ist, so daß seine Neigung zum Widerspruch nicht ausbleiben kann. Infolge dieser Bedingtheit ist die Ironie der Gefahr, nicht verstanden zu werden, besonders leicht ausgesetzt. Sie bringt der sie anwendenden Person den Vorteil, daß sie die Schwierigkeiten direkter Äußerungen, z. B. bei Invektiven, leicht umgehen läßt; bei dem Hörer erzeugt sie komische Lust, wahrscheinlich, indem sie ihn zu einem Widerspruchsaufwand bewegt, der sofort als überflüssig erkannt wird. Ein solcher Vergleich des Witzes mit einer ihm nahestehenden Gattung des Komischen mag uns in der Annahme bestärken, daß die Beziehung zum Unbewußten das dem Witz Besondere ist, das ihn vielleicht aus der Komik scheiden.

\[1\] Auf der Scheidung von Aussage und begleitenden Gebärden (im weitesten Sinne) beruht auch der Charakter der Komik, der als ihre 'Trockenheit' bezeichnet wird.
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I must state emphatically that this fact has not up to now met with any recognition. But it seems to point to an important characteristic of unconscious thinking, in which in all probability no process that resembles ‘judging’ occurs. In the place of rejection by a judgement, what we find in the unconscious is ‘repression’. Repression may, without doubt, be correctly described as the intermediate stage between a defensive reflex and a condemning judgement.

Nonsense, absurdity, which appears so often in dreams and has brought them into so much undeserved contempt, never arises by chance through the ideational elements being jumbled together, but can always be shown to have been admitted by the dream-work intentionally and to be designed to represent embittered criticism and contemptuous contradiction in the dream-thoughts. Thus the absurdity in the content of the dream takes the place of the judgement ‘this is a piece of nonsense’ in the dream-thoughts. I laid great stress on the evidence of this in my Interpretation of Dreams because I thought that in this way I could make the most forcible attack on the error of believing that the dream is not a psychical phenomenon at all—an error which blocks the way to a knowledge of the unconscious. We have now learned, in the course of solving certain tendentious jokes (p. 57 ff.), that nonsense in jokes is made to serve the same aims of representation. We know too that a senseless façade to a joke is particularly well suited to increase the hearer’s psychical expenditure and so to raise the quota present in the dream-thoughts as a positive or as a negative.¹

Der Uninn, die Absurdität, die so häufig im Traum vorkommt und ihm soviel unverdient Verachtung zugezogen hat, ist doch niemals zufällig durch die Zusammenwürfelung von Vorstellungselementen entstanden, sondern jedesmal als von der Traumarbeit absichtlich zugelassen nachzuweisen und zur Darstellung von erbitterter Kritik und verachtlichem Widerspruch innerhalb der Traumgedanken bestimmt. Die Absurdität des Trauminhalts ersetzt also das Urteil: Es ist ein Uninn, in den Traumgedanken¹. Ich habe in meiner Traumdeutung große Nachdruck auf diesen Nachweis gelegt, weil ich den Irrtum, der Traum sei überhaupt kein psychisches Phänomen, der den Weg zur Erkenntnis des Unbewußten versperrt, auf diese Weise am eindringlichsten zu bekämpfen gedachte. Wir haben nun erfahren (bei der Auflösung gewisser tendenziöser Witze, S. 56 ff.), daß der Uninn im Witze den gleichen Zwecken der Darstellung dienstbar gemacht wird. Wir wissen auch, daß eine un­
ninnige Fassade des Witzes ganz besonders geeignet ist, den psychischen Aufwand bei dem Hörer zu steigern und somit auch den zur Abfuhr

¹ [Vgl. den ersten Teil von Abschnitt G in Kapitel VI der Traumdeutung.]

¹ Traumdeutung [Kapitel VI, etwa am Ende des ersten Drittels von Abschnitt C].


¹ [Vgl. the first part of Section G of Chapter VI of The Interpretation of Dreams.]
liberated for discharge by laughing [p. 152]. But besides this, it must not be forgotten that the nonsense in a joke is an end in itself, since the intention of recovering the old pleasure in nonsense is among the joke-work's motives. There are other ways of recovering the nonsense and of deriving pleasure from it: caricature, exaggeration, parody and travesty make use of them and so create 'comic nonsense'. If we submit these forms of expression to an analysis similar to the one we have applied to jokes, we shall find that in none of these cases is there any occasion for bringing in unconscious processes in our sense in order to explain them. We can now understand too how it is that the techniques to which jokes admittedly cling are, on the other hand, not their exclusive property. Some doubts which we were obliged to hold over until later in our original examination of these techniques now find a comfortable solution. For that very reason another doubt that arises is all the more deserving of our consideration. This suggests that the undeniable relation of jokes to the unconscious is in fact only valid for certain categories of tendentious jokes, whereas we are prepared to extend it to every species and every developmental stage of jokes. We must not evade an examination of this objection.

It can be assumed with certainty that jokes are formed in the unconscious when it is a question of jokes in the service of unconscious purposes or of purposes reinforced by the unconscious—that is, of most 'cynical' jokes [p. 113 f.]. For in such cases the unconscious purpose drags the preconscious thought down into the unconscious and there gives it a new shape—a process to which Fechner's idea that 'the scene of action in dreams is different from that of waking idealational life' had been quoted by Freud in The Interpretation of Dreams (Standard Ed., 5, 536) as supporting the topographical distinction between unconscious and preconscious mental processes.] 1

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Durch Lachen frei werdenden Betrag zu erhöhen [S. 143]. Außerdem aber wollen wir nicht daran vergessen, daß der Unsinns im Witz Selbstzweck ist, da die Absicht, die alte Lust am Unsinns wiedergewinnen, zu den Motiven der Witzarbeit gehört. Es gibt andere Wege, um den Unsinns wiedergewinnen und Lust aus ihm zu ziehen; Karikatur, Ubertreibung, Parodie und Travestie bedienen sich derselben und schaffen so den 'komischen Unsinns'. Unterwerfen wir diese Ausdrucksformen einer ähnlichen Analyse, wie wir sie am Witz geübt haben, so werden wir finden, daß sich bei ihnen allen kein Anlaß ergibt, unbewußte Vorgänge in unserem Sinne zur Erklärung heranzuziehen. Wir verstehen nun auch, warum der Charakter des »Witzigen« zur Karikatur, Ubertreibung, Parodie als Zutat hinzukommen kann; es ist die Verschiedenheit des »psychischen Schauplatzes«, die dies ermöglicht. 

Ich meine, die Verlegung der Witzarbeit in das System des Unbewußten ist uns um ein ganzes Stück wertvoller geworden, seitdem sie uns das Verständnis für die Tatsache eröffnet hat, daß die Techniken, an denen der Witz doch haftet, anderseits nicht sein ausschließlisches Gut sind. Manche Zweifel, die wir während unserer anfänglichen Untersuchung dieser Techniken fürs nächste zurückstellen mußten, finden nun ihre bequeme Lösung. Um so mehr verdient unsere Würdigung ein Bedenken, welches uns sagen möchte, daß die unleugbar vorhandene Beziehung des Witzes zum Unbewußten nur für gewisse Kategorien des tendenziösen Witzes richtig ist, während wir bereits sind, dieselbe auf alle Arten und Entwicklungstufen des Witzes auszudehnen. Wir dürfen uns der Prüfung dieses Einwandes nicht entziehen.

Der sichere Fall der Witzbildung im Unbewußten ist anzunehmen, wenn es sich um Witze im Dienste unbewußter oder durchs Unbewußte verstärkter Tendenzen handelt, also bei den meisten »zynischen« Witzen [S. 108 f.]. Dann zieht nämlich die unbewußte Tendenz den vorbewußten Gedanken zu sich herab ins Unbewußte, um ihn dort umzuformen, ein Vorgang, zu

1 An expression used by Fechner [1889, 2, 520-1] which has acquired importance as a support for my views. [Fechner's idea that 'the scene of action in dreams is different from that of waking idealational life' had been quoted by Freud in The Interpretation of Dreams (Standard Ed., 5, 536) as supporting the topographical distinction between unconscious and preconscious mental processes.]

2 [See, for instance, pp. 61 and 81 f.]

3 [S. z. B. S. 60 und S. 79.]
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which the study of the psychology of the neuroses has taught us numerous analogies. In the case, however, of tendentious jokes of other kinds, of innocent jokes and of jests, this downward-dragging force seems absent and the relation of jokes to the unconscious is accordingly called in question.

But let us now consider the case in which a thought, not worthless in itself, arises in the course of a train of thought and is expressed as a joke. In order to enable this thought to be turned into a joke, it is clearly necessary to select from among the possible forms of expression the precise one which brings along with it a yield of verbal pleasure. We know from self-observation that this selection is not made by conscious attention; but it will certainly help the selection if the cathexis of the preconscious thought is reduced to an unconscious one, for, as we have learnt from the dream-work, the connecting paths which start out from words are in the unconscious treated in the same way as connections between things. An unconscious cathexis offers far more favourable conditions for selecting the expression. Moreover, we can immediately assume that the possible form of expression that involves a yield of verbal pleasure exercises the same downward drag on the still unsettled wording of the preconscious thought as did the unconscious purpose in the earlier case. To meet the simpler case of the jest, we may suppose that an intention which is all the time on the look-out to achieve a yield of verbal pleasure grasps the occasion offered in the preconscious for dragging the cathetic process down into the unconscious according to the familiar pattern.

I should be very glad if it were possible for me on the one hand to give a clearer exposition of this single decisive point in my view of jokes and on the other hand to reinforce it with conclusive arguments. But in fact what I am faced with here is not a two-fold failure but one and the same failure. I cannot give a clearer exposition because I have no further proof of my view. I arrived at it on the basis of a study of the technique [of jokes] and of a comparison with the dream-work, and on no other basis; and I then found that on the whole it fits in excellently with the characteristics of jokes. Thus this view has been arrived at by inference; and if from an inference of this kind one is led, not to a familiar region, but on the contrary, to one that is alien and new to one’s thought, one calls the
inference a ‘hypothesis’ and rightly refuses to regard the relation of the hypothesis to the material from which it was inferred as a ‘proof’ of it. It can only be regarded as ‘proved’ if it is reached by another path as well and if it can be shown to be the nodal point of still other connections. But proof of this sort is not to be had, in view of the fact that our knowledge of unconscious processes has scarcely begun. In the realization that we are standing upon ground which has never before been trodden, we are thus content, from our point of observation, to take one single, short and uncertain step forward into the unexplored region. 

On such a foundation we cannot build a great deal. If we bring the various stages of the joke into relation to the mental states that are favourable to them we can perhaps proceed as follows. The jest springs from a cheerful mood, which seems to be characterized by an inclination to diminish mental cathexes. It already employs all the characteristic techniques of jokes and already fulfils their fundamental condition by selecting verbal material or connections of thoughts which will meet both the demands for a yield of pleasure and those made by rational criticism. We shall conclude that the lowering of the thought-cathexis to the unconscious level, facilitated by the cheerful mood, is present already in jests. In the case of innocent jokes that are linked to the expression of a valuable thought, the encouraging effect of mood no longer applies. Here we must presume the occurrence of a special personal aptitude, which is manifested in the ease with which the preconscious cathexis is dropped and exchanged for a moment for the unconscious one. A purpose that is all the time on the watch for renewing the original yield of pleasure from jokes exercises a downward drag on the still unsettled preconscious expression of the thought. No doubt most people are capable of producing jests when they are in a cheerful mood; the aptitude for making jokers is present in only a few people independently of their mood. Lastly, the joke-work receives its most powerful stimulus when strong purposes reaching down into the unconscious are present, which represent a special aptitude for the production of jokes and which may explain to us how it is that the subjective determinants of jokes are so often fulfilled in neurotic people. Under the influence of strong purposes even those who otherwise have the least aptitude for it become capable of making jokes.
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With this last contribution, however, which explains, even though still only hypothetically, the joke-work in the first person, our interest in jokes is, strictly speaking, at an end. It remains for us to make a further short comparison between jokes and the better-known dream; and we may expect that, apart from the single conformity we have already considered, two such dissimilar mental functions will only reveal differences. The most important difference lies in their social behaviour. A dream is a completely asocial mental product; it has nothing to communicate to anyone else; it arises within the subject as a compromise between the mental forces struggling in him, it remains unintelligible to the subject and is for that reason totally uninteresting to other people. Not only does it not need to set any store by intelligibility, it must actually avoid being understood, for otherwise it would be destroyed; it can only exist in masquerade. For that reason it can without hindrance make use of the mechanism that dominates unconscious mental processes, to the point of a distortion which can no longer be set straight. A joke, on the other hand, is the most social of all the mental functions that aim at a yield of pleasure. It often calls for three persons and its completion requires the participation of someone else in the mental process it starts. The condition of intelligibility is, therefore, binding on it; it may only make use of possible distortion in the unconscious through condensation and displacement up to the point at which it can be set straight by the third person’s understanding. Moreover, jokes and dreams have grown up in quite different regions of mental life and must be allotted to points in the psychological system far remote from each other. A dream still remains a wish, even though one that has been made unrecognizable; a joke is developed play. Dreams, in spite of all their practical nonentity, retain their connection with the major interests of life; they seek to fulfil needs by the regressive detour of hallucination, and they are permitted to occur for the sake of the one need that is active during the night—the need to sleep. Jokes, on the other hand, seek to gain a small yield of pleasure from the mere activity, untramelled by needs, of our mental apparatus. Later they try to catch hold of that pleasure as a by-product during the activity of that apparatus and thus arrive secondarily at not unimportant

VI. Die Beziehung des Witzes zum Traum und zum Unbewußten

Mit diesem letzten Beitrag, der wenn auch hypothetisch gebliebenen Aufklärung der Witzarbeit bei der ersten Person, ist aber unser Interesse am Witz strenggenommen erledigt. Es erübrigt uns etwa noch eine kurze Vergleichung des Witzes mit dem besser bekannten Traum, der wir die Erwartung vorausschicken, daß zwei so verschiedenartige seelische Leistungen neben der einen bereits gewürdigten Überinstimmung nur noch Unterschiede erkennen lassen dürften. Der wichtigste Unterschied liegt in ihrem sozialen Verhalten. Der Traum ist ein vollkommen asoziales seelisches Produkt; er hat einem anderen nichts mitzuteilen; innerhalb einer Person als Kompromiß der in ihr ringenden seelischen Kräfte entstanden, bleibt er dieser Person selbst unverständlich und ist darum für eine andere völlig uninteressant. Nicht nur daß er keinen Wert auf Verständlichkeit zu legen braucht, er muß sich sogar hüten verstanden zu werden, da er sonst zerstört würde; er kann nur in der Vermummung bestehen. Er darf sich darum ungehindert des Mechanismus, der die unbewußten Denkvorgänge beherrscht, bis zu einer nicht mehr redressierbaren Entstellung bedienen. Der Witz dagegen ist die sozialste aller auf Lustgewinn zielenden seelischen Leistungen. Er benötigt oftmals dreier Personen und verlangt seine Vollendung durch die Teilnahme eines anderen an dem von ihm angeregtet seelischen Vorgange. Er muß sich also an die Bedingung der Verständlichkeit binden, darf die im Unbewußten mögliche Entstehung durch Verdrängung und Verschiebung in keinem weiteren Ausmaße in Anspruch nehmen, als soweit dieselbe durch das Verständnis der dritten Person redressierbar ist. Im übrigen sind die beiden, Witz und Traum, auf ganz verschiedenen Gebieten des Seelenlebens erwachsen und an weit von einander entlegenen Stellen des psychologischen Systems unterzubringen. Der Traum ist immer noch ein, wiewohl unkenntlich gemachter, Wunsch; der Witz ist ein entwickeltes Spiel. Der Traum behält trotz all seiner praktischen Nichtigkeit die Beziehung zu den großen Interessen des Lebens bei; er sucht die Bedürfnisse auf dem regressiven Umwege der Halluzination zu erfüllen, und er verdankt seine Zulassung dem einzigen während des Nachtzustandes regen Bedürfnis zu schlafen. Der Witz hingegen sucht einen kleinen Lustgewinn aus der bloßen, bedürfnisfreien Tätigkeit unseres seelischen Apparats zu ziehen; später einen solchen als Nebengewinn während der Tätigkeit desselben zu erhaschen, und gelangt so sekundär zu nicht unwichtigen,
functions directed to the external world. Dreams serve predominantly for the avoidance of unpleasure, jokes for the attainment of pleasure; but all our mental activities converge in these two aims.
VII
JOKES AND THE SPECIES OF THE COMIC

[1]

We have approached the problems of the comic in an unusual way. It seemed to us that jokes, which are ordinarily regarded as a sub-species of the comic, offer enough peculiarities to be attacked directly; thus we have avoided their relation to the more inclusive category of the comic so long as that was possible, though we have not failed to pick out en passant a few hints that might throw light on the comic. We have had no difficulty in discovering that socially the comic behaves differently from jokes [p. 144]. It can be content with two persons: a first who finds what is comic and a second in whom it is found. The third person, to whom the comic thing is told, intensifies the comic process but adds nothing new to it. In a joke this third person is indispensable for the completion of the pleasure-producing process; but on the other hand the second person may be absent, except where a tendentious, aggressive joke is concerned. A joke is made, the comic is found—and first and foremost in people, only by a subsequent transference in things, situations, and so on, as well. As regards jokes, we know that the sources of the pleasure that is to be fostered lie in the subject himself and not in outside people. We have seen, too, that jokes can sometimes re-open sources of the comic which have become inaccessible [p. 103], and that the comic often serves as a façade for a joke and replaces the fore-pleasure which has otherwise to be produced by the familiar technique (p. 152). None of this precisely suggests that the relations between jokes and the comic are very simple. On the other hand, the problems of the comic have proved so complicated and all the efforts of the philosophers at solving them have been so unsuccessful that we cannot hold out any prospect that we shall be able to master them in a sudden onslaught, as it were, by approaching them from the direction of jokes. Moreover, for our investigation of jokes we brought with us an instrument of which no one else had hitherto made use—a knowledge of the dream-work. We have no similar

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advantage at our command to help us to understand the comic, and we must therefore expect that we shall discover no more about the nature of the comic than what we have already found in jokes, in so far as they form part of the comic and possess in their own nature certain of its features unchanged or merely modified.

The type of the comic which stands nearest to jokes is the naive. Like the comic in general, the naive is ‘found’ and not, like a joke, ‘made’. Indeed, the naive cannot be made at all, whereas alongside the pure comic we have to take into account the case in which something is made comic—an evocation of the comic. The naive must arise, without our taking any part in it, in the remarks and actions of other people, who stand in the position of the second person in the comic or in jokes. The naive occurs if someone completely disregards an inhibition because it is not present in him—if, therefore, he appears to overcome it without any effort. It is a condition for the naive’s producing its effect that we should know that the person concerned does not possess the inhibition; otherwise we call him not naive but impudent. We do not laugh at him but are indignant at him. The effect produced by the naive is irresistible, and seems simple to understand. An inhibitory expenditure which we usually make suddenly becomes unutilizable owing to our hearing the naive remark, and it is discharged by laughter. There is no need here for the attention to be distracted [p. 152], probably because the lifting of the inhibition occurs directly and not through the intermediary of an operation that has been provoked. In this we are behaving like the third person in a joke, who is presented with the economy in inhibition without any effort on his own part [p. 148].

In view of the insight we have gained into the genesis of inhibitions from following the course of development from play to jokes, it will not surprise us to find that the naive occurs far the most often in children, and is then carried over to uneducated adults, whom we may regard as childish so far as their intellectual development is concerned. Naive remarks are, of course, better suited for comparison with jokes than naive actions, since remarks and not actions are the usual form in which jokes are expressed. It is illuminating to find that naive

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Diejenige Gattung des Komischen, welche dem Witze am nächsten steht, ist das Naive. Das Naive wird wie das Komische im allgemeinen gefunden, nicht wie der Witze gemacht, und zwar kann das Naive überhaupt nicht gemacht werden, während beim rein Komischen auch ein Komischmachen, ein Hervorrufen der Komik in Betracht kommt. Das Naive muß sich ohne unser Dazutun ergeben an den Reden und Handlungen anderer Personen, die an der Stelle der zweiten Person beim Komischen oder beim Witze stehen. Das Naive entsteht, wenn sich jemand über eine Hemmung voll;hinaussetzt, weil eine solche bei ihm nicht vorhanden ist, wenn er sie also mühelos zu überwinden scheid. Bedingung für die Wirkung des Naiven ist, daß uns bekannt sei, er besitze diese Hemmung nicht, sonst heißt wir ihn nicht naiv, sondern frech, lachen nicht über ihn; sondern sind über ihn entrüstet. Die Wirkung des Naiven ist unwiderstehlich und scheint dem Verständniss einfach. Ein von uns gewohnheitsmäßig gemachter Hemmungsaufwand wird durch das Anhören der naiven Rede plötzlich unverwendbar und durch Lachen abgeführt; eine Ablenkung der Aufmerksamkeit [S. 143] braucht es dabei nicht, wahrscheinlich weil die Aufhebung der Hemmung direkt und nicht durch Vermittlung einer angeregten Operation erfolgt. Wir verhalten uns dabei analog der dritten Person des Witzes, weder die Hemmungersparung ohne eigene Bemühung geschenkt wird [S. 139f.].

Nach den Einblicken in die Genese der Hemmungen, welche wir bei der Verfolgung der Entwicklung vom Spiel zum Witze gewonnen haben, wird es uns nicht wundern, daß das Naive zu allermeist am Kind gefunden wird, in weiterer Übertragung dann beim ungebildeten Erwachsenen, den wir als kindlich betrachten seiner intellektuellen Ausbildung aufgefranen können. Zum Vergleiche mit dem Witze bieten sich naive Reden natürlich besser als naive Handlungen, da Reden und nicht Handlungen die gewöhnlichen Außerungsformen des Witzes sind, Es ist nun bezeichnend, daß man naive
This view will be confirmed if we examine another example. A brother and sister—a twelve-year-old girl and a ten-year-old boy—were performing a drama composed by themselves before an audience of uncles and aunts. The scene represented a hut by the sea-shore. In the first act the two author-actors, a poor fisherman and his honest wife, are complaining about the hard times and their small earnings. The husband decides to cross the wide seas by a few examples.

A three-and-a-half-year-old girl gave this warning to her brother: ‘I say, don’t eat so much of that pudding or you’ll get ill and have to have some “Bubizin”‘. ‘“Bubizin”?’ asked her mother, ‘What’s that?’ ‘When I was ill’, answered the child in self-justification, ‘I had to have some Medizin.’ The child thought that what the doctor prescribed was called ‘Mädi-zin’ when it was for a ‘Mädi’ [little girl] and concluded that if it was for a ‘Bubi’ [little boy] it would be called ‘Bubi-zin’. This is constructed like a verbal joke working with the technique of similarity of sound, and indeed it might have occurred as a real joke, in which case we should have greeted it, half-unwillingly, with a smile. As an example of naïveté it strikes us as quite excellent and it raises a laugh. What is it that makes the difference here between a joke and something naïve? Evidently not the wording or the technique, which would be the same for both possibilities, but a factor, rather, which at first sight seems quite remote from both of them. It is merely a question of whether we assume that the speaker has intended to make a joke or whether we suppose that he—the child—has tried in good faith to draw a serious conclusion on the basis of his uncorrected ignorance. Only the latter case is one of naïveté. Here for the first time our attention is drawn to the other person putting himself into the psychical process that occurs in the person who produces the remark.

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him proudly: 'I too have not been idle.' And thereupon she opens the door of the hut and reveals to his eyes twelve large dolls lying asleep on the floor. . . At this point in the drama the actors were interrupted by a storm of laughter from the audience, which they were unable to understand. They stared disconcerted at their fond relatives, who had behaved properly till then and had listened with eager attention. The laughter is explained on the supposition that the audience assumed that the young authors still knew nothing of the conditions governing the origin of children and were therefore able to believe that a wife could boast of the offspring born during her husband's long absence and that a husband could rejoice with her over them. What the authors produced on the basis of this ignorance might be described as nonsense or absurdity. 1

A third example will show us yet another technique, the acquaintance of which we have made in jokes, in the service of the naive. A 'Frenchwoman' 2 was engaged as governess for a little girl, but did not meet with her personal approval. Scarcely had the newcomer left the room when the little girl gave voice to loud criticism: 'That a Frenchwoman? She may call herself one because she once lay beside a Frenchman!' This might have been a joke—even a tolerably good one—if the child had had the slightest notion of the possibility of the double meaning. In fact she had merely transferred to the stranger she disliked a facetious way of describing a thing as ungenuine which she had often heard: 'That genuine gold? It may once have lain beside gold.' Owing to the child's ignorance, which so completely altered the psychical process in her understanding hearers, her remark became a naive one. In consequence of this condition [that the child must really be ignorant], there is the possibility of a misleading _naiveté_. We may assume in the child an ignorance that no longer exists; and children often represent themselves as naive, so as to enjoy a liberty that they would not otherwise be granted.

We can illustrate from these examples the position occupied

1 [This anecdote is told, with a different setting, of the children of the 1st Earl of Lytton. Cf. G. W. E. Russell's _Collections and Recollections_, 1898, Chapter 32.]
2 ['Französine,' The ordinary term for a French governess in Austria.]
by the naïve between jokes and the comic. The naïve (in speech) agrees with jokes as regards wording and content: it brings about a misuse of words, a piece of nonsense, or a piece of smut. But the psychical process in the first person, who produces it, which raised so many interesting and puzzling questions for us in regard to jokes, is here completely absent. A naïve person thinks he has used his means of expression and trains of thought normally and simply, and he has no arrière pensee in mind; nor does he derive any yield of pleasure from producing something naïve. None of the characteristics of the naïve exist except in the apprehension of the person who hears it— a person who coincides with the third person in jokes. Moreover the person who produces it does so without any effort. The complicated technique, which in jokes is designed to paralyse the inhibition arising from rational criticism, is absent in him; he does not possess this inhibition as yet, so that he can produce nonsense and smut directly and without compromise. In that respect the naïve is a marginal case of the joke; it arises if in the formula for the construction of jokes we reduce the value of the censorship to zero.

Whereas it was a condition for the effectiveness of a joke that both persons should be subject to approximately the same inhibitions or internal resistances [p. 151], it will be seen that it is a condition for the naïve that the one person should possess inhibitions which the other is without. The apprehension of the naïve lies with the person provided with inhibitions, and he alone obtains the yield of pleasure which the naïve brings about. We have come near to guessing that that pleasure arises from the lifting of inhibitions. Since the pleasure from jokes has the same origin—a core of verbal pleasure and pleasure from nonsense, and a casing of pleasure in the lifting of inhibitions or in the relief of psychical expenditure [p. 138n.]—this similar relation to inhibition explains the internal kinship between the naïve and jokes. In both of them the pleasure arises through the lifting of internal inhibition.

The psychical process in the receptive person, however, is as much more complicated in the case of the naïve as it is simplified in comparison with jokes in the productive person. (In the case of the naïve, incidentally, our own self invariably coincides with the receptive person, while in the case of jokes we may equally
occupy the position of the productive one.) When the receptive person hears something naïve, it must on the one hand affect him like a joke—and our examples give evidence precisely of this—for, as with a joke, the lifting of the censorship is made possible for him by no more than the effort of listening. But only a part of the pleasure created by the naïve can be explained in this way; and even this might be endangered in certain instances—for example, at hearing a naïve piece of smut. We might react to this at once with the same indignation that might be felt against a real piece of smut, if it were not that another factor spares us this indignation and at the same time offers us the more important part of our pleasure in the naïve. This other factor is the condition already mentioned [p. 182] that, only a part of the pleasure created by the naïve can be explained in order to recognize the naïve, we must know that the internal inhibition is absent in the producing person. Only when this is certain do we laugh instead of being indignant. Thus we take the producing person’s psychical state into consideration, put ourselves into it and try to understand it by comparing it with our own. It is these processes of empathy and comparison that result in the economy in expenditure which we discharge by laughing.

It would be possible to prefer a simpler account—that our indignation is made superfluous by the fact that the other person has had no need to overcome a resistance; in that case the laughter would occur at the cost of the economy in indignation. In order to discourage this view, which is on the whole misleading, I will make a sharper distinction between two cases which I have treated together above. The naïve which we come across can either be in the nature of a joke, as it was in our examples, or in the nature of smut (or of what is in general objectionable); and the latter will occur especially when it is expressed not in speech but in action. This second alternative is really misleading: one could suppose, as far as it is concerned, that the pleasure arises from the economized and transformed indignation. But the first alternative throws more light on things. A naïve remark—e.g., ‘Bubizin’ [p. 183]—can in itself act like a minor joke and give no cause for indignation. This alternative is certainly the less frequent; but it is the purer and by far the more instructive. In so far as what we are concerned with is the fact that the child has seriously and without arrière pensée...
believed that the syllable ‘Medi’ in ‘Medizin’ is identical with her own name ‘Mädi’, our pleasure in what we hear receives an increase which has no longer anything to do with pleasure in a joke. We now look at what has been said from two points of view—once in the way it happened in the child and once in the way it would have happened to us; and in making this comparison we see that the child has found an identity and that she has overcome a barrier that exists for us; and we then seem to go further and say to ourselves: ‘If you choose to understand what you’ve heard, you can economize the expenditure on keeping up this barrier.’ The expenditure liberated in a comparison like this is the source of pleasure in the making this comparison we see that the child has found an identity and that she has overcome a barrier that exists for us; and we then seem to go further and say to ourselves: ‘If you choose to understand what you’ve heard, you can economize the expenditure on keeping up this barrier.’ The expenditure liberated in a comparison like this is the source of pleasure in the naïve and it is discharged by laughter; and it is, incidentally, the same pleasure that we should otherwise have transformed into indignation, if this had not been excluded by our understanding of the producing person and, in this case, by the nature of what was said as well. But if we take the instance of a naïve joke as a model for the other alternative, of something naïve that is objectionable, we shall see that there too the economy in inhibition can arise directly from the comparison, that there is no necessity for us to assume an indignation that begins and is then stifled, and that this indignation in fact only corresponds to using the liberated expenditure in another way—against which in the case of jokes complicated protective arrangements were necessary [p. 151 f.].

This comparison, and this economy in expenditure by putting oneself into the mental process of the producing person, can only claim to be of significance for the naïve, however, if it is not in it alone that they are found. A suspicion occurs to us, in fact, that this mechanism, which is wholly alien to jokes, may be a part and perhaps an essential part of the psychical process in the comic. Looked at from this point of view—and this is undoubtedly the most important aspect of the naïve—the naïve thus presents itself as a species of the comic. The extra element in our examples of naïve speeches that is added to the pleasure of a joke is ‘comic’ pleasure. We should be inclined to assume of it quite generally that it arises from expenditure economized in a comparison of someone else’s remarks with our own. But since this leads us to far-reaching considerations, we will first

[1] [I.e. the identity between Medi and Mädi.]

VII. Der Witze und die Arten des Komischen

Nebenabsicht für identisch mit seinem eigenen Namen »Mädi« gehalten hat, erfährt die Lust am Gehörten eine Steigerung, die nichts mehr mit der Witzeslust zu tun hat. Wir betrachten jetzt das Gesagte von zweierlei Standpunkten, einmal so, wie es sich beim Kind ergeben hat, und dann so, wie sich es für uns ergeben würde, finden bei diesem Vergleich, daß das Kind eine Identität gefunden, eine Schranke überwunden hat, die für uns besteht, und dann geht es etwa so weiter, als ob wir uns sagen würden: Wenn du das Gehörte verstehen willst, kannst du dir den Aufwand für die Einhaltung dieser Schranke ersparen. Der bei solchem Vergleich frei gewordene Aufwand ist die Quelle der Lust am Naiven und wird durch Lachen abgeführt; es ist allerdings der nämliche, den wir sonst in Entrüstung verwandelt hätten, wenn das Verständnis der produzierenden Person und hier auch die Natur des Gesagten eine solche nicht ausschloßen. Nehmen wir aber den Fall des naïven Witzes als vorbildlich für den anderen Fall des naïven Anstoßens, so sehen wir, daß auch hier die Ersparrung an Entrüstung direkt aus der Vergleichung hervorgehen kann, daß wir nicht notwendig haben, eine beginnende und dann erststichte Entrüstung anzunehmen, und daß die letztere nur einer anderweitigen Verwendung des frei gewordenen Aufwandes entspricht, gegen welche beim Witze komplizierte Schutzinrichtungen erforderlich waren [S. 142 f.].

conclude our discussion of the naïve. The naïve, then, would be a species of the comic in so far as its pleasure springs from the difference in expenditure which arises in trying to understand someone else; and it would approach the joke in being subject to the condition that the expenditure economized in the comparison must be an inhibitory expenditure.

Let us hastily add a few points of agreement and of difference between the concepts that we have just reached and those which have long been familiar in the psychology of the comic. The putting of oneself in the other person's place and trying to understand him is clearly nothing other than the 'comic lending' which since Jean Paul has played a part in the analysis of the comic; the 'comparing' of someone else's mental process with one's own corresponds to the 'psychological contrast' which we can at last find a place for here, after not knowing what to do with it in jokes [p. 11 f.]. But we differ in our explanation of comic pleasure from many authorities who regard it as arising from the oscillation of attention backwards and forwards between contrasting ideas. A mechanism of pleasure like this would seem incomprehensible to us; but we may point out that in a comparison between contrasts a difference in expenditure occurs which, if it is not used for some other purpose, becomes capable of discharge and may thus become a source of pleasure.

It is only with misgivings that I venture to approach the problem of the comic itself. It would be presumptuous to expect that my efforts would be able to make any decisive contribution

1 [See footnote 1, p. 195 below.]

2 In what I have written, I have all the time identified the naïve with the naïve-comic, which is certainly not in every case admissible. But it is enough for our purposes to study the character of the naïve in 'naive jokes' and in 'naive smut'. Any further investigation would imply an intention on my part of using this as a basis for my explanation of the comic.

Bergson, too, rejects the idea of comic pleasure having any such derivation, which is evidently influenced by an effort to establish an analogy with the laughter caused by tickling; and he supports his view with some good arguments (1900, 99).—The explanation of comic pleasure given by Lipps is on a quite different plane: in accordance with his view of the comic, he would regard it as something that is 'unexpectedly small'. [In the German this footnote is attached at the end of the paragraph.]
to its solution when the works of a great number of eminent thinkers have failed to produce a wholly satisfactory explanation. My intention is in fact no more than to pursue the lines of thought that have proved valuable with jokes a short distance further into the sphere of the comic.

The comic arises in the first instance as an unintended discovery derived from human social relations. It is found in people—in their movements, forms, actions and traits of character, originally in all probability only in their physical characteristics but later in their mental ones as well as, or as the case may be, in the expression of those characteristics. By means of a very common sort of personification, animals become comic too, and inanimate objects. At the same time, the comic is capable of being detached from people, in so far as we recognize the conditions under which a person seems comic. In this way the comic of situation comes about, and this recognition affords the possibility of making a person comic at one's will by putting him in situations in which his actions are subject to the comic conditions. The discovery that one has it in one's power to make someone else comic opens the way to an easy as other people. The methods that serve to make people comic are: putting them in a comic situation, mimicry, disguise, unmasking, caricature, parody, travesty, and so on. It is obvious that these techniques can be used to serve hostile and aggressive purposes. One can make oneself comic, too, as easily as other people. The methods that serve to make people comic are: putting them in a comic situation, mimicry, disguise, unmasking, caricature, parody, travesty, and so on. It is obvious that these techniques can be used to serve hostile and aggressive purposes. One can make a person comic in order to make him become contemptible, to deprive him of his claim to dignity and authority. But even if such an intention habitually underlies making people comic, this need not be the meaning of what is comic spontaneously.

This irregular\(^1\) survey of the occurrences of the comic will already show us that a very extensive field of origin is to be ascribed to it and that such specialized conditions as we found, for instance, in the naïve are not to be expected in it. In order to get on the track of the determining condition that is valid for the comic, the most important thing is the choice of an introductory case. We shall choose the comic of movement,
because we recollect that the most primitive kind of stage performance—the pantomime—uses that method for making us laugh. The answer to the question of why we laugh at the clown's movements is that they seem to us extravagant and inexpedient. We are laughing at an expenditure that is too large. Let us look now for the determining condition outside us to make us laugh. The answer to the question of why we laugh at the clown's movements is that they seem to us extravagant and inexpedient. A child's movements do not seem to us comic, although he kicks and jumps about. On the other hand, it is comic when a child who is learning to write follows the movements of his pen with his tongue stuck out; in these associated motions we see an unnecessary expenditure of movement which we should spare ourselves if we were carrying out the same activity. Similarly, other such associated motions, or merely exaggerated expressive movements, seem to us comic in adults too. Pure examples of this species of the comic are to be seen, for instance, in the movements of someone playing skittles who, after he has released the ball, follows its course as though he could still continue to direct it. Thus, too, all grimaces are comic which exaggerate the normal expression of the emotions, even if they are produced involuntarily as in sufferers from St. Vitus's dance (chorea). And in the same way, the passionate movements of a modern conductor seem comic to any unmusical person who cannot understand their necessity. Indeed, it is from this comic of movement that the comic of bodily shapes and facial features branches off; for these are regarded as though they were the outcome of an exaggerated or pointless movement. Staring eyes, a hooked nose hanging down to the mouth, ears sticking out, a hump-back—all such things probably only produce a comic effect in so far as movements are imagined which would be necessary to bring about these features; and here the nose, the ears and other parts of the body are imagined as more moveable than they are in reality. There is no doubt that it is comic if someone can 'waggle his ears', and it would certainly be still more comic if he could move his nose up and down. A good deal of the comic effect produced on us by animals comes from our perceiving in them movements such as these which we cannot imitate ourselves.

But how is it that we laugh when we have recognized that some other person's movements are exaggerated and inex-
pedicent? By making a comparison, I believe, between the movement I observe in the other person and the one that I should have carried out myself in his place. The two things compared must of course be judged by the same standard, and this standard is my expenditure of innervation, which is linked to my idea of the movement in both of the two cases. This statement calls for elucidation and expansion.

What we are here comparing is on the one hand the psychical expenditure while we are having a certain idea and on the other hand the content of the thing that we are having the idea of. Our statement says that the former is not in general and in theory independent of the latter, the content of the idea, and in particular that the idea of something large demands more expenditure than the idea of something small. So long as it is only a matter of the idea of different large movements, there should be no difficulties over the theoretical grounds for our statement or over proving it by observation. We shall see that in this case an attribute of the idea in fact coincides with an attribute of what we have an idea of, though psychology warns us as a rule against such a confusion.

I have acquired the idea of a movement of a particular size by carrying the movement out myself or by imitating it, and through this action I have learnt a standard for this movement in my innervatory sensations.¹

When, now, I perceive a movement like this of greater or lesser size in someone else, the securest way to an understanding (an apperception) of it will be for me to carry it out by imitation, and I can then decide from the comparison on which of the movements my expenditure was the greater. An impulse of this kind to imitation is undoubtedly present in perceptions of movements. But actually I do not carry the imitation through, any more than I still spell words out if I learnt to read by spelling. Instead of imitating the movement with my

1 The memory of this innervatory expenditure will remain the essential part of my idea of this movement, and there will always be modes of thinking in my mental life in which the idea will be represented by nothing else than this expenditure. In other circumstances, indeed, this element may be replaced by another—for instance, by visual images of the aim of the movement or by a verbal image; and in certain kinds of abstract thinking a token will suffice instead of the full content of the idea.

VII. Der Witz und die Arten des Komischen


Was wir hier in Beziehung zueinander setzen, ist einerseits der psychische Aufwand bei einem gewissen Vorstellen und anderseits der Inhalt dieses Vorgestellten. Unsere Behauptung geht dahin, daß der erstere nicht allgemein und prinzipiell unabhängig sei vom letzteren, vom Vorstellungsinhalt, insbesondere daß die Vorstellung eines Großen einen Mehraufwand gegen die eines Kleinen erfordere. Solange es sich nur um die Vorstellung verschieden großer Bewegungen handelt, dürfte uns die theoretische Begründung unseres Satzes und sein Erweiss durch die Beobachtung keine Schwierigkeiten bereiten. Es wird sich zeigen, daß in diesem Falle eine Eigenschaft der Vorstellung tatsächlich mit einer Eigenschaft des Vorgestellten zusammenfällt, obwohl die Psychologie uns sonst vor solcher Verwechslung warnt.


muscles, I have an idea of it through the medium of my memory-traces of expenditures on similar movements. Ideation or ‘thinking’ differs from acting or performing above all in the fact that it displaces far smaller cathetic energies and holds back the main expenditure from discharge.¹

But how is the quantitative factor—the greater or lesser size—of the perceived movement to be given expression in the idea? And if there can be no representation of quantity in the idea, which is made up of qualities, how can I distinguish the ideas of movements of different sizes?—how can I make the comparison on which everything here depends? The way is pointed out by physiology, for it teaches us that even during the process it is true, correspond to a very modest expenditure of energy.

Now it becomes very plausible to suppose that this innervatory sent the quantitative factor of the idea: that it is larger when this case in fact be the larger one—that is, it would be the idea of a large movement than when there is an idea of a small movement—when it is a question of a small one. Thus the idea of the larger movement would in this case in fact be the larger one—that is, it would be the idea accompanied by the larger expenditure of energy.

Direct observation shows that human beings are in the habit of expressing the attributes of largeness and smallness in the contents of their ideas by means of a varying expenditure in a kind of ideational mimetics. If a child or a man from the common people, or a member of certain races, narrates or describes something, it is easy to see that he is not content to make his idea plain to the hearer by the choice of clear words, but that he also represents its subject-matter in his expressive movements: he combines the mimetic and the verbal forms of representation.

¹ [This important principle had been expressed by Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900a), Standard Ed., 5, 599–600, though perhaps less clearly than here. He had discussed it earlier (in 1895) in quasi-neurological terms in Section 18 of Part I of his posthumously published 'Project' (1950a). The point is once more brought out very plainly in the paper on "The Two Principles of Mental Functioning" (1911b), Standard Ed., 12, 221 and recurs in many later passages—e.g. in Lecture XXXII of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933a).]

² [Some approach to the ideas contained in this passage may perhaps be traced in Sections 17 and 18 of Part I of Freud's 'Project'. (See last footnote.)]
sensation. And he especially demonstrates quantities and intensities: 'a high mountain' — and he raises his hand over his head, 'a little dwarf' — and he holds it near the ground. He may have broken himself of the habit of painting with his hands, yet for that reason he will do it with his voice; and if he exercises self-control in this too, it may be wagered that he will open his eyes wide when he describes something large and squeeze them shut when he comes to something small. What he is thus saying is that reason he expresses is not his affects but actually the content of what he is having an idea of.

Are we to suppose, then, that this need for mimetics is only aroused by the requirements of communicating something, in spite of the fact that a good part of this method of representation of what he is having an idea of may have been the beginning of the ideational mimetics? I can see quite clearly that my remarks relating to the category of large and small do not exhaust the subject. I might myself add a variety of points even before arriving at the phenomena of tension by which a person indicates somatically the concentration of his attention and the level of abstraction at which his thinking is at the moment proceeding. I regard the matter as a really important one, and I believe that if ideational mimetics are followed up, they may be as useful in other branches of aesthetics as they are here for an understanding of the comic.

To return now to the comic of movement. When, I repeat, a particular movement is perceived, the impulsion is given to

VII. JOKES AND THE COMIC

Er bezeichnet zumal die Quantitäten and Intensitäten. »Ein hoher Berg«, dabei hebt er die Hand über seinen Kopf; »ein kleiner Zwerg«, dabei hält er sie nahe an den Boden. Er mag es sich abgewöhnt haben, mit den Händen zu malen, so wird er es darum doch mit der Stimme tun, und wenn er sich auch darin beherrscht, so mag man wetten, daß er bei der Schilderung von etwas Großen die Augen aufreißt und bei der Darstellung von etwas Kleinem die Augen zusammendrückt. Es sind nicht seine Affekte, die er so äußert, sondern wirklich der Inhalt des von ihm Vorgestellten.

Soll man nun annehmen, daß dies Bedürfnis nach Mimik erst durch die Anforderung der Mitteilung geweckt wird, während doch ein gutes Stück dieser Darstellungsweise der Aufmerksamkeit des Hörers überhaupt entgeht? Ich glaube vielmehr, daß diese Mimik, wenn auch minder lebhaft, abgesehen von jeder Mitteilung besteht, daß sie auch zustande kommt, wenn die Person für sich allein vorstellt, etwas anschaulich denkt; daß diese Person dann das Groß und Klein an ihrem Körper ebenso wie während der Rede zum Ausdruck bringt, durch veränderte Innervation an ihren Gesichtszügen und Sinnesorganen wenigstens. Ja, ich kann mir denken, daß die dem Inhalt des Vorgestellten konsensuelle Körperrinnervation der Beginn und Ursprung der Mimik zu Mitteilungszwecken war; sie brauchte ja nur gesteigert, dem anderen auffällig gemacht zu werden, um dieser Absicht dienen zu können.

Wenn ich so die Ansicht vertrete, daß zu dem »Ausdruck der Gemütsbewegungen«, der als körperliche Nebenwirkung seelischer Vorgänge bekannt ist, dieser »Ausdruck des Vorstellungsinhalts« hinzugefügt werden sollte, so ist mir gewiß klar, daß meine auf die Kategorie des Großen und Kleinen bezüglichen Bemerkungen das Thema nicht erschöpfen.

Ich wüßte selbst noch mancherlei dazuzutun, noch ehe man zu den Spannungsphänomenen gelangt, durch welche eine Person die Sammlung ihrer Aufmerksamkeit und das Niveau der Abstraktion, auf dem ihr Denken eben verweilt, körperlich anzeigt. Ich halte den Gegenstand für recht bedeutsam und glaube, daß die Verfolgung der Vorstellungsmimik auf anderen Gebieten der Ästhetik ähnlich nützlich sein dürfte wie hier für das Verständnis des Komischen.

Um nun zur Komik der Bewegung zurückzukehren, wiederhole ich, daß mit der Wahrnehmung einer bestimmten Bewegung der Impuls zu ihrer
forming an idea of it by means of a certain expenditure of energy. In ‘trying to understand’, therefore, in apperceiving this movement, I make a certain expenditure, and in this portion of the mental process I behave exactly as though I were putting myself in the place of the person I am observing. But at the same moment, probably, I bear in mind the aim of this movement, and my earlier experience enables me to estimate the scale of expenditure required for reaching that aim. In ‘trying to understand’, therefore, in apperceiving the same moment, probably, I bear in this movement, I make a certain expenditure, and in this

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motion, and my earlier experience enables me to estimate the scale of expenditure required for reaching that aim. In action of the mental process I behave exactly as though I were to a comparison between the observed movement and my own. These two possibilities in my imagination amount in statu nascendi, it is declared superfluous and is free for use elsewhere or perhaps for discharge by laughter. This would be the way in different directions: first, to establish the conditions governing the discharge of the surplus, and second, to examine whether other circumstances being favourable, pleasure in a comic movement is generated—an innervatory expenditure which has become an unusable surplus when a comparison is made with a movement of one’s own.

It will be seen that our discussions must proceed in two different directions: first, to establish the conditions governing the discharge of the surplus, and second, to examine whether the other cases of the comic can be looked at in the same way as the comic of movement.

We will take the second question first and will turn from the comic of movement and action to the comic which is found in the intellectual functions and the character traits of other people.

As a sample of this class we may choose comic nonsense, as it is produced by ignorant candidates in an examination; it is no doubt more difficult to give a simple example of character traits. We should not be confused if we find that nonsense and stupidity, which so often produce a comic effect, are nevertheless not felt as comic in every case, just as the same characters which on one occasion can be laughed at as comic may on another occasion strike one as contemptible or hateful. This fact, of which we must not lose sight, merely points out that other factors are concerned in producing the comic effect be-


Wir merken nun, daß wir unsere Erörterungen nach zwei verschiedenen Richtungen fortzusetzen haben, erstens, um die Bedingungen für die Abfuhr des Überschusses festzustellen, zweitens um zu prüfen, ob die anderen Fälle des Komischen sich ähnlich fassen lassen wie das Komische der Bewegung.

Wir wenden uns der letzteren Aufgabe zuerst zu und ziehen nach dem Komischen der Bewegung und Handlung das Komische in Betracht, das an den geistigen Leistungen und Charakterzügen des anderen gefunden wird.

Wir können den komischen Unsinn, wie er von unwissenden Kandidaten im Examen produziert wird, zum Muster der Gattung nehmen; schwieriger ist es wohl, von den Charakterzügen ein einfaches Beispiel zu geben. Es darf uns nicht irremachen, daß Unsinn und Dummheit, die so häufig komisch wirken, doch nicht in allen Fällen als komisch empfunden werden, ebenso wie die nämlichen Charaktere, über die wir das eine Mal als komisch lachen, andere Male uns als verächtlich oder hassenswert erscheinen können. Diese Tatsache, der Rednung zu tragen wir nicht vergessen dürfen, deutet doch nur darauf hin, daß für die komische Wirkung noch andere Verhältnisse als die der uns bekannten
sides the comparison we know about—factors which we may be able to trace out in another connection. [See p. 217 ff.]

The comic that is found in someone else's intellectual and mental characteristics is evidently once again the outcome of a comparison between him and my own self, though, curiously enough, a comparison which has as a rule produced the opposite result to that in the case of a comic movement or action. In this latter case it was comic if the other person had made a greater expenditure than I thought I should need. In the case of a mental function, on the contrary, it becomes comic if the other person has spared himself expenditure which I regard as indispensable (for nonsense and stupidity are inefficiencies of function). In the former case I laugh because he has taken too much trouble, in the latter because he has taken too little. The comic effect apparently depends, therefore, on the difference between the two cathetic expenditures—one's own and the other person's as estimated by 'empathy'—and not on which of the two the difference favours. But this peculiarity, which at first sight confuses our judgement, vanishes when we bear in mind that a restriction of our muscular work and an increase of our intellectual work fit in with the course of our personal development towards a higher level of civilization. By raising our intellectual expenditure we can achieve the same result with a diminished expenditure on our movements. Evidence of this cultural success is provided by our machines.3

Thus a uniform explanation is provided of the fact that a person appears comic to us if, in comparison with ourselves, he makes too great an expenditure on his bodily functions and too little on his mental ones; and it cannot be denied that in both these cases our laughter expresses a pleasurable sense of the superiority which we feel in relation to him. If the relation in the two cases is reversed—if the other person's physical expenditure is found to be less than ours or his mental expenditure

Vergleichung in Betracht kommen, Bedingungen, denen wir in anderem Zusammenhange nachspüren können. [Vgl. S. 202 ff.]

Das Komische, das an geistigen und seelischen Eigenschaften eines anderen gefunden wird, ist offenbar wiederum Ergebnis einer Vergleichung zwischen ihm und meinem Ich, aber merkwürdigerweise einer Vergleichung, die zumeist das entgegengesetzte Resultat geliefert hat wie im Falle der komischen Bewegung oder Handlung. In diesem letzteren Falle war es komisch, wenn der andere sich mehr Aufwand auferlegt hatte, als ich zu gebrauchen glaubte; im Falle der seelischen Leistung wird es hingegen komisch, wenn der andere sich Aufwand erspart hat, den ich für unerläßlich halte, denn Unsinn und Dummheit sind ja Minderleistungen. Im ersteren Falle lache ich, weil er es sich zu schwer, im letzteren, weil er es sich zu leicht gemacht hat. Es kommt also scheinbar für die komische Wirkung nur auf die Differenz zwischen den beiden Besetzungsauflwendungen — dem der 'Einfühlung' und dem des Ichs — an und nicht darauf, zu wessen Gunsten diese Differenz aussagt. Diese unser Urteil zunächst verwirrende Sonderbarkeit schwindet aber, wenn man in Erwägung zieht, daß es in der Richtung unserer persönlichen Entwicklung zu einer höheren Kulturstufe liegt, unserer Muskelarbeit einzuschränken und unsere Gedankenarbeit zu steigern. Durch Erhöhung unseres Denkaufwandes erzielen wir eine Verringerung unseres Bewegungsaufwandes für die nämliche Leistung, von welchem Kulturerfolg ja unsere Maschinen Zeugnis ablegen.4

Es fügt sich also einem einheitlichen Verständnis, wenn derjenige uns komisch erscheint, der für seine körperlichen Leistungen zu viel und für seine seelischen Leistungen zu wenig Aufwand im Vergleich mit uns treibt, und es ist nicht abzuweisen, daß unser Lachen in diesen beiden Fällen der Ausdruck der lustvoll empfundenen Überlegenheit ist, die wir uns ihm gegenüber zusprechen. Wenn das Verhältnis sich in beiden Fällen umkehrt, der somatische Aufwand des anderen geringer und sein

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1 The German word here (and regularly in this connection throughout the rest of the book) is 'Differenz', not the usual 'Unterschied'. It is the term used in mathematics and means a quantitative not a qualitative difference. The English word has to cover both meanings.

2 As the proverb says: 'Was man nicht im Kopfe hat, muß man in den Beinen haben.' [Literally: 'What one hasn't in one's head one must have in one's legs.]

3 Vergleichung in Betracht kommen, Bedingungen, denen wir in anderem Zusammenhange nachspüren können. [Vgl. S. 202 ff.]

4 'Was man nicht im Kopfe hat', sagt das Sprichwort, 'muß man in den Beinen haben.'
greater—then we no longer laugh, we are filled with astonishment and admiration.\footnote{1}

The origin of comic pleasure which has been discussed here—its derivation from a comparison of another person with ourself, from the difference between our own psychical expenditure and the other person’s as estimated by empathy—is probably the most important genetically. It is certain, however, that it has not remained the only one. We have learnt at one time or other to disregard this comparison between the other person and ourself and to derive the pleasurable difference from the one side only, whether from the empathy or from the processes in ourself—which proves that the feeling of superiority bears no essential relation to comic pleasure. A comparison is [nevertheless] indispensable for the generation of this pleasure. We find that it is made between two cathetic expenditures that occur in rapid succession and are concerned with the same function, and these expenditures are either brought about in us through empathy into someone else or, without any such relation, are discovered in our own mental processes.

The first of these cases—in which, therefore, the other person still plays a part, though no longer in comparison with our own self—arises when the pleasurable difference in cathetic expenditures is brought about by external influences, which we may sum up as a ‘situation’. For that reason, this species of the comic is also known as ‘the comic of situation’. The characteristics of the person who provides the comic effect do not in this case play an essential part: we laugh even if we have to confess that we should have had to do the same in that situation. We are here extracting the comic from the relation of human beings to the often over-powerful external world; and so far as the mental processes of a human being are concerned, this external world also comprises social conventions and necessities and even his own bodily needs. A typical instance of the latter kind is provided if, in the middle of an activity which makes demands on a person’s mental powers, he is suddenly inter-

\footnote{1} The contradictoriness with which the determining conditions of the comic are pervaded—the fact that sometimes an excess and sometimes an insufficiency seems to be the source of comic pleasure—has contributed no little to the confusion of the problem. Cf. Lipps (1898, 47).
rupted by a pain or an excretory need. The contrast, through empathy, offers us the comic difference is that between the high degree of interest taken by him before the interruption and the minimal one that he has left over for his mental activity when the interruption has occurred. The person who offers us this difference becomes comic to us once again for his inferiority; but he is inferior only in comparison with his earlier self and not in comparison with us, for we know that in the same circumstances we could not have behaved otherwise. But it is noteworthy that we only find someone's being put in a position of inferiority comic where there is empathy—that is, where someone else is concerned: if we ourselves were in similar straits we should be conscious only of distressing feelings. It is probably only by keeping such feelings away from ourselves that we are able to enjoy pleasure from the difference arising out of a comparison between these changing cathexes.

The other source of the comic, which we find in the transformations of our own cathexes, lies in our relations with the future, which we are accustomed to anticipate with our expectant ideas. I assume that a quantitatively definite expenditure underlies each of our ideas—an expenditure which, in the event of a disappointment, is therefore diminished by a definite difference. Here I may once again recall the remarks I made earlier [p. 194] on 'ideational mimetics'. But it seems to me to be easier to prove a real mobilization of cathetic energy in the case of expectation. It is quite obviously true of a number of cases that motor preparations are what form the expression of expectation—above all in all cases in which the expected event makes demands on my motility—and that these preparations can be at once determined quantitatively. If I am expecting to catch a ball which is being thrown to me, I put my body into tensions which will enable it to meet the impact of the ball; and, should the ball when it is caught turn out to be too light, my superfluous movements make me comic to the spectators. I have let myself be enticed by my expectation into an exaggerated expenditure of movement. The same is true if, for instance, I lift a fruit which I have judged to be heavy out of a basket, but which, to my disappointment, turns out to be a sham one, hollow and made of wax. My hand, by jumping up, betrays the fact that I had prepared an innervation too large

Die andere Quelle des Komischen, die wir in unseren eigenen Besetzungswandlungen finden, liegt in unseren Beziehungen zum Zukünftigen, welches wir gewohnt sind, durch unsere Erwartungsvorstellungen zu antizipieren. Ich nehme an, daß ein quantitativ bestimmter Aufwand unserer jedesmaligen Erwartungsvorstellung zugrunde liegt, der sich also im Falle der Enttäuschung um eine bestimmte Differenz vermindert, und berufe mich hier wiederum auf die vorhin gemachten Bemerkungen über Vorstellungsmimik. Es scheint mir aber leichter, den wirklich mobil gemachten Besetzungsaufwand für die Fälle der Erwartung zu erweisen. Es ist für eine Reihe von Fällen ganz offenkundig, daß motorische Vorbereitungen den Ausdruck der Erwartung bilden, zunächst für alle Fälle, in denen das erwartete Ereignis Ansprüche an meine Motilität stellt, und diese Vorbereitungen sind ohne weiteres quantitativ bestimmbar. Wenn ich einen Ball aufzufangen erwartete, der mir zugeworfen wird, so versetzte ich meinen Körper in Spannungen, die ihn befähigen sollen, dem Anprall des Balls standzuhalten, und die überschüssigen Bewegungen, die ich mache, wenn sich der aufgefangene Ball als zu leicht erweist, machen mich den Zuschauern-komisch: Ich habe mich durch die Erwartung zu einem übermäßigen Bewegungsaufwand verführen lassen. Desgleichen, wenn ich z. B. eine für schwer gehaltene Frucht aus einem Korb hebe, die aber zu meiner Täuschung hohl, aus Wachs nachgeahmt ist. Meine Hand verrät durch ihr Emporschneiden, daß ich eine für den Zweck übergroße Innervation vorbereitet
for the purpose—and I am laughed at for it. There is at least one case in which the expenditure on expectation can be directly demonstrated measurably by physiological experiments on animals. In Pavlov's experiments on salivary secretions, various kinds of food are set before dogs in whom a salivary fistula has been opened; the amounts of saliva secreted then vary according to whether the experimental conditions confirm or disappoint the dogs' expectations of being fed with the food set before them.

Even when what is expected makes demands on my sense organs and not on my motility, I may assume that the expectation is expressed in a certain motor expenditure towards making the senses tense and towards holding back other impressions that are not expected; and, in general, I may regard an attitude of attention as being a motor function equivalent to a certain expenditure. I may further take it as a premiss that the expenditure on expectation is, in a certain expenditure towards making a communication and in the case of thinking unaccompanied by expectation. The expenditure on expectation is, however, put together from several components, and in the case of my disappointment, too, various points will be involved—not only whether what happens is perceptually greater or smaller than what is expected, but also whether it is worthy of the great interest which I had expended on the expectation. In this way I shall perhaps be led to take into account, besides the expenditure on the representation of large and small (the ideational mimetics), the expenditure on tightening the attention (the expenditure on expectation), and beyond this in other cases the expenditure on abstraction. But these other kinds of expenditure can easily be traced back to that on large and small, since what is more interesting, more sublime and even more abstract are only special cases, with particular qualities, of what is larger. If we consider in addition that, according to Lipps and other writers, quantitative (and not qualitative) contrast is to be regarded primarily as the source of comic pleasure, we shall on the whole feel glad that we chose the comic of movement as the starting-point of our enquiry.

had, and I were forerunverlacht: Ja es gibt wenigsten einen Fall, in welchem der Erwartungsaufwand durch das physiologische Experiment am Tier unmittelbar messbar aufgezeigt werden kann. In den Pawlowschen Versuchen über Speichelsekretionen werden Hunden, denen eine Speichelfistel angelegt worden ist, verschiedene Nahrungsmittel vorgezeigt, und die abgesonderten Mengen Speichel schwanken dann, je nachdem die Versuchsbedingungen die Erwartungen des Hundes, mit dem Vorgezeigten gefüttert zu werden, bestärkt oder getäuscht haben.

Auch wo das Erwartete bloß Ansprüche an meine Sinnesorgane und nicht an meine Motilität stellt, darf ich annehmen, daß die Erwartung sich in einer gewissen motorischen Verarbeitung zur Spannung der Sinne, zur Abhaltung anderer nicht erwarteter Eindrücke äußert, und darf überhaupt die Einstellung der Aufmerksamkeit als eine motorische Leistung, die einem gewissen Aufwand gleichkommt, auffassen: Ich darf ferner voraussetzen, daß die vorbereitende Tätigkeit der Erwartung nicht unabhängig sein wird von der Größe des erwarteten Eindrucks, sondern daß ich das Groß oder Klein derselben mimisch durch einen größeren oder kleineren Vorbereitungsaufwand darstellen werde, wie im Falle der Mitteilung und im Falle der Konsens ohne zu erwarten. Der Erwartungsaufwand wird sich allerdings aus mehreren Komponenten zusammensetzen, und auch für meine Enttäuschung wird verschiedene in Betracht kommen, nicht nur ob das Eingetroffene innlich größer oder kleiner ist als das Erwartete, sondern auch, ob es des großen Interesses würdig ist, welcher ich für die Erwartung aufgebogen hatte. Ich werde auf diese Weise etwa angeleitet, außer dem Aufwand für die Darstellung von Groß und Klein (der Vorstellungsmimik), den Aufwand für die Spannung der Aufmerksamkeit (Erwartungsaufwand) und bei anderen Fällen überhaupt den Abstraktionsaufwand in Betracht zu ziehen. Aber diese anderen Arten von Aufwand lassen sich leicht auf den für Groß und Klein zurückführen: da ja das Interessantere, das Erhabenerere und selbst das Abstraktere nur besonders qualifizierte Spezialfälle des Größeren sind. Nehmen wir hinzu, daß nach Lipps u. a. der quantitative— und nicht der qualitative — Kontrast in erster Linie als Quelle der-komischen Lust angesehen wird, so werden wir im ganzen damit zufrieden sein, daß wir das Komische der Bewegung zum Ausgangspunkt unserer Untersuchung gewählt haben.
Lipps, in the volume which has been so often quoted in these pages, has attempted, as an amplification to Kant's statement\footnote{Cf. footnote, p. 12.} that the comic is 'an expectation that has turned to nothing', to derive comic pleasure quite generally from expectation. \footnote{In English in the original.} In spite, however, of the many instructive and valuable findings which this attempt has brought to light, I should like to support the criticism made by other authorities that Lipps has taken the field of origin of the comic far too narrowly and has been obliged to use great violence in order to bring its phenomena within the scope of his formula.

Mankind have not been content to enjoy the comic where they have come upon it in their experience; they have also sought to bring it about intentionally, and we can learn more about the nature of the comic if we study the means which serve to make things comic. First and foremost, it is possible to produce the comic in relation to oneself in order to amuse other people—for instance, by making oneself out clumsy or stupid. In that way one produces a comic effect exactly as though one really were these things, by fulfilling the condition of the comparison which leads to the difference in expenditure. But one does not in this way make oneself ridiculous or contemptible, but may in some circumstances even achieve admiration. The feeling of superiority does not arise in the other person if he knows that one has only been pretending; and this affords fresh evidence of the fundamental independence of the comic from the feeling of superiority [p. 196].

As regards making other people comic, the principal means is to put them in situations in which a person becomes comic as a result of human dependence on external events, particularly on social factors, without regard to the personal characteristics of the individual concerned—that is to say, by employing the comic of situation. This putting of someone in a comic situation may be a real one (a practical joke\footnote{Vgl. die Anm. auf S. 16.})—by sticking out a leg so that someone trips over it as though he were clumsy, by making him seem stupid by exploiting his credulity, or trying to convince him of something nonsensical, and so on—or it may be...
simulated by speech or play. The aggressiveness, to which making a person comic usually ministers, is much assisted by the fact that the comic pleasure is independent of the reality of the comic situation, so that everyone is in fact exposed, without any defence, to being made comic.

But there are yet other means of making things comic which deserve special consideration and also indicate in part fresh sources of comic pleasure. Among these, for instance, is *mimicry*, which gives quite extraordinary pleasure to the hearer and makes its object comic even if it is still far from the exaggeration of a caricature. It is much easier to find a reason for the comic effect of *caricature* than for that of mere mimicry. Caricature, parody and travesty (as well as their practical counterpart, unmasking) are directed against people and objects which lay claim to authority and respect, which are in some sense *sublime*. They are procedures for *Herabsetzung*, as the apt German expression has it. What is sublime is something large in the figurative, psychical sense; and I should like to suggest, or rather to repeat my suggestion [cf. p. 198], that, like what is somatically large, it is represented by an increased expenditure. It requires little observation to establish that when I speak of something sublime I innervate my speech in a different way, I make different facial expressions, and I try to bring the whole way in which I hold myself into harmony with the dignity of what I am having an idea of. I impose a solemn restraint upon myself—not very different from what I should adopt if I were to enter the presence of an exalted personality, a monarch, or a prince of science. I shall hardly be wrong in assuming that this different innervation in my ideational mimetics corresponds to an increased expenditure. The third instance of an

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1 Degradation. A. Bain (1865) says: *The occasion of the ludicrous is the degradation of some person or interest, possessing dignity, in circumstances that excite no other strong emotion.* [The English word 'degradation' has accordingly been used in all that follows as a translation of *'Herabsetzung'.*]

2 [The German word here is 'erhaben', for which the accepted English translation in aesthetics is 'sublime'. As, however, it is difficult to apply this rendering in the case of people, we have, where necessary, used the word 'exalted' instead.]

3 [The other two being presumably the somatically large and the sublime.]
increased expenditure of this kind is no doubt to be found when I proceed in abstract trains of thought instead of in the habitual concrete and plastic ones. When, therefore, the procedures that I have discussed for the degradation of the sublime allow me to have an idea of it as though it were something commonplace, in whose presence I need not pull myself together but may, to use the military formula, 'stand easy', I am being spared the increased expenditure of the solemn restraint; and the comparison between this new ideational method (instigated by empathy) and the previously habitual one, which is simultaneously trying to establish itself—this comparison once again creates the difference in expenditure which can be discharged by laughter.

Caricature, as is well known, brings about degradation by emphasizing in the general impression given by the exalted object a single trait which is comic in itself but was bound to be overlooked so long as it was only perceivable in the general picture. By isolating this, a comic effect can be attained which extends in our memory over the whole object. This is subject to the condition that the actual presence of the exalted object himself does not keep us in a reverential attitude. If a comic trait of this kind that has been overlooked is lacking in reality, a caricature will unhesitatingly create it by exaggerating one that is not comic in itself; and the fact that the effect of the caricature is not essentially diminished by this falsification of reality is once again an indication of the origin of comic pleasure [p. 200].

Parody and travesty achieve the degradation of something exalted in another way: by destroying the unity that exists between people's characters as we know them and their speeches and actions, by replacing either the exalted figures or their utterances by inferior ones. They are distinguished from caricature in this, but not in the mechanism of their production of comic pleasure. The same mechanism is also used for unmasking, which only applies where someone has seized dignity and authority by a deception and these have to be taken from him in reality. We have already met with a few examples of the comic effect of unmasking in jokes—for instance, in the story of the aristocratic lady who, at the first onset of her labour-pains, exclaimed 'Ah! mon Dieu!' but whom the doctor would not assist till she cried out 'Aa-ee, aa-ee!' [p. 81]. Having come to


Die Karikatur stellt die Herabsetzung bekanntlich her, indem sie aus dem Gesamtausdruck des Erhabenen Objekte einen einzelnen an sich komischen Zug herausschneidet, welcher übersehen werden mußte, solange er nur im Gesamtbilde wahrnehmbar war. Durch dessen Isolierung kann nun ein komischer Effekt erzielt werden, der sich auf das Ganze in unserer Erinnerung erstreckt. Bedingung ist dabei, daß nicht die Anwesenheit des Erhabenen selbst uns in der Disposition der Ehrerbietung festhält. Wo ein solcher übersehener komischer Zug in Wirklichkeit fehlt, da schafft ihn die Karikatur unbedenklich durch die Überreibung eines an sich nicht komischen. Es ist wiederum kennzeichnend für den Ursprung der komischen Lust, daß der Effekt der Karikatur durch solche Verfälschung der Wirklichkeit nicht wesentlich beeinträchtigt wird.

Parodie und Travestie erreichen die Herabsetzung des Erhabenen auf andere Weise, indem sie die Einheitlichkeit zwischen den uns bekannten Charakteren von Personen und deren Reden und Handlungen zerstören, entweder die erhabenen Personen oder deren Äußerungen durch niedrige ersetzen. Darin unterscheiden sie sich von der Karikatur, nicht aber durch den Mechanismus der Produktion von komischer Lust. Der nämliche Mechanismus gilt auch noch für die Entlarvung, die nur dort in Betracht kommt, wo jemand Würde und Autorität durch einen Trug an sich gerissen hat, die ihm in der Wirklichkeit abgenommen werden müssen. Den komischen Effekt der Entlarvung haben wir durch einige Beispiele beim Witze kennengelernt, z.B. in jener Geschichte von der vornehmen Dame, die in den ersten Geburtswehen: _Ab, mon dieu ruft, welcher der Arzt aber nicht eher Beistand leisten will, als bis sie: Ai, waih geschrien hat [S. 78]. Nachdem wir nun
know the characteristics of the comic, we can no longer dispute that this anecdote is in fact an example of comic unmasking and has no justifiable claim to be called a joke. It only recalls jokes by its setting and by the technical method of 'representation by something very small' [loc. cit.]—in this case the patient's cry, which is found sufficient to establish the indication for treatment. It nevertheless remains true that our linguistic sense, if we call on it for a decision, raises no objection to our calling a story like this a joke. We may explain this by reflecting that linguistic usage is not based on the scientific insight into the nature of jokes that we have arrived at in this laborious investigation. Since one of the functions of jokes is to make hidden sources of comic pleasure accessible once more (p. 108), any device that brings to light something that is not manifestly comic may, by a loose analogy, be termed a joke. This applies preferably, however, to unmasking as well as to other methods of making people comic.1

Under the heading of 'unmasking' we may also include a procedure for making things comic with which we are already acquainted [p. 196 f.]—the method of degrading the dignity of individuals by directing attention to the frailties which they share with all humanity, but in particular the dependence of their mental functions on bodily needs. The unmasking is equivalent here to an admonition: such and such a person, who is admired as a demigod, is after all only human like you and me. Here, too, are to be placed the efforts at laying bare the monotonous psychical automatism that lies behind the wealth and apparent freedom of psychical functions. We came across examples of 'unmasking' of this kind in the marriage-broker jokes, and felt a doubt at the time whether these anecdotes have a right to be counted as jokes [p. 65]. We are now able to decide with greater certainty that the anecdote of the echo [p. 64] who reinforced all the assertions of the marriage-broker and finally confirmed his admission that the bride had a hump with the declaration 'And what a hump!'—that this anecdote is essentially a comic story, an example of the unmasking of a

1 'Thus every conscious and ingenious evocation of the comic (whether the comic of contemplation or of situation) is in general described as a joke. We, of course, cannot here make use of this concept of the joke either.' (Lipps, 1898, 78.)
psychical automatism. Here, however, the comic story is only serving as a façade. For anyone who will attend to the hidden meaning of the marriage-broker anecdotes, the whole thing remains an admirably staged joke [p. 105 ff.]; anyone who does not penetrate so far is left with a comic story. The same thing applies to the other joke, about the marriage-broker who, in order to answer an objection, ended by confessing the truth with a cry of 'But I ask you, who would lend such people anything?' [p. 64 f.]. Here again we have a comic unmasking as the façade for a joke, though in this instance the characteristic of a joke is much more unmistakable, since the marriage-broker's remark is at the same time a representation by the opposite. In trying to prove that the people are rich he at the same time proves that they are not rich, but very poor. Here a joke and the comic are combined, and teach us that the same remark can be both things at once.

We are glad to seize the opportunity of returning to jokes from the comic of unmasking, since our true problem is not to determine the nature of the comic but to throw light on the relation between jokes and the comic. We have discussed the uncovering of psychical automatism, in a case in which our feeling as to whether something is comic or a joke left us in the lurch. And we will now add another case in which there is a similar confusion between jokes and the comic—the case of nonsensical jokes. But our investigation will show us in the end that as regards this second case the convergence between jokes and the comic can be theoretically accounted for. [Cf. p. 206.]

In discussing the techniques of jokes we found that giving free play to modes of thought which are usual in the unconscious but which can only be judged as examples of 'faulty reasoning' in the conscious is the technical method adopted in many jokes; and about these, once again, we felt doubts whether they possessed the true character of jokes, so that we were inclined to classify them simply as comic stories [p. 61]. We were unable to reach a decision about our doubts because at the time we were ignorant of the essential characteristic of jokes. Subsequently, led by an analogy with the dream-work, we discovered that it lay in the compromise effected by the joke-work between the demands of reasonable criticism and the urge not...
to renounce the ancient pleasure in words and nonsense [p. 137]. What came about in this way as a compromise, when the preconscious start of the thought was left for a moment to unconscious revision, satisfied both claims in every instance, but presented itself to criticism in various forms and had to put up with various judgements at its hands. Sometimes a joke would succeed in slipping on the appearance of an insignificant but nevertheless permissible assertion, another time it would smuggle itself in as the expression of a valuable thought. But, in the marginal case of effecting a compromise, it would give

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In what instances, then, will a joke appear before criticism as nonsense? Particularly when it makes use of the modes of thought which are usual in the unconscious but are proscribed in conscious thought—faulty reasoning, in fact. For certain modes of thought proper to the unconscious have also been retained by the conscious—for instance, some kinds of indirect representation, allusion, and so on—even though their conscious employment is subject to considerable restrictions. When a joke makes use of these techniques it will raise little or no objection on the part of criticism; objections will only appear if it also makes use for its technique of the methods with which conscious thought will have nothing more to do. A joke can still avoid objection, if it conceals the faulty reasoning it has used and disguises it under a show of logic, as happened in the anecdotes of the cake and the liqueur [p. 60], of the salmon mayonnaise [p. 49 f.], and similar ones. But if it produces the faulty reasoning undisguised, then the objections of criticism will follow with certainty.

In such cases the joke has another resource. The faulty reasoning, which it uses for its technique as one of the modes of thought of the unconscious, strikes criticism—even though not invariably so—as being comic. Consciously giving free play to unconscious modes of thought (which have been rejected as faulty) is a means of producing comic pleasure; and it is easy

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to understand this, since it certainly requires a greater expenditure of energy to establish a preconscious cathexis than to give free play to an unconscious one. When, on hearing a thought which has, as it were, been formed in the unconscious, we compare it with its correction, a difference in expenditure emerges for us from which comic pleasure arises. A joke which makes use of faulty reasoning like this for its technique, and therefore appears nonsensical, can thus produce a comic effect at the same time. If we fail to detect the joke, we are once again left with only the comic or funny story.

The story of the borrowed kettle which had a hole in it when it was given back (p. 62) is an excellent example of the purely comic effect of giving free play to the unconscious mode of thought. It will be recalled that the borrower, when he was questioned, replied firstly that he had not borrowed a kettle at all, secondly that it had had a hole in it already when he borrowed it, and thirdly that he had given it back undamaged and without a hole. This mutual cancelling-out by several thoughts, each of which is in itself valid, is precisely what does not occur in the unconscious are actually manifest, there is no such thing as an 'either—or', only a simultaneous juxtaposition. In the example of a dream, which, in spite of its complication, I chose in my Interpretation of Dreams as a specimen of the work of interpretation, I tried to rid myself of the reproach of having failed to relieve a patient of her pains by psychical treatment. My reasons were: (1) that she herself was responsible for her illness because she would not accept my solution, (2) that her pains were of organic origin and were therefore no concern of mine, (3) that her pains were connected with her widowhood, for which I was evidently not responsible and (4) that her pains were due to an injection from a contaminated syringe, which had been given her by someone else. All these reasons stood side by side, as though they were not mutually exclusive. I was obliged to replace the 'and' of the dream by an 'either—or' in order to escape a charge of nonsense.\footnote{At the most, it is introduced by the narrator by way of interpretation. [See The Interpretation of Dreams (1900a), Standard Ed., 4, 316-18.]}

\footnote{[See The Interpretation of Dreams, ibid., 119-20, where the story of the borrowed kettle also appears again.]}
There is a similar comic story of a Hungarian village in which the blacksmith had been guilty of a capital offence. The burgomaster, however, decided that as a penalty a tailor should be hanged and not the blacksmith, because there were two tailors in the village but no second blacksmith, and the crime must be expiated. A displacement of this kind from the figure of the guilty person to another naturally contradicts every law of conscious logic but by no means the mode of thought of the unconscious. I do not hesitate to call this story comic, and yet I have included the one about the kettle among the jokes. I will now admit that this latter story too is far more correctly described as ‘comic’ rather than as a joke. But I now understand how it is that my feeling, which is as a rule so sure, can leave me in doubt as to whether this story is comic or a joke. This is a case in which I cannot come to a decision on the basis of my feeling — when, that is, the comic arises from the uncovering of a mode of thought that is exclusively proper to the unconscious. A story like this may be comic and a joke at the same time; but it will give me the impression of being a joke, even if it is merely reminiscence of jokes, just as did the maneuvers for uncovering the faulty reasoning of the unconscious. A comic, because the use of the faulty reasoning of the unconscious reminds me of jokes, just as did the maneuvers for uncovering the faulty reasoning of the unconscious. A comic, because the use of the faulty reasoning of the unconscious reminds me of jokes, just as did the maneuvers for uncovering the faulty reasoning of the unconscious.

I set great store by clarifying this most delicate point in my arguments — the relation of jokes to the comic; and I will therefore supplement what I have said with a few negative statements. I may first draw attention to the fact that the instance of the convergence of jokes and the comic which I am dealing with here is not identical with the former one (p. 202). It is true that the distinction is a rather narrow one, but it can be made with certainty. In the earlier case the comic arose from the uncovering of psychical automatism. This, however, is by no means peculiar to the unconscious alone, nor does it play any striking part in the technique of jokes. Unmasking only comes into relation with jokes accidentally, when it serves some other joke-technique, such as representation by the opposite. But in the case of giving free play to unconscious modes of thought the convergence of the comic and the comic is a necessary one, since the same method which is used here by the first person of the joke

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1 [This story reappeared nearly twenty years later in Chapter IV of The Ego and the Id (1923b).]
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as a technique for releasing pleasure must from its very nature produce comic pleasure in the third person.

One might be tempted to generalize from this last case and look for the relation of jokes to the comic in the notion that the effect of jokes on the third person takes place according to the mechanism of comic pleasure. But there is no question of this being so. Contact with the comic is by no means to be found in all jokes or even in the majority of them; in most cases, on the contrary, a clear distinction is to be made between jokes and the comic. Whenever a joke succeeds in escaping the appearance of nonsense—that is, in most jokes accompanied by double meaning and allusion—there is no trace to be found in the hearer of any effect resembling the comic. This may be tested on the examples I have given earlier, or on a few new ones that I can bring up:

Telegram of congratulations to a gambler on his seventieth birthday: 'Trente et quarante.' (Dividing-up [pp. 31 and 42] with allusion.)

Hevesi somewhere describes the process of tobacco manufacture: 'The bright yellow leaves... were dipped in a sauce and were sauced in this dip,' (Multiple use of the same material.)

Madame de Maintenon was known as 'Madame de Maintenant.' (Modification of a name.)

Professor Kastner [cf. p. 129] said to a prince who stood in front of a telescope during a demonstration: 'Your Highness, I know quite well that you are “durchsichtig (illustrious)”, but you are not “durchsichtig (transparent).”'

Count Andrassy was known as 'Minister of the Fine Exterior.'

It might further be thought that at any rate all jokes with a façade of nonsense will seem comic and must produce a comic effect. But I must recall that jokes of this kind very often affect the hearer in another way and provoke bewilderment and a tendency to repudiation (see p. 138n.). Thus it evidently depends

entbindung verwendet wird, seiner Natur nach bei der dritten Person komische Lust erzeugt.

Man könnte in die Versuchung geraten, diesen letzten Fall zu verallgemeinern, und die Beziehung des Witzes zur Komik darin suchen, daß die Wirkung des Witzes auf die dritte Person nach dem Mechanismus der komischen Lust erfolgt. Aber davon ist keine Rede, die Berührung mit dem Komischen trifft keineswegs für alle oder auch nur die meisten Witze zu; in den meisten Fällen sind Witze und Komik vielmehr reinlich zu scheiden. So oft es dem Witz gelingt, dem Anschein des Unsinnigen zu entgehen, also bei den meisten Doppelsinn- und Anspielungs- vitzen, ist von einer dem Komischen ähnlichen Wirkung beim Hörer nichts zu entdecken. Man mache die Probe an den früher mitgeteilten Beispielen oder an einigen neuen, die ich anführen kann.

Glückwunschtelegramm zum 70. Geburtstag eines Spielers: 'Trente et quarante.' (Zerteilung [S. 33 und S. 43] mit Anspielung.)

Hevesi beschreibt einmal den Prozeß der Tabakfabrikation: 'Die hellgelben Blätter... wurden da in eine Beize getunkt und in dieser Tunke gebetet.' (Mehrfache Verwendung des nämlichen Materials.)

Madame de Maintenon wurde Mme. de Maintenant genannt. (Namensmodifikation.)

Prof. Kastner [vgl. S. 122] sagt zu einem Prinzen, der sich während einer Demonstration vor das Fernrohr gestellt: 'Mein Prinz, ich weiß wohl, daß Sie durchsichtig sind, aber Sie sind nicht durchsichtig.'

Graf Andrassy wurde der Minister des schönen Äußeren genannt.

Man könnte ferner glauben, daß wenigstens alle Witze mit Unsinnfassade komisch erscheinen und so wirken müssen. Allein ich erinnere hier daran, daß solche Witze sehr oft eine andere Wirkung auf den Hörer haben, Verblüffung und Neigung zur Ablehnung hervorrufen (s. S. 130, Anm.). Es kommt also offenbar darauf an,

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1 ['Saucing' (German 'tunken') used to be part of the technical process for preparing tobacco.]
2 [An adjective derived from 'Durchlaucht', a title applied to minor royalty: 'Serene Highness'.]
3 [Count Gyula Andrassy (1823–90) was for many years the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs (for 'the Exterior'). He was something of a dandy.]
on whether the nonsense of a joke appears as comic or as sheer ordinary nonsense—and we have not yet investigated what determines this. We therefore stick to our conclusion that jokes are from their nature to be distinguished from the comic and only converge with it, on the one hand in certain special cases, and on the other hand in their aim of obtaining pleasure from intellectual sources.

During these enquiries into the relations between jokes and the comic the distinction has become plain to us which we must emphasize as the most important and which points at the same time to a main psychological characteristic of the comic. We found ourselves obliged to locate the pleasure in jokes in the unconscious; no reason is to be found for making the same localization in the case of the comic. On the contrary, all the analyses we have hitherto made have pointed to the source of comic pleasure being a comparison between two expenditures both of which must be ascribed to the preconscious. Jokes and the comic are distinguished first and foremost in their psychical localization; the joke, it may be said, is the contribution made to the comic from the realm of the unconscious.1

There is no need to apologize for this digression, since the relation of jokes to the comic was the reason for our being forced into an investigation of the comic. But it is certainly time we returned to our previous topic—the discussion of the methods which serve for making things comic. We considered caricature and unmasking first, because we can derive some indications from these two for the analysis of the comic of mimicry. As a rule, mimicry is permeated with caricature—the exaggeration of traits that are not otherwise striking [p. 201], and it also involves the characteristic of degradation. But this does not seem to exhaust its nature. It cannot be disputed that it is in itself an extraordinarily fertile source of comic pleasure, for we laugh particularly at the faithfulness of a piece of mimicry. It is not easy to give a satisfactory explanation of this unless one is prepared to adopt the view held by Bergson (1900), which approximates the comic of mimicry to the comic due to the dis-

1 [The italics date only from the second edition (1912).]

Wir brauchen uns nicht zu beschuldigen, daß wir uns in eine Abschweifung eingelassen haben, da ja das Verhältnis des Witzes zur Komik der Anlaß ist, welcher uns zur Untersuchung des Komischen gedrängt hat. Es ist aber wohl an der Zeit, daß wir zu unserem dermaligen Thema zurückkehren, zur Behandlung der Mittel, welche dem Komischen dienen. Wir haben die Erörterung der Karikatur und der Entlautung vorausgeschickt, weil wir aus ihnen beiden einige Anknüpfungen für die Analyse der Komik der Nachahmung entnehmen können. Die Nachahmung ist wohl zumeist mit Karikatur, Uberreibung einiger sonst nicht auffälliger Züge versetzt [S. 187] und trägt auch den Charakter der Herabsetzung an sich. Doch scheint ihr Wesen hiemit nicht erschöpft; es ist unleugbar, daß sie an sich eine außerordentlich ergiebige Quelle der komischen Lust darstellt, indem wir gerade über die Treue der Nachahmung besonders lachen. Es ist nicht leicht, hiefür eine befriedigende Aufklärung zu geben, wenn man sich nicht der Ansicht von Bergson (1900) anschließen will, durch welche die Komik der Nachahmung nahe an die durch
covery of psychical automatism. Bergson’s opinion is that every­thing in a living person that makes one think of an inanimate mechanism has a comic effect. His formula for this runs ‘mécanisation de la vie’. He explains the comic of mimicry by starting out from a problem raised by Pascal in his Pensées of why it is that one laughs when one compares two similar faces neither of which has a comic effect by itself. ‘What is living should never, according to our expectation, be repeated exactly the same. When we find such a repetition we always suspect some mechanism lying behind the living thing.’ [Bergson, 1900, 35.] When one sees two faces that resemble each other closely, one thinks of two impressions from the same mould or of some similar mechanical procedure. In short, the cause of laughter in such cases would be the divergence of the living from the inanimate, or, as we might say, the degradation of the living to the inanimate (ibid., 35). If, moreover, we were to accept these plausible suggestions of Bergson’s, we should not find it difficult to include his view under our own formula. Experience has taught us that every living thing is different from every other and calls for a kind of expenditure by our understanding; and we find ourselves disappointed if, as a result of complete conformity or deceptive mimicry, we need make no fresh expenditure. But we are disappointed in the sense of a relief, and the expenditure on expectation which has become superfluous is discharged by laughter. The same formula would also cover all the cases which Bergson considers of comic rigidity (‘raideur’), of professional customs, fixed ideas, and turns of speech repeated on every possible occasion. All these cases would go back to a comparison between the expenditure on expectation and the expenditure actually required for an understanding of something that has remained the same; and the larger amount needed for expectation would be based on observation of the multiplicity and plasticity of living things. In the case of mimicry, accordingly, the source of the comic pleasure would be not the comic of situation but of expectation [p. 197].

Since we derive comic pleasure in general from a comparison, it is incumbent on us to examine the comic of comparison itself; and this, indeed, serves as a method of making things comic. Our interest in this question will be increased when we recall that in the case of analogies, too, we often found that our
treatment than our interests can devote to it. The main attribute ‘feeling’ left us in the lurch as to whether something was to be that we enquire after in an analogy is whether it is apt—that is, whether it draws attention to a conformity which is really present in two different objects. The original pleasure in discovering the same thing (Groos, 1899, 153 [and above, p. 121 £]) is not the only motive that favours the use of analogies; follows the usual practice of comparing what is less known with what is better known or the abstract with the concrete, and by difficult. Every such comparison, especially of something abstrakt with something concrete, involves a certain degradation into prominence.
in which doubt might be felt whether they show the is tic of the comic. The comparison becomes undoubtedly comic if
There are plenty of cases which merely fringe on on abstraction in the two things that are being compared, on abstraction of the two things that are being compared, if something serious and unfamiliar, especially if it is of an intellectual or moral nature, is brought into comparison with something commonplace and inferior. The previous pleasure of the relief and the contribution from the determinants of ideational mimetics may perhaps explain the gradual transition, conditioned by quantitative factors, from general pleasure to comic pleasure during the comparison. I shall no doubt avoid misunderstandings if I stress the fact that I do not trace the comic pleasure in analogies to the contrast between the two things compared but to the difference between the two expenditures on abstraction. When an unfamiliar thing that is hard to take in, a thing that is abstract and in fact sublime in an intellectual sense, is alleged to tally with something familiar and inferior, in imagining which there is a complete absence of any expend-

\[\text{Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewußten}\]

\[\text{etwas ein Witz oder bloß komisch zu nennen sei, im Stiche zu lassen pflegt (s. S. 78 f.)}\]

Das Thema verdiente freilich mehr Sorgfalt, als wir ihm von unserem Interesse her zuteil werden lassen können. Die Haupteigenschaft, nach welcher wir beim Gleichnis fragen, ist, ob dasselbe treffend ist, d. h. ob es auf eine wirklich vorhandene Übereinstimmung zweier verschiedener Objekte aufmerksam macht. Die ursprüngliche Lust am Wiederfinden des Gleichens (Groos, 1899, S. 153 [s. auch oben S. 115 f.]) ist nicht das einzige Motiv, welches den Gebrauch der Vergleichung begünstigt; es kommt hinzu, daß das Gleichnis einer Verwendung fähig ist, welche eine Erleichterung der intellektuellen Arbeit mit sich bringt, wenn man nämlich, wie zumeist üblich, das Unbekannte mit dem Bekannten, das Abstrakte mit dem Konkreten vergleicht und durch diesen Vergleich das Fremdere und Schwierigere erläutert. Mit jeder solchen Vergle-

\[\text{ichung, speziell des Abstrakten mit dem Sachlichen, ist eine gewisse Her,}

absetzung und eine gewisse. Ersparung an Abstraktionsaufwand. (im Sinne einer Vorstellungsmimik) verbunden [S. 184 f.], doch reicht dieselbe natürlich nicht hin, um den Charakter des Komischen deutlich hervor-


treten zu lassen. Dieser taucht nicht plötzlich, sondern allmählich aus der Erleichterungslust der Vergleichung auf; es gibt reichlich Fälle, die bloß ans Komische streifen, bei denen man zueinander könnte, ob sie den komischen Charakter zeigen. Unzweifelhaft komisch wird die Verglei-


\[\text{ching, wenn der Niveauunterschied des Abstraktionsaufwandes zwisch}

enden beiden Verglichenen sich steigert, wenn etwas Ernstes und Fremdes, insbesondere intellektueller oder moralischer Natur, in den Ver-

\[\text{gleich mit etwas Banalem und Niedrigem gezogen wird. Die vorherige}

Erleichterungslust und der Beitrag aus den Bedingungen der Vorstel-

lungs mimik mögen etwa den allmählichen, durch quantitative Verhält-
VII. JOKES AND THE COMIC

Abstraction is a useful tool for understanding the nature of a joke, without a trace of comic admixture; presumably, it is itself unmasked as something equally inferior. The comic of comparison is thus reduced to a case of degradation.

A comparison can, however, be arrived at by attentive investigation, provides us with a yield of pleasure which is coincidentally, provides us with a yield of pleasure which is not comic, because the person making use of the comparison is a clerk, who thus seems at first sight to be no more than a remarkable example of a comically degrading comparison; but on further consideration we must also allow it the characteristics of a joke, since the comparison, as a means of allusion, impinges on the region of the obscene and so succeeds in liberating pleasure in the obscene. The same material, by what is admittedly not an entirely chance coincidence, provides us with a yield of pleasure which is simultaneously comic and of the character of a joke. If the conditions of the one favour the generation of the other, their union has a confusing effect on the 'feeling' which is supposed to tell us whether we are being offered a joke or something comic, and a decision can only be arrived at by an attentive investigation that has been freed from any predisposition to a particular kind of pleasure.

However attractive it may be to follow up these more intimate determinants of the yield of comic pleasure, the author must bear in mind that neither his education nor his daily life on abstraction, then that abstract thing is itself unmasked as something equally inferior. The comic of comparison is thus reduced to a case of degradation.

A comparison can, however, as we have already seen, be in the nature of a joke, without a trace of comic admixture—precisely, that is, when it avoids degradation. Thus the comparison of truth with a torch that cannot be carried through a crowd without singeing someone's beard [p. 82] is purely in the nature of a joke, because it takes a watered-down turn of speech ('the torch of truth') at its full value, and it is not comic, because a torch as an object, though it is a concrete thing, is not without a certain distinction. But a comparison can just as easily be a joke and comic as well, and can be each independently of the other, since a comparison can be of help to certain techniques of jokes, such as unification or allusion. In this way Nestroy's comparison of memory to a 'warehouse' (p. 85) is at once comic and a joke—the former because of the extraordinary degradation which the psychological concept has to put up with in being compared to a 'warehouse', and the latter because the person making use of the comparison is a clerk, who thus establishes in the comparison a quite unexpected unification between psychology and his profession. Heine's phrase 'till all the buttons burst on the breeches of my patience' [p. 85] seems at first sight to be no more than a remarkable example of a comically degrading comparison; but on further consideration we must also allow it the characteristics of a joke, since the comparison, as a means of allusion, impinges on the region of the obscene and so succeeds in liberating pleasure in the obscene. The same material, by what is admittedly not an entirely chance coincidence, provides us with a yield of pleasure which is simultaneously comic and of the character of a joke. If the conditions of the one favour the generation of the other, their union has a confusing effect on the 'feeling' which is supposed to tell us whether we are being offered a joke or something comic, and a decision can only be arrived at by an attentive investigation that has been freed from any predisposition to a particular kind of pleasure.

So verlockend es wäre, diesen intimeren Bedingtheiten des komischen Lustgewinnes nachzuspüren, so muß doch der Autor sich vorhalten, daß weder seine Vorbildung noch sein täglicher
occupation justify his extending his enquiries far beyond the sphere of jokes; and he must confess that the topic of comic comparisons makes him particularly aware of his inability.

We therefore readily recall that many authorities do not recognize the sharp conceptual and material distinction between jokes and the comic to which we have found ourselves led, and that they regard jokes as simply 'the comic of speech' or 'of words'. In order to test this view we will choose one example each of something intentionally and of something involuntarily comic in words to compare with jokes. We have remarked earlier that we believe ourselves very well able to distinguish a comic remark from a joke:

'With a fork and much to-do
His mother dragged him from the stew' [p. 69]

is merely comic; Heine's remark about the four castes among the inhabitants of Göttingen—'professors, students, philistines and donkeys' [p. 69] is par excellence a joke.

For something intentionally comic I will take as a model Stettenheim's 'Wippchen', 1 People speak of Stettenheim as 'witty' because he possesses to a special degree the gift of evoking the comic. This capacity does in fact aptly determine the 'wit' that one 'has' in contrast to the 'joke' that one 'makes'. 2 It cannot be disputed that the letters of Wippchen, the correspondent from Bernau, are also 'witty' in so far as they are abundantly sprinkled with jokes of every kind, among them some that are genuinely successful (e.g. of a display by savages: 'in ceremonial undress'). But what gives these productions their peculiar character is not these separate jokes but the almost too abundant comic of speech which flows through them. 'Wippchen' was no doubt originally intended as a satirical figure, a modification of Gustav Freytag's 'Schmock', 3 one of those uneducated people who misuse and trade away the nation's store of culture; but the author's enjoyment of the comic effects achieved in his picture of this character has evidently pushed the

1 [Julius Stettenheim (1831–1916), Berlin journalist.]
2 [The same German word 'Witz' is used here for both 'wit' and 'joke'. Cf. p. 120.]
3 [Gustav Freytag (1816–95), novelist and dramatist. 'Schmock' was an unscrupulous journalist in his comedy Die Journalisten.]
satirical purpose little by little into the background. Wippchen's productions are for the most part 'comic nonsense'. The author has made use of the pleasurable mood brought about by the piling up of these successes to introduce (justifiably, it must be said), alongside perfectly permissible material, all kinds of insipidities which could not be tolerated on their own account. Wippchen's nonsense produces a specific effect on account of a peculiarity technique. If one looks more closely at these 'jokes' one is specially struck by a few kinds which give the whole production its stamp. Wippchen makes use predominantly of combinations (amalgamations), modifications of familiar turns of speech and quotations and replacements of a few commonplace elements in them by more pretentious and weighty forms of expression. This incidentally is coming near to the techniques of jokes.

Here, for instance, are some amalgamations (taken from the preface and the first pages of the whole series):

'Turkey has money wie Heu am Meere [like hay by the sea].'
This is made up of the two expressions: 'Money wie Heu [like hay]' and 'Money wie Sand am Meere [like sand by the sea]'.

Or, 'I am more than a column stripped of its leaves,' which bears witness to its vanished glory'—condensed from 'a tree stripped of its leaves' and 'a column which . . . etc.'

Or, 'Where is the thread of Ariadne which will lead me from the Scylla of this Augean stable?' to which three Greek legends have each contributed an element.

The modifications and substitutions can be summarized without much difficulty. Their nature can be seen from the following examples, which are characteristic of Wippchen and behind which we have a glimpse of another, more current and usually more commonplace wording, which has been reduced to a cliché:

'Mir Papier und Tinte höher zu hängen [to hang paper and ink higher for me],' We use the phrase 'einem den Brotkorb höher hängen [to hang his bread-basket higher for someone—to put someone on short commons]' metaphorically for 'to put

1 [These are two common expressions in German, equivalent to 'money like dirt' or 'oceans of money'.]

2 ['Eine entlaubte Säule—an echo of 'eine entlaubte Seele', 'a disembodied spirit.']
someone in more difficult circumstances. So why should not the metaphor be extended to other material?  

'Battles in which the Russians sometimes draw the shorter [lot—i.e. come off second best] and sometimes the longer.' Only the first of these expressions ['den Kürzern ziehen', 'draw the shorter'] is in common use; but in view of its derivation there would be no absurdity in bringing the second into use as well.  

'While I was still young, Pegasus stirred within me.' If we put back 'the poet' instead of 'Pegasus' we find an autobiographical cliché well-worn by frequent use. It is true that 'Pegasus' is not a suitable substitute for 'the poet', but it has a conceptual relation with it and is a high-sounding word.  

'Thus I lived through the thorny shoes of childhood.' A simile instead of a simple statement. 'Die Kinderschuhe austreten' ['to wear out the shoes of childhood', 'to leave the nursery behind'] is one of the images connected with the concept of childhood.  

From the profusion of Wippchen's other productions some can be stressed as pure examples of the comic. For instance, as a comic disappointment: 'For hours the fight fluctuated, until at last it remained undecided.' Or, as a comic unmasking (of ignorance): 'Clio, the Medusa of History.' Or quotations such as: 'Habent sua fata morgana.' But our interest is more aroused by the amalgamations and modifications, because they repeat familiar joke-techniques. We may, for instance, compare with quotations such as: 'Die Kinderschuhe austreten' [to wear out the shoes of childhood], 'to leave the nursery behind' is one of the images connected with the concept of childhood.  

It is not difficult to answer. Let us recall that jokes present a double face to their hearer, force him to adopt two different views of them. In a nonsense joke, like the ones last mentioned, the one view, which only takes the wording into account,  

1 ['Habent sua fata libelli (books have their destinies)'] is a Latin saying attributed to Terence. 'Fata Morgana' is the Italian name for a particular kind of mirage seen in the Straits of Messina: from Morgan le Fey (fairy), King Arthur's sister.]  

2 [Another of Stettenheim's 'jokes' will be found in The Interpretation of Dreams, Standard Ed., 4, 207.]

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versetzen. Warum sollte man dieses Bild also nicht auf anderes Material erwecken dürfen?  

Schlachtten, in denen die Russen einmal den Kürzeren, einmal den Längeren ziehen. Nur die ersteren Redensart ist bekanntlich im Gebrauche; nach der Ableitung derselben wäre es sogar nicht-unsinnig, auch die andere in Aufnahme zu bringen.  


Es ist gewiß nicht schwierig, darauf zu antworten. Erinnern wir uns daran, daß der Witz dem Hörer ein Doppelgesicht zeigt, ihm zu zwei verschiedenen Auffassungen zwingt. Bei den Unsinnswitzen, wie die letzterwähnten, lauter die eine Auffassung, die nur den Wortlaut be-
regards it as nonsense; the other view, following the hints that are given, passes through the hearer’s unconscious and finds an excellent sense in it. In Wippchen’s joke-like productions one face of the joke is blank, as though it were rudimentary: a Janus head but with only one face developed on it. If we allow the technique to lure us into the unconscious, we come upon nothing. The amalgamations lead us to no instance in which the two things that are amalgamated really yield a new meaning; if we attempt an analysis, they fall completely apart. The modifications and substitutions lead, as they do in jokes, to a usual one face of the joke is blank, as though it were rudimentary: an excellent sense in it. In Wippchen’s joke-like productions are given, passes through the hearer’s two things that are amalgamated really yield a new meaning; that they are nonsense. We can merely decide whether we choose to call such productions, which have freed themselves from one of the most essential characteristics of jokes, ‘bad’ jokes or not jokes at all.

Rudimentary jokes of this kind undoubtedly produce a comic effect, which we can account for in more than one way. Either the comic arises from the uncovering of the modes of thought of the unconscious, as in cases we considered earlier [e.g. p. 205], or the pleasure comes from the comparison with a complete joke. Nothing prevents our supposing that both these ways of generating comic pleasure converge here. It is not impossible that here the inadequacy of support from a joke is precisely what makes the nonsense into comic nonsense.

For there are other easily intelligible cases in which inadequacy of this kind as compared with what ought to be effected makes the nonsense irresistibly comic. The counterpart of jokes—riddles [p. 67n.]—can perhaps offer us better examples of this than jokes themselves. For instance, here is a ‘facetious question’ [p. 153n.]: ‘What is it that hangs on the wall and that one can dry one’s hands on?’ It would be a stupid riddle if the answer were ‘a hand-towel’. But that answer is rejected.—’No, a herring.’—’But for heaven’s sake,’ comes the infuriated protest ‘a herring doesn’t hang on the wall.’—’You can hang it up there.’—’But who in the world is going to dry his hands on a herring?’—’Well’, is the soothing reply, ‘you don’t have to.’ This explanation, given by means of two typical displacements, shows how far this question falls short of a genuine riddle; and rücksichtigt, er sei ein Unsinn; die andere, die den Andeutungen folgend beim Hörer den Weg durch das Unbewusste zurücklegt, findet den ausgezeichneten Sinn. Bei den witzähnlichen Produktionen Wippchens ist das eine der Angesicht des Witzes leer, wie verkümmert; ein Januskopf, aber nur ein Angesicht ausgebildet. Man gerät auf nichts, wenn man sich von der Technik ins Unbewusste verlockt. Aus den Verschmelzungen wird man zu keinem Fall geführt, in dem die beiden Verschmelzungen wirklich einen neuen Sinn ergeben; diese fallen bei einem Versuch der Analyse gänzlich auseinander. Die Modifikationen und Ersetzungen führen wie beim Witz auf einen gebräuchlichen und bekannten Wortlaut, aber die Modifikation oder Ersetzung sagt selbst nichts anderes und in der Regel auch nichts Mögliches oder Brauchbares. Es bleibt also für diese »Witze« nur die eine Auffassung als Unsinn übrig. Man kann nun nach Belieben darüber entscheiden, ob man solche Produktionen, die sich von einem der wesentlichsten Charaktere des Witzes frei gemacht haben, »schlechte« Witze oder überhaupt nicht Witze heißen will.

Unzweifelhaft machen solche verkümmerte Witze einen komischen Effekt, den wir uns auf mehr als eine Weise zurechtlegen können. Entweder entsteht die Komik aus der Aufdeckung der Denkweisen des Unbewussten wie in früher betrachteten Fällen [s. z. B. S. 191 f.], oder es ist der Vergleich mit dem vollkommenen Witz, aus dem die Lust hervorgeht. Es hindert uns nichts anzunehmen, daß beiderlei Entstehungsweisen der komischen Lust hier zusammentreffen. Es ist nicht abzuweisen, daß gerade die unzulängliche Anlehnung an den Witz den Unsinn hier zu einem komischen Unsinn macht.

on account of its absolute inadequacy it strikes us as being—instead of simply nonsensically stupid—irresistibly comic. In this way, by failing to comply with essential conditions, jokes, riddles, and other things, which do not produce comic pleasure in themselves, are made into sources of comic pleasure.

There is still less difficulty in understanding the case of the involuntary comic of speech, which we can find realized as often as we please in, for instance, the poems of Friederike Kempner (1891):

Against Vivisection

Ein unbekanntes Band der Seele kettet
Den Menschen an das arme Tier.
Das Tier hat einen Willen—ergo Seele—
Wenn auch 'ne kleinere als wir.¹

Or a conversation between a loving married couple:

The Contrast

Wie glücklich bin ich', ruft sie leise,
'Auch ich', sagt lauter ihr Gemahl,
'Es macht mich meine Art und Weise
Sehr stolz auf meine gute Wahl!'²

There is nothing here to make us think of jokes. But there is no doubt that it is the inadequacy of these 'poems' that makes them comic—the quite extraordinary clumsiness of their expression, which is linked with the tritest or most journalistic turns of phrase, the simple-minded limitation of their thought, the absence of any trace of poetic matter or form. In spite of all this, however, it is not obvious why we find Kempner's poems comic. We find many similar products nothing but shockingly bad; they do not make us laugh but annoy us. But it is precisely the greatness of the distance that separates them from what we expect of a poem that imposes the comic view on us; if this difference struck us as smaller we should be more inclined to

¹ [Between mankind and poor dumb beasts there stretches
A chain of souls impossible to see.
Poor dumb beasts have a will—ergo a soul too—
E'en though they have a soul smaller than we.]

² ['How fortunate am I!' she softly cried.
'E'en though they have a soul smaller than we.
'Your many qualities fill me with pride
At having made so excellent a choice.']

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und wegen dieser absoluten Unzulänglichkeit erscheint sie anstatt bloß unhinlänglich dumm — unwiderstehlich komisch. Auf solche Weise, durch Nichteinhaltung wesentlicher Bedingungen können also Witz, Rätsel und anderes, die an sich komische Lust nicht ergeben, zu Quellen komischer Lust gemacht werden.

Noch geringere Schwierigkeiten bereitet dem Verständnis der Fall der unfreiwilligen Komik der Rede, den wir etwa in den Gedichten der Friederike Kempner (1891) in uns beliebender Häufigkeit verwirklicht finden können:

Gegen die Vivisektion.

Ein unbekanntes Band der Seele kettet
Den Menschen an das arme Tier.
Das Tier hat einen Willen—ergo Seele—
Wenn auch 'ne kleinere als wir.

Oder ein Gespräch zwischen zärtlichen Ehegatten:

Der Kontrast.

»Wie glücklich bin ich«, ruft sie leise,
»Auch ich«, sagt lauter ihr Gemahl,
»Es macht mich meine Art und Weise
Sehr stolz auf meine gute Wahl!«

Hier ist nun nichts, was an den Witz erinnert. Ohne Zweifel ist es aber die Unzulänglichkeit dieser »Dichtungen«, die sie komisch macht, die ganz außerordentliche Plumpheit ihrer Ausdrucksweise, die an die alltäglichsten oder dem Zeitungsstil entnommenen Redensarten gebunden ist, die einfältige Beschränktheit ihrer Gedanken, das Fehlen jeder Spur von poetischer Denk- oder Redensweise. Bei alledem ist es nicht selbstverständlich, daß wir die Gedichte der Kempe komisch finden; viele ähnliche Produktionen finden wir bloß herzlich schlecht, belachen sie nicht, sondern ärgern uns über sie. Gerade die Größe des Abstandes von unseren Anforderungen an ein Gedicht drängt aber zur komischen Auf- fassung; wo diese Differenz geringer ausfiele, wären wir eher zur Kritik
criticize than to laugh. Furthermore, the comic effect of Kempner's poems is assured by a subsidiary circumstance—the authoress's unmistakably good intentions and a peculiar sincerity of feeling which disarms our ridicule or our annoyance and which we sense behind her helpless phrases.

Here we are reminded of a problem whose consideration we have postponed. Difference in expenditure is undoubtedly the basic determining condition of comic pleasure; but observation shows that this difference does not invariably give rise to pleasure. What further conditions must be present or what disturbances must be kept back, in order that comic pleasure may actually arise from the difference in expenditure? Before we turn to answering this question, we will conclude this discussion with a clear assertion that the comic of speech does not coincide with jokes, and that jokes must therefore be something other than the comic of speech. [Cf. p. 212.]

Now that we are on the point of approaching an answer to our last question, as to the necessary conditions for the generating of comic pleasure from the difference in expenditure, we may allow ourselves a relief which cannot fail to give us pleasure. An accurate reply to the question would be identical with an exhaustive account of the nature of the comic, for which we can claim neither capacity nor authority. We shall once more be content to throw light on the problem of the comic only so far as it contrasts clearly with the problem of jokes.

Every theory of the comic is objected to by its critics on the score that its definition overlooks what is essential to the comic: 'The comic is based on a contrast between ideas.' 'Yes, in so far as the contrast has a comic and not some other effect.' 'The feeling of the comic arises from the disappointment of an expectation.' 'Yes, unless the disappointment is in fact a distressing one.' No doubt the objections are justified; but we shall be over-estimating them if we conclude from them that the essential feature of the comic has hitherto escaped detection. What impairs the universal validity of these definitions are conditions which are indispensable for the generating of comic pleasure; but we do not need to look for the essence of the comic in as zum Lachen geneigt. Ferner wird die komische Wirkung bei den Gedichten der Kempner durch andere Nebenumstände gesichert, durch die unverkennbare gute Absicht der Verfasserin und durch eine gewisse, unseren Spott oder unseren Ärger entwaffnende Gefühlslässigkeit, die wir hinter ihren hilflosen Phrasen verspüren.

Wir werden hier an ein Problem gemahnt, dessen Würdigung wir uns aufgeschoben haben: Die Aufwanddifferenz ist gewiß die Grundbedingung der komischen Lust, aber die Beobachtung zeigt, daß aus solcher Differenz nicht jedesmal Lust hervorgeht. Welche Bedingungen müssen hinzukommen oder welche Störungen hintangehalten werden, damit die komische Lust sich aus der Aufwanddifferenz wirklich ergeben könne? Ehe wir uns aber der Beantwortung dieser Frage zuwenden, wollen wir als Abschluß der vorigen Erörterungen feststellen, daß das Komische der Rede nicht zusammenfällt mit dem Witz, der Witz also etwas anderes sein muß als das Komische der Rede. [Vgl. S. 197.]

Im Begriffe, nun an die Beantwortung der letztgestellten Frage, nach den Bedingungen der Entstehung komischer Lust aus der Aufwandsdifferenz heranzutreten, dürfen wir uns eine Erleichterung gestatten, die uns selbst nicht anders als zur Lust gereichen kann. Die genaue Beantwortung dieser Frage wäre identisch mit einer erschöpfenden Darstellung der Natur des Komischen, zu der wir uns weder die Fähigkeit noch die Befugnis zusprechen können. Wir werden uns wiederum damit begnügen, das Problem des Komischen nur so weit zu beleuchten, bis es sich deutlich von dem des Wittes abhebt.

Allen Theorien des Komischen ist von ihren Kritikern der Einwurf gemacht worden, daß ihre Definition das für die Komik Wesentliche überzieht. Das Komische beruht auf einem Vorstellungskontrast; ja, insofern dieser Kontrast komisch und nicht anders wirkt. Das Gefühl der Komik rührt vom Zergehen einer Erwartung her; ja, wenn diese Enttäuschung nicht gerade peinlich ist. Die Einwürfe sind ohne Zweifel berechtigt, aber man überschätzt sie, wenn man aus ihnen schließt, daß das wesentliche Kennzeichen des Komischen bisher der Auffassung entschlußt. Was die Allgemeingültigkeit jener Definitionen beeinträchtigt, sind Bedingungen, die für die Entstehung der komischen Lust unerläßlich sind, ohne daß man das Wesen der Komik in ihnen suchen.
them. In any case, it will only become easy for us to dismiss the objections and throw light on the contradictions to the definitions of the comic if we suppose that the origin of comic pleasure lies in a comparison of the difference between two expenditures. Comic pleasure and the effect by which it is known—laughter—can only come about if this difference is unutilizable and capable of discharge. We obtain no pleasurable effect but at most a transient sense of pleasure in which the characteristic of being comic does not emerge, if the difference is put to another use as soon as it is recognized. Just as special contrivances have elsewhere of the expenditure that is recognized as superfluous occasions on which these differences in expenditure occur in our ideational life are uncommonly numerous, but the occasions on which the comic emerges from those differences are relatively quite rare.

Two observations force themselves on anyone who studies even cursorily the conditions for the generation of the comic from difference in expenditure. Firstly, there are cases in which the comic appears habitually and as though by force of necessity, and on the contrary others in which it seems entirely dependent on the circumstances and on the standpoint of the observer. But secondly, unusually large differences very often break through unfavourable conditions, so that the comic feeling emerges in spite of them. In connection with the first of these points it would be possible to set up two classes—the inevitably comic and the occasionally comic—though one must be prepared from the first to renounce the notion of finding the inevitability of the comic in the first class free from exceptions. It would be tempting to enquire into the determining conditions for the two classes.

The conditions, some of which have been brought together as the 'isolation'¹ of the comic situation, apply essentially to the second class. A closer analysis elicits the following facts:

(a) The most favourable condition for the production of comic pleasure is a generally cheerful mood in which one is

¹ [Some light is thrown on this by a passage on p. 225 below.]

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müsste. Die Abweisung der Einwendungen und die Aufklärung der Widersprüche gegen die Definitionen des Komischen wird uns allerdings erst leicht, wenn wir die komische Lust aus der Vergleichsdifferenz zweier Aufwände hervorgehen lassen. Die komische Lust und der Effekt, an dem sie erkannt wird, das Lachen, können erst dann entstehen, wenn diese Differenz unverwendbar und abfuhrfähig wird. Wir gewinnen keinen Lusteffekt, sondern höchstens ein flüchtiges Lustgefühl, an dem der komische Charakter nicht hervortritt, wenn die Differenz, sobald sie erkannt wird, eine andere Verwendung erfährt. Wie beim Witz besonders Veranstaltungen getroffen sein müssen, um die anderweitige Verwendung des als überflüssig erkannten Aufwandes zu verhüten [S. 142 ff.], so kann auch die komische Lust nur unter Verhältnissen entstehen, welche diese letztere Bedingung erfüllen. Die Fälle, in denen in unserem Vorstellungsleben solche Aufwanddifferenzen-entstehen, sind daher ungewöhnlich zahlreich; die Fälle, in denen das Komische aus ihnen hervorgeht, vergleichsweise recht selten.

Zwei Bemerkungen drängen sich dem Beobachter auf, der die Bedingungen für die Entstehung des Komischen aus der Aufwanddifferenz auch nur flüchtig überblickt, erstens, daß es Fälle gibt, in denen sich die Komik regelmäßig und wie notwendig einstellt, und im Gegensatz zu ihnen andere, in denen dies durchaus von den Bedingungen des Falles und dem Standpunkt des Beobachters abhängig erscheint; zweitens aber, daß ungewöhnlich große Differenzen sehr häufig ungünstige Bedingungen durchbrechen, so daß das komische Gefühl diesen zum Trotz entsteht. Man könnte mit Bezug auf den ersten Punkt zwei Klassen aufstellen, die des unabweisbar Komischen und die des gelegentlich Komischen, obwohl man von vornherein darauf verzichten müßte, in der ersten Klasse die Unabweisbarkeit des Komischen frei von Ausnahmen zu finden. Es wäre verlockend, den für beide Klassen maßgebenden Bedingungen nachzugehen.

Wesentlich für die zweite Klasse gelten die Bedingungen, von denen man einen Teil als die »Isolierung«¹ des komischen Falles zusammengesetzt hat. Eine nähere Zerlegung macht etwa folgende Verhältnisse kenntlich:

(a) Die günstigste Bedingung für die Entstehung der komischen Lust ergibt die allgemein heitere Stimmung, in welcher man zum Lachen auf-

¹ [Dies wird auf S. 209 etwas näher erläutert.]
VII. JOKES AND THE COMIC

‘inclined to laugh’. In a toxic mood of cheerfulness almost everything seems comic, probably by comparison with the expenditure in a normal state. Indeed, jokes, the comic and all similar methods of getting pleasure from mental activity are no more than ways of regaining this cheerful mood — this euphoria — from a single point of approach, when it is not present as a general disposition of the psyche.

(b) A similarly favourable effect is produced by an expectation of the comic, by being attuned to comic pleasure. For this reason, if an intention to make something comic is communicated to one by someone else, differences of such a low degree are sufficient that they would probably be overlooked if they occurred in one’s experience unintentionally. Anyone who starts out to read a comic book or goes to the theatre to see a farce owes to this intention his ability to laugh at things which would scarcely have provided him with a case of the comic in his ordinary life. In the last resort it is in the recollection of having laughed and in the expectation of laughing that he laughs when he sees the comic actor come on to the stage, before the latter can have made any attempt at making him laugh. For that reason, too, one admits feeling ashamed afterwards over what one has been able to laugh at at the play.

(c) Unfavourable conditions for the comic arise from the kind of mental activity with which a particular person is occupied at the moment. Imaginative or intellectual work that pursues serious ends interferes with the capacity of the catheges for discharge — catheges which the work requires for its displacements — so that only unexpectedly large differences in expenditure are able to break through to comic pleasure. What are quite specially unfavourable for the comic are all kinds of intellectual processes which are sufficiently remote from what is perceptual to bring ideational mimetics to a stop. There is no place whatever left for the comic in abstract reflection except when that mode of thought is suddenly interrupted.

(d) The opportunity for the release of comic pleasure disappears, too, if the attention is focused precisely on the comparison from which the comic may emerge. In such circumstances what would otherwise have the most certain comic effect loses its comic force. A movement or a function cannot be comic for a person whose interest is directed to comparing it...
with a standard which he has clearly before his mind. Thus the examiner does not find the nonsense comic which the candidate produces in his ignorance; he is annoyed by it, while the candidate’s fellow students, who are far more interested in what luck he will have than in how much he knows, laugh heartily at the same nonsense. A gymnastic or dancing instructor seldom has an eye for the comic in his pupils’ movements; and a clergyman entirely overlooks the comic in the human weaknesses which the writer of comedies can bring to light so effectively. The comic process will not bear being hypercathected by attention; it must be able to take its course quite unobserved—in this respect, incidentally, just like jokes [p. 151 ff.]. It would, however, contradict the nomenclature of the ‘processes of consciousness’ of which I made use, with good reason, in my *Interpretation of Dreams* if one sought to speak of the comic process as a necessarily unconscious one. It forms part, rather, of the preconscious; and such processes, which run their course in the preconscious but lack the cathexis of attention with which consciousness is linked, may aptly be given the name of ‘automatic’. The process of comparing expenditures must remain automatic if it is to produce comic pleasure.

(e) The comic is greatly interfered with if the situation from which it ought to develop gives rise at the same time to a release of strong affect. A discharge of the operative difference is as a rule out of the question in such a case. The affects, disposition and attitude of the individual in each particular case make it understandable that the comic emerges and vanishes according to the standpoint of each particular person, and that an absolute comic exists only in exceptional instances. The contingency or relativity of the comic is therefore far greater than that of a joke, which never happens of its own accord but is invariably made, and in which the conditions under which it can find acceptance can be observed at the time at which it is constructed. The generation of affect is the most intense of all the conditions that interfere with the comic and its importance in this respect has been nowhere overlooked.¹ For this reason it has been said that the comic feeling comes easiest in more or less indifferent cases where the feelings and interests are not strongly involved. Yet precisely in cases where there is a release

¹ ‘It is easy for you to laugh; it means nothing more to you.’

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klar vorschwebenden Maße zu vergleichen. So findet der Prüfer den Unsinn nicht komisch, den der Examinierte in seiner Unwissenheit produziert; er ärgert sich über ihn, während die Kollegen des Geprüften, die sich weit mehr dafür interessieren, welches Geschick dieser haben wird, als wieviel er weiß, denselben Unsinn herzlich belachen. Der Turn- oder Tanzlehrer hat nur selten ein Auge für das Komische der Bewegungen bei seinen Schülern, und dem Prediger entgeht durchaus das Komische an den Charakterfehlern der Menschen, das der Lustspiel­dichter so wirksam herauszufinden weiß. Der komische Prozeß verträgt nicht die Überbesetzung durch die Aufmerksamkeit, er muß durchaus unbeachtet vor sich gehen können, übrigens darin dem Witz ganz ähnlich [S. 142 ff.]. Es widerspräche aber der Nomenklatur der »Bewußt­seinsvorgänge«, deren ich mich in der *Traumdeutung* mit gutem Grunde bedient habe, wollte man ihn einen notwendigerweise unbewußten nennen. Er gehört vielmehr dem Vorbewußten an, und man kann für solche Vorgänge, die sich im Vorbewußten abspielen und der Aufmerksam­keitsbesetzung, mit welcher Bewußtsein verbunden ist, entlehren, passend den Namen »automatischen« verwenden. Der Prozeß der Vergleichung der Aufwände muß automatisch bleiben, wenn er komische Lust erzeugen soll.

e) Es ist überaus störend für die Komik, wenn der Fall, aus dem sie entstehen soll, gleichzeitig zu starker Affektenbindung Anlaß gibt. Die Abfuhr der wirksamen Differenz ist dann in der Regel ausgeschlossen. Affekte, Disposition und Einstellung des Individuums im jeweiligen Falle lassen es verständlich werden, daß das Komische mit dem Standpunkt der einzelnen Person auftaucht oder schwindet, daß es ein absolut Komisches nur in Ausnahmsfällen gibt. Die Abhängigkeit oder Relativität des Komischen ist darum weit größer als die des Witzes, der sich niemals ergibt, der regelmäßig gemacht wird und bei dessen Herstellung bereits auf die Bedingungen, unter denen er Annahme findet, geachtet werden kann. Die Affektenwicklung ist aber die intensivste unter den die Komik störenden Bedingungen und wird in dieser Bedeutung von keiner Seite verkannt.¹ Man sagt darum, das komische Gefühl käme am ehesten in halbwegs indifferenten Fällen ohne stärkere Ge­fühls- oder Interessenbeteiligung zustande. Doch kann man gerade in
of affect one can observe a particularly strong difference in expenditure bring about the automatism of release. When Colonel Butler\(^1\) answers Octavio's warnings by exclaiming 'with a bitter laugh': 'Thanks from the House of Austria', his embitterment does not prevent his laughing. The laugh applies to his memory of the disappointment he believes he has suffered; and on the other hand the magnitude of the disappointment cannot be portrayed more impressively by the dramatist than by his showing it capable of forcing a laugh in the midst of the storm of feelings that have been released. I am inclined to think that this explanation would apply to every case in which laughter occurs in circumstances other than pleasurable ones and accompanied by intensely distressing or strained emotions.

\(f\) If we add to this that the generating of comic pleasure can be encouraged by any other pleasurable accompanying circumstance as though by some sort of contagious effect (working in the same kind of way as the fore-pleasure principle with tendentious jokes), we shall have mentioned enough of the conditions governing comic pleasure for our purposes, though certainly not all of them. We can then see that these conditions, as well as the inconstancy and contingency of the comic effect, cannot be explained so easily by any other hypothesis than that of the derivation of comic pleasure from the discharge of a difference which, under the most varying circumstances, is liable to be used in ways other than discharge.

\[5\]

The comic of sexuality and obscenity would deserve more detailed consideration; but we can only touch upon it here with a few comments. The starting-point would once more [as in the case of obscene jokes, p. 97] be exposure. A chance exposure has a comic effect on us because we compare the ease

\[2\] [In Schiller's tragedy Wallenstein's Tod (II, 6). Colonel Butler, a veteran Irish soldier in the Imperial army during the Thirty Years War, believes that he has been snubbed by the Emperor and is preparing to desert to his enemies. Octavio Piccolomini, his superior officer, begs him to reconsider the position and reminds him of the thanks which Austria owes him for his forty years' loyalty, and to this Butler replies in the words quoted above.]

\[1\] [In Wallenstein's Tod von Schiller, II. Akt, 6. Szene.]

\[1\] [Wie bei obszönen Witzen, S. 92.]

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with which we have enjoyed the sight with the great expenditure which would otherwise be required for reaching this end. Thus the case approaches that of the naïvely comic, but is simpler. Every exposure of which we are made the spectator (or audience in the case of smut) by a third person is equivalent to the exposed person being made comic. We have seen that it is the task of jokes to take the place of smut and so once more to open access to a lost source of comic pleasure. As opposed to this, witnessing an exposure is not a case of the comic for the witness, because his own effort in doing so does away with the determining condition of comic pleasure: nothing is left but the sexual pleasure in what is seen. If the witness gives an account to someone else, the person who has been witnessed becomes comic once more, because there is a predominant sense that he endeavours to explain the comic as an after-effect of the joys of childhood.

Thus the case approaches that of the Naïve-Komisch, which, true, he soon abandons: 'substitution quelconque de l'artificiel au naturel'. He proceeds by a plausible train of thought from automatism to automata, and tries to trace back a number of comic effects to the faded characteristics of the comic:

1 ['Mechanization of life'—'some kind of substitution of the artificial for the natural.']


première ébauche des combinaisons qui font rire l'homme... Trop souvent surtout nous méconnaissons ce qu'il y a d'enfance enfantine, pour ainsi dire, dans la plupart de nos émotions joyeuses.' (Bergson, 1900, 68 ff.) Since we have traced back jokes to children's play with words and thoughts which has been frustrated by rational criticism [p. 128 ff.] we cannot help feeling tempted to investigate the infantile roots which Bergson suspects in the case of the comic as well.

And, in fact, if we examine the relation of the comic to the child we come upon a whole number of connections which seem promising. Children themselves do not strike us as in any way comic, though their nature fulfills all the conditions which, if we compare it with our own nature, yield a comic difference: the excessive expenditure on movement as well as the small intellectual expenditure, the domination of the mental functions by the bodily ones, and other features. A child only produces a comic effect on us when he conducts himself not as a child but as a serious adult, and he produces it then in the same way as other people who disguise themselves. But so long as he retains his childish nature the perception of him affords us a pure feeling, like such a number of other things, which has been frustrated by rational criticism [p. 128 ff.]

On the other hand, children are without a feeling for the comic. This assertion seems to say no more than that the comic feeling, like such a number of other things, only starts at some point in the course of mental development; and this would be by no means surprising, especially as it has to be admitted that the feeling already emerges clearly at an age which has to be counted as part of childhood. But it can nevertheless be shown that the assertion that children lack the feeling of the comic contains more than something self-evident. In the first place, it is easy to see that it could not be otherwise if our view is correct.

1 ['Perhaps we should even carry simplification further still, go back to our oldest memories, and trace in the games that amused the child the first sketch of the combinations which make the grown man laugh. . . . Above all, we too often fail to recognize how much of childishness, so to speak, there still is in most of our joyful emotions.]

2 [Cf. footnote 1, p. 195.]

which derives the comic feeling from a difference in expenditure that arises in the course of understanding another person. Let us once again take the comic of movement as an example. The comparison which provides the difference runs (stated in conscious formulas): 'That is how he does it' and 'This is how I should do it, how I did it'. But a child is without the standard contained in the second sentence; he understands simply by mimicry: he does it in just the same way. The child's upbringing presents him with a standard: 'this is how you ought to do it.' If he now makes use of this standard in making the comparison, he will easily conclude: 'he did not do it right' and 'I can do it better'. In this case he laughs at the other person, he laughs at the feeling of his own superiority. There is nothing to prevent our deriving this laughter too from a difference in expenditure; but on the analogy of the cases laughing at people that we have come across we may infer that the comic feeling is not present in a child's superior laughter.

Es ist wahrscheinlich richtig zu sagen, das Kind lache aus seiner Lust unter verschiedenen Umständen, die wir als 'komisch' empfinden und nicht zu motivieren verstehen, während die Motive des Kindes klare und angebärende sind. Wenn z.B. jemand auf der Straße ausgetobt und hinfällt, so lachen wir, weil 'dieser Eindruck'—unbekannt warum—komisch ist. Das Kind lacht im gleichen Falle aus Überlegenheitsgefühl oder aus Schadenfreude: Du bist gefallen, und ich nicht. Gewisse Lust motive des Kindes scheinen uns Erwachsenen verlorenzugehen; dafür verspüren wir unter den gleichen Bedingungen das 'komische' Gefühl als Ersatz für das Verlorene.

Dürfte man verallgemeinern, so erschien es recht verlockend, den gesuchten spezifischen Charakter des Komischen in die Erweckung des Infantilen zu verlegen, das 'Komische' als das wiedergewonnene 'verlorene' Kinderlachen 'zu erfassen. Man könnte dann sagen, 'ich lache jedesmal über eine Aufwändendifferenz zwischen dem anderen und mir, wenn ich in dem anderen das Kind wiederfinde. Oder genauer ausgedrückt, der vollständige Vergleich, der zum Komischen führt, würde lauten:

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would run: 'That is how he does it—I do it in another way—he does it as I used to do it as a child.'

Thus the laughter would always apply to the comparison between the adult's ego and the child's ego. Even the lack of uniformity in the comic difference—the fact that what seems to me comic is sometimes a greater and sometimes a smaller expenditure [p. 196n.]—would fit in with the infantile determinant; actually what is comic is invariably on the infantile side.

This is not contradicted by the fact that, when children themselves are the object of the comparison, they do not give me a comic impression but a purely pleasurable one; nor is it contradicted because the comparison with the infantile only produces a comic effect if any other use of the difference is avoided. For these are matters concerned with the conditions governing discharge. Whatever brings a psychical process into connection with others operates against the discharge of the surplus cathexis and puts it to some other use; whatever isolates a psychical act encourages discharge [cf. p. 218]. A conscious attitude to children as objects of comparison therefore makes impossible the discharge that is necessary for comic pleasure. Only when the cathexis is preconscious [p. 220] is there an approximation to an isolation such as, incidentally, we may ascribe to the mental processes in children as well. The addition to the comparison ('I did it like that as a child too') from which the comic effect is derived would thus only come into consideration, as far as differences of medium magnitude are concerned, if no other nexus could gain control over the liberated surplus.

If we pursue our attempt to discover the essence of the comic in a preconscious link with the infantile, we must go a step further than Bergson and admit that a comparison need not, in order to produce the comic, arouse old childish pleasures and childish play; it will be enough for it to touch upon childish nature in general, and perhaps even on childish suffering. Here we shall be parting from Bergson but remaining in agreement with ourselves if we connect comic pleasure not with recollected pleasure but once more with a comparison. It may be that cases of the former kind [those connected with recollected pleasure] may coincide with the invariably and irresistibly comic [p. 218].

Let us at this point review the scheme which we drew up.

VII. Der Witz und die Arten des Komischen

So macht es der—I mach es anders—
Der macht es so, wie ich es als Kind gemacht habe.

Dieses Lachen gälte also jedesmal dem Vergleich zwischen dem Ich des Erwachsenen und dem Ich als Kind. Selbst die Ungleichsinnigkeit der komischen Differenz, daß mir bald das Mehr, bald das Minder des Aufwandes komisch erscheint [vgl. S. 182, Anm. 2], würde mit der infantilen Bedingung stimmen; das Komische ist dabei tatsächlich stets auf der Seite des Infantilen.

Es widerspricht dem nicht, daß das Kind selbst als Objekt der Vergleichung mir keinen komischen, sondern einen rein lustvollen Eindruck macht; auch nicht, daß dieser Vergleich mit dem Infantilen nur dann komisch wirkt, wenn eine andere Verwendung der Differenz vermieden wird. Denn dabei kommen die Bedingungen der Abfuhr in Betracht. Alles was einen psychischen Vorgang in einen Zusammenhang einschließt, wirkt der Abfuhr der überschüssigen Besetzung entgegen und führt diese einer anderen Verwendung zu; was einen psychischen Akt isoliert, begünstigt die Abfuhr [vgl. S. 203]. Die bewußte Einstellung auf das Kind als Vergleichsperson macht daher die Abfuhr unmöglich, die zur komischen Lust erforderlich ist; nur bei vorbewußter Besetzung [S. 204 f.] ergibt sich eine ähnliche Annäherung an die Isolierung, wie wir sie übrigens auch den seelischen Vorgängen im Kinde zuschreiben dürfen. Der Zusatz zum Vergleich: So hab ich es als Kind auch gemacht, von dem die komische Wirkung ausginge, käme also für mittlere Differenzen erst dann in Betracht, wenn kein anderer Zusammenhang sich des frei gewordenen Überschusses bemächtigen könnte.

Verweilen wir noch bei dem Versuch, das Wesen des Komischen in der vorbewußten Anknüpfung an das Infantile zu finden, so müssen wir einen Schritt über Bergson hinaus tun und zugeben, daß der das Komische ergebende Vergleich nicht etwa alte Kinderlust und Kinderspiel erwecken müsse, sondern daß es hinreiche, wenn er an kindliches Wesen überhaupt, vielleicht selbst an Kinderleid rühre. Wir entfernen uns hierin von Bergson, bleiben aber im Einklang mit uns selbst, wenn wir die komische Lust nicht auf erinnerte Lust, sondern immer wieder auf einen Vergleich beziehen. Vielleicht daß die Fälle der ersteren Art das regelmäßige und unwiderstehliche Komische einigermaßen decken [S. 203].

Ziehen wir hier das vorhin [S. 182 f.] angeführte Schema der komischen
earlier [p. 196] of the various comic possibilities. We remarked that the comic difference was found either

(a) by a comparison between another person and oneself, or
(b) by a comparison entirely within the other person, or
(c) by a comparison entirely within oneself.

In the first of these cases the other person would appear to me as a child; in the second he would reduce himself to a child; and in the third I should discover the child in myself.

[2] The first case would include the comic of movement and form, of mental functioning and of character. The corresponding infantile factors would be the urge to movement and the child's inferior mental and moral development. So that, for instance, a stupid person would be comic to me in so far as he reminded me of a lazy child and a bad person in so far as he reminded me of a naughty child. There could only be a question of a childish pleasure lost to adults in the single instance in which the child's own joy in movement was concerned.

[3] The second case, in which the comic depends entirely on 'empathy', includes the most numerous possibilities—the comic of situation, of exaggeration (caricature), of mimicry, of degradation and of unmasking. This is the case in which the introduction of the infantile point of view proves most useful. For the comic of situation is mostly based on embarrassments, in which we rediscover the child's helplessness. The worst of the embarrassments, the interference by the peremptory demands of natural needs with other functions, corresponds to the child's incomplete control over his bodily functions. Where the comic of situation operates by means of repetitions, it is based on the child's peculiar pleasure in constant repetition (of questions or of being told stories) which make him a nuisance to the adult. [Cf. p. 128n.] Exaggeration, which still gives pleasure to adults in so far as it can find justification with their critical faculty, is connected with the child's peculiar lack of a sense of proportion, his ignorance of all quantitative relations, which he comes to know later than qualitative ones. The use of moderation and restraint, even in the case of permitted impulses, is a late fruit of education and is acquired by the mutual inhibition of mental activities brought together in a combination. Where such combinations are weakened, as in the unconscious of dreams or in

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Möglichkeiten heran. Wir sagten, die komische Differenz würde gefunden entweder

a) durch einen Vergleich zwischen dem anderen und dem Ich, oder
b) durch einen Vergleich ganz innerhalb des anderen, oder
c) durch einen Vergleich ganz innerhalb des Ichs.

Im ersten Falle erschien der andere mir als Kind. Im zweiten läßt er sich selbst zum Kind herab, im dritten fände ich das Kind in mir selbst.

[a] Zum ersten Falle gehören das Komische der Bewegung und der Formen, der geistigen Leistung und des Charakters; das entsprechende Infantile wären der Bewegungsdrang und die geistige und sittliche Minderentwicklung des Kindes, so daß etwa der Dumme mir komisch würde, insofern er mich an ein faules, der Böse, insofern er an ein schlimmes Kind mahnt. Von einer dem Erwachsenen verlorengegangenen Kinderlust könnte man nur das eine Mal reden, wo die dem Kind eigene Bewegungsfreude in Betracht kommt.

[b] Der zweite Fall, bei welchem die Komik ganz auf »Einführung« beruht, umfaßt die zahlreichsten Möglichkeiten, die Komik der Situation, der Übertreibung (Karikatur), der Nachahmung, der Herabsetzung und der Entlarvung. Es ist derjenige Fall, der die Einführung des infantilen Gesichtspunktes am meisten zustat kommt. Denn die Situationskomik gründet sich zumeist auf Verlegenheiten, in denen wir die Hilflosigkeit des Kindes wiedersuchen; die ärgste dieser Verlegenheiten, die Störung anderer Leistungen durch die gebietischen Anforderungen der natürlichen Bedürfnisse, entspricht der dem Kinde noch mangelnden Beherrschung der leiblichen Funktionen. Wo die Situationskomik durch Wiederholungen wirkt, stützt sie sich auf die dem Kinde eigentümliche Lust an fortgesetzter Wiederholung (Fragen, Geschichten erzählen), durch die es dem Erwachsenen zur Plage wird. [VgL S. 121, Anm.] Die Übertreibung, welche auch dem Erwachsenen noch Lust bereitet, insofern sie eine Rechtfertigung vor dessen Kritik zu finden weiß, hängt mit der eigentümlichen Maßlosigkeit des Kindes, mit dessen Unkenntnis aller quantitativen Beziehungen zusammen, die es ja später kennenlernen als die qualitativen. Maßhalten, Ermäßigung auch der erlaubten Regungen ist eine späte Frucht der Erziehung und wird durch gegenseitige Hemmung der in einen Zusammenhang aufgenommenen seelischen Tätigkeiten gewonnen. Wo dieser Zusammenhang geschwächt
the mono-ideism of psychoneuroses, the child’s lack of moderation re-emerges.¹

We found relatively great difficulties in understanding the comic of mimicry so long as we left the infantile factor out of account. But mimicry is the child’s best art and the driving motive of most of his games. A child’s ambition aims far less at adults in their attitude to the life of children. There is little that accounts. But mimicry is the child’s best art and the driving motive re-emerges.¹

The relation of children to adults is also the basis of the comic of degradation, which corresponds to the condescension shown by adults in their attitude to the life of children. There is little that gives children greater pleasure than when a grown-up lets himself down their level, to renounces his oppressive superiority and plays with them as an equal. This relief, which gives the child pure pleasure, becomes in adults, in the form of degradation, a means of making things comic and a source of comic pleasure. As regards unmasking, we know that it goes back to degradation, which corresponds to the condescension shown by adults in their attitude to the life of children. There is little that gives children greater pleasure than when a grown-up lets himself down their level, to renounces his oppressive superiority and plays with them as an equal. This relief, which gives the child pure pleasure, becomes in adults, in the form of degradation, a means of making things comic and a source of comic pleasure. As regards unmasking, we know that it goes back to degradation.

[²] We come up against the most difficulties in finding the infantile basis of the third case, the comic of expectation, which no doubt explains why those authorities who have put this case first in their discussion of the comic have found no occasion for taking account of the infantile factor in the comic. The comic of expectation is no doubt the remotest in children; the capacity goes back to degradation, which corresponds to the condescension shown by adults in their attitude to the life of children. There is little that gives children greater pleasure than when a grown-up lets himself down their level, to renounces his oppressive superiority and plays with them as an equal. This relief, which gives the child pure pleasure, becomes in adults, in the form of degradation, a means of making things comic and a source of comic pleasure. As regards unmasking, we know that it goes back to degradation, which corresponds to the condescension shown by adults in their attitude to the life of children. There is little that gives children greater pleasure than when a grown-up lets himself down their level, to renounces his oppressive superiority and plays with them as an equal. This relief, which gives the child pure pleasure, becomes in adults, in the form of degradation, a means of making things comic and a source of comic pleasure. As regards unmasking, we know that it goes back to degradation.

What we have said would seem to suggest a certain probability for a translation of the comic feeling that might run; ‘Those things are comic which are not proper for an adult.’ Nevertheless I do not feel bold enough, in virtue of my whole attitude to the problem of the comic, to defend this last assertion with as much seriousness as my earlier ones. I am unable to decide whether degradation to being a child is only a special.

¹ [This point had been brought out already by Freud in a footnote to The Interpretation of Dreams (1900a), Standard Ed., 4, 268.]
case of comic degradation, or whether everything comic is based fundamentally on degradation to being a child.1

An enquiry which deals with the comic, however cursorily, would be seriously incomplete if it did not find room for at least a few remarks about humour. The essential kinship between the two is so little open to doubt that an attempt at explaining the comic is bound to make at least some contribution to an understanding of humour. However much that appreciation of humour (which, itself one of the highest psychical achievements, enjoys the particular favour of thinkers), yet we cannot evade an attempt at giving expression to its nature by an approach to the formulas for jokes and for the comic.

We have seen [p. 220] that the release of distressing affects is the greatest obstacle to the emergence of the comic. As soon as the aimless movement does damage, or the stupidity leads to mischief, or the disappointment causes pain, the possibility of a comic effect is at an end. This is true, at all events, for a person who cannot ward off such unpleasure, who is himself its victim or is obliged to have a share in it; whereas a person who is not concerned shows by his demeanour that the situation involved contains everything that is required for a comic effect. Now humour is a means of obtaining pleasure in spite of the distressing affects that interfere with it; it acts as a substitute for the generation of these affects, it puts itself in their place. The conditions for its appearance are given if there is a situation in which, according to our usual habits, we should be tempted to release a distressing affect and if motives then operate upon us which suppress that affect in statu nascendi. In the cases that have just been mentioned the person who is the victim of the injury, pain, and so on, might obtain humorous pleasure, while the unconcerned person laughs from comic pleasure. The pleasure of

1 The fact that comic pleasure has its source in the 'quantitative contrast' of a comparison between small and large, which after all also expresses the essential relation between a child and an adult—this would certainly be a strange coincidence if the comic had no other connection with the infantile.

Eine Untersuchung, die das Komische noch so flüchtig behandelt, wäre in arger Weise unvollständig, wenn sie nicht wenigstens einige Bemerkungen für den Humor übrig hätte. Die Wesensverwandtschaft zwischen beiden ist so wenig zweifelhaft, daß ein Erklärungsversuch des Komischen mindestens eine Komponente zum Verständnis des Humors abgeben muß. Soviel des Treffenden und Erhebenden auch zur Wertschätzung des Humors vorgebracht worden ist, der, selbst eine der höchsten psychischen Leistungen, auch die besondere Gunst der Denker genießt, so können wir doch dem Versuche nicht ausweichen, sein Wesen durch eine Annäherung an die Formeln für den Witz und für das Komische auszudrücken.

Wir haben gehört [S. 205], daß die Entbindung peinlicher Affekte das stärkste Hindernis der komischen Wirkung ist. Sowie die zwecklose Bewegung Schaden stifft, die Dummheit zum Unheil führt, die Entäußerung Schmerz bereitet, ist es mit der Möglichkeit eines komischen Effekts zu Ende, für den wenigstens, der sich solcher Unlust nicht erwehren kann, selbst von ihr betroffen wird oder an ihr Anteil nehmen muß, während der Unbeteiligte durch sein Verhalten bezeugt, daß in der Situation des betreffenden Falles alles enthalten ist, was für eine komische Wirkung erfordernd wird. Der Humor ist nun ein Mittel, um die Lust trotz der sie störenden peinlichen Affekte zu gewinnen; er tritt für diese Affektentwicklung ein, setzt sich an die Stelle derselben. Seine Bedingung ist gegeben, wenn eine Situation vorliegt, in welcher wir unsere Gewohnheiten gemäß versucht sind, peinlichen Affekt zu entbinden, und wenn nun Motive auf uns einwirken, um diesen Affekt in statu nascendi zu unterdrücken. In den eben angeführten Fällen könnte also die vom Schaden, Schmerz usw. betroffene Person humoristische Lust gewinnen, während die unbeteiligte aus komischer Lust lacht. Die Lust

1 Daß die komische Lust ihre Quelle im 'quantitativen Kontrast' im Vergleich von Klein und Groß hat, welcher schließlich auch die wesentliche Relation des Kindes zum Erwachsenen ausdrückt, dies wäre in der Tat ein seltsames Zusammentreffen, wenn das Komische weiter nichts mit dem Infantilen zu tun hätte.
Humour, if this is so, comes about—we cannot say otherwise—at the cost of a release of affect that does not occur: it arises from an economy in the expenditure of affect.

Humour is the most easily satisfied among the species of the comic. It completes its course within a single person; another person’s participation adds nothing new to it. I can keep to say what happens in a person when humorous pleasure is atated; but we can obtain some insight if we examine the cases in which humour is communicated or sympathized with, cases in which, by an understanding of the humorous person, we arrive at the same pleasure as his. The crudest case of humour—what is known as Galgenhumor [literally, 'gallows humour']—may be instructive in this connection. A rogue who was being led out to execution on a Monday remarked: ‘Well, this week’s begin­ning nicely.’ 1 This is actually a joke, since the remark is quite apt in itself, but on the other hand, is misplaced in a nonsensical way, since for the man himself there would be no further events that week. But humour is concerned in the making of such a joke—that is, in disregarding what it is that distinguishes the begin­ning of this week from others, in denying the distinction which might give rise to motives for quite special emotions. The case was the same when the rogue on his way to execution asked for a scarf for his bare throat so as not to catch cold—an otherwise laudable precaution but one which, in view of what lay in store shortly for the neck, was remarkably superfluous and un­important. It must be confessed that there is something like magnanimity in this blague, in the man’s tenacious hold upon his customary self and his disregard of what might overthrow that self and drive it to despair. This kind of grandeur of humour appears unmistakably in cases in which our admiration is not inhibited by the circumstances of the humorous person.

In Victor Hugo’s Hernani, the bandit who has become involved in a conspiracy against his King, Charles I of Spain (the Emperor Charles V), has fallen into the hands of this powerful enemy. He foresees that, convicted of high treason, it is his fate to lose his head. But this fore-knowledge does not prevent his

1 [The anecdote is discussed again in Freud’s late paper on ‘Humor’ (1927 d).]
letting himself be known as a Hereditary Grandee of Spain and declaring that he has no intention of renouncing any of the privileges that are his due. A Grandee of Spain might cover his head in the presence of his royal master. Very well, then:

... Nos têtes ont le droit
De tomber couvertes devant de toi.\(^1\)

This is humour on the grand scale, and if when we hear it we do not laugh, that is because our admiration covers the humorous pleasure. In the case of the rogue who refuses to catch cold on the way to execution we laugh heartily. The situation that ought to drive the criminal to despair might rouse intense pity in us; but that pity is inhibited because we understand that he, who is more closely concerned, makes nothing of the situation.

As a result of this understanding, the expenditure on the pity, which was already prepared, becomes unutilizable and we laugh it off. We are, as it were, infected by the rogue’s indifference—though we notice that it has cost him a great expenditure of psychical work.

An economy of pity is one of the most frequent sources of humorous pleasure. Mark Twain’s humour usually works with this mechanism. In an account of his brother’s life, for instance, he tells us how he was at one time employed on a great road-making enterprise. The premature explosion of a mine blew him up into the air and he came down again far away from the place where he had been working. We are bound to have feelings of sympathy for the victim of the accident and would like to ask whether he was injured by it. But when the story goes on to say that his brother had a half-day’s wages deducted for being ‘absent from his place of employment’ we are entirely distracted from our pity and become almost as hard-hearted as the contractor and almost as indifferent to possible damage to the brother’s health. On another occasion Mark Twain presents us with his family tree, which he traces back to one of Columbus’s fellow-voyagers. He then describes this ancestor’s character and how his baggage consisted entirely of a number of pieces of washing each of which had a different laundry-mark—here we cannot help laughing at the cost of an economy of the feelings of piety into which we were prepared to enter at the beginning.

\(^1\) ['Our heads have the right to fall before you covered.']
of this family history. The mechanism of the humorous pleasure is not interfered with by our knowledge that this pedigree is a fictitious one and that the fiction serves the satirical purpose of exposing the embellishments in similar accounts by other people: it is as independent of the condition that it must be real as in the case of making things comic [p. 199 ff.]. In yet another story, Mark Twain describes how his brother constructed a subterranean dwelling, into which he brought a bed, a table and a lamp and which he roofed over with a large piece of sailcloth with a hole in the middle. At night, however, after the hut was finished, a cow that was being driven home fell through the opening of the roof on to the table and put out the lamp. His brother patiently helped to get the beast out and put the establishment to rights again. Next night the same interruption was repeated and his brother behaved as before. And so it was every following night. Repetition makes the story comic, but Mark Twain ends it by reporting that on the forty-sixth night, when the cow fell through again, his brother finally remarked: 'The thing's beginning to get monotonous.' At this our humorous pleasure cannot be kept back, for what we had long expected to hear was that this obstinate set of misfortunes would make his brother angry. And indeed the small contributions of humour that we produce ourselves are as a rule made at the cost of anger—instead of getting angry.

The species of humour are extraordinarily variegated according to the nature of the emotion which is economized.

1 The grandiose humorous effect of a figure like that of the fat knight Sir John Falstaff rests on an economy in contempt and indignation. We recognize him as an undeserving gormandizer and swindler, but our condemnation is disarmed by a whole number of factors. We can see that he knows himself as well as we do; he impresses us by his wit [see Editor's Preface, p. 7]; and, besides this, his physical mis-proportion has the effect of encouraging us to take a comic view of him instead of a serious one, as though the demands of morality and honour must rebound from so fat a stomach. His doings are on the whole harmless, and are almost excused by the comic baseness of the people he cheats. We admit that the poor fellow has a right to try to live and enjoy himself like anyone else, and we almost pity him because in the chief situations we find him a playing in the hands of someone far his superior. So we cannot feel angry with him and we add all that we economize in indignation with him to the comic pleasure which he affords us apart from this. Sir John's own humour arises in fact from

begin this Familiengeschichte zu versetzen gedacht. Der Mechanismus der humoristischen Lust wird dabei nicht durch unser Wissen gestört, daß diese Ahnengeschichte eine fingierte ist und daß diese Fixierung der satirischen Tendenz dient, die Schönräuber, die sich in solchen Mitteilungen anderer kundgibt, bloßzustellen; er ist ebenso unabhängig von der Realitätsbedingung wie im Falle des Komischmachens [vgl. S. 186 f.]. Eine andere Geschichte von Mark Twain, die berichtet, wie sein Bruder sich ein unterirdisches Quartier herstellte, in das er Bett, Tisch und Lampe brachte und das als Dach ein großes, in der Mitte durchlöchertes Stück Segeltuch bekam, wie aber in der Nacht, nachdem die Stube fertig geworden, eine heimgetriebene Kuh durch die Öffnung der Decke auf den Tisch herabfiel und die Lampe auslöschte, wie der Bruder geduldig mithalf, das Tier hinaufzubefördern und die Einrichtung wiederherzustellen, wie er das gleiche tat, als sich die gleiche Störung in der nächsten Nacht wiederholte und dann jede weitere Nacht; eine solche Geschichte wird durch ihre Wiederholung komisch. Mark Twain beschließt sie aber mit der Mitteilung, der Bruder habe endlich in der 46. Nacht, als wiederum die Kuh herabfiel, bemerkt: Die Sache fange an, monoton zu werden, und da können wir unsere humoristische Lust nicht zurückhalten, denn wir hätten längst zu hören erwartet, wie sich der Bruder über dieses hartnäckige Malheur — geübert. Den kleinen Humor, den wir etwa selbst in unserem Leben aufbringen, produzieren wir in der Regel auf Kosten des Ärgers, anstatt uns zu ärgern 4.

Die Arten des Humors sind außerordentlich mannigfach, je nach der Natur der Gefühlsregung, die zugunsten des Humors erspart wird:

1 Die großartige humoristische Wirkung einer Figur wie des dicken Ritters Sir John Falstaff beruht auf ersparter Verachtung und Entfröhung. Wir erkennen zwar in ihm den unwürdigen Schlemmer und Hochstäbler, aber unsere Verachtung wird durch eine ganze Reihe von Momenten entwaffnet. Wir verstehen, daß er sich genau so kennt, wie wir ihn beurteilen; er imponiert uns durch seinen Witz, und außerdem übt seine körperliche Mißgestalt eine Kontaktwirkung zugunsten einer komischen Auffassung seiner Person anstatt einer erasthaften aus, als ob unsere Anforderungen von Moral und Ehre von einem so dicken Bauch abprallen müßten. Sein Treiben ist im ganzen harmlos und wird durch die komische Niedrigkeit der von ihm Betroffenen fast entschuldigt. Wir geben zu, daß der Arme bemüht sein darf zu leben und zu genießen wie ein anderer, und bemühen ihn fast, weil wir ihn in den Hauptsituationen als Spielzeug in den Händen eines ihm weit Überlegenen finden. Darum können wir ihm nicht gram werden und schlagen alles, was wir bei ihm an Entfröhung ersparen, zur komischen Lust, die er sonst bereitet, hinzu. Sir Johns eigener Humor geht eigentlich
in favour of the humour: pity, anger, pain, tenderness, and so on. Their number seems to remain uncompleted because the kingdom of humour is constantly being enlarged whenever an artist or writer succeeds in submitting some hitherto unexperienced emotions to the control of humour, in making them, by devices like those in the examples we have given, into sources of humorous pleasure. The artists in *Simplicissimus*¹, for instance, have had astonishing results in achieving humour at the cost of horror and disgust. The forms in which humour is manifested may, in the first place, appear merged with a joke or some other device; but one day, the artist or writer succeeds in submitting some hitherto unsuspected source of pleasure to his account, and the kingdom of humour is constantly being enlarged whenever an artist or writer succeeds in submitting some hitherto unexperienced emotions to the control of humour, in making them, by devices like those in the examples we have given, into sources of humorous pleasure. The artists in *Simplicissimus* ¹, for instance, have had astonishing results in achieving humour at the cost of horror and disgust. The forms in which humour is manifested are, moreover, determined by two peculiarities which are connected with the conditions under which it is generated. Humour may, in the first place, appear merged with a joke or some other species of the comic; in that case its task is to get rid of a possibility implicit in the situation that an affect may be generated which would interfere with the pleasurable outcome. In the second place, it may stop this generating of an affect entirely or withdraw a part of its energy from the affect and in exchange gives it a tinge of humour. The humorous pleasure derived from sympathy originates, as the superior fruit of an ego which neither his physical nor his moral defects can rob of its cheerfulness and assurance.

The ingenious knight Don Quixote de la Mancha is, on the contrary, a figure who possesses no humour himself but who with his seriousness offers us a pleasure which could be called humorous, though its mechanism shows an important divergence from that of humour. Don Quixote is originally a purely comic figure, a big child; the phantasias from his books of chivalry have gone to his head. It is well known that to begin with the author intended nothing else of him and that his creation gradually grew far beyond its creator's first intentions. But after the author had equipped this ridiculous figure with the deepest wisdom and the noblest purposes and had made him into the symbolic representative of an idealism which believes in the realization of its aims and takes duties seriously and takes promises literally, this figure ceased to have a comic effect. Just as in other cases humorous pleasure arises from the prevention of an emotion, so it does here from the interference with comic pleasure. But it is clear that these examples have already carried us a long way from the simple cases of humour.

¹ [See footnote, p. 73.]
² A term which is used in quite another sense in Vischer’s aesthetics.
can be seen from the examples above, from a peculiar technique comparable to displacement, by means of which the release of affect that is already in preparation is disappointed and the cathexis diverted on to something else, often on to something of secondary importance. But this does not help us at all to understand the process by which the displacement away from the generating of affect takes place in the humorous person himself. We can see that the receiver imitates the creator of the humour in his mental processes, but this tells us nothing of the forces which make the process possible in the latter.

We can only say that if someone succeeds, for instance, in disregarding a painful affect by reflecting on the greatness of the interests of the world as compared with his own smallness, we do not regard this as an achievement of humour but of philosophical thought, and if we put ourselves into his train of thought, we obtain no yield of pleasure. Humorous displacement is thus just as impossible under the glare of conscious attention as is comic comparison [p. 220]; like the latter, it is tied to the condition of remaining preconscious or automatic.

We can gain some information about humorous displacement if we look at it in the light of a defensive process. Defensive processes are the psychological correlate of the flight reflex and perform the task of preventing the generation of unpleasure from internal sources. In fulfilling this task they serve mental events as an automatic regulation, which in the end, incidentally, turns out to be detrimental and has to be subjected to conscious thinking. I have indicated one particular form of this defence, repression that has failed, as the operative mechanism for the development of psychoneuroses. Humour can be regarded as the highest of these defensive processes. It scorches to withdraw the ideational content bearing the distressing affect from conscious attention as repression does, and thus surmounts the automatism of defence. It brings this about by finding a means of withdrawing the energy from the release of unpleasure that is already in preparation and of transforming it, by discharge, into pleasure. It is even conceivable that once again it may be a connection with the infantile that puts the means for achieving this at its disposal. Only in childhood have there been distressing affects at which the adult would smile to-day—just as he laughs, as a humorist, at his present distressing affects.

Man kann nur sagen, wenn es jemandem gelingt, sich z.B. über einen schmerzlichen Affekt hinwegzusetzen, indem er sich die Größe der Weltinteressen als Gegensatz zur eigenen Kleinheit vorhält, so sehen wir darin keine Leistung des Humors, sondern des philosophischen Denkens und haben auch keinen Lustgewinn, wenn wir uns in seinen Gedankengang hineinversetzen. Die humoristische Verschiebung ist also in der Beleuchtung der bewußten Aufmerksamkeit ebenso unmöglich wie die komische Vergleichung [S. 204 f.]; sie ist wie diese an die Bedingung, vorbewußt oder automatisch zu bleiben, gebunden.

Zu einem Aufschluß über die humoristische Verschiebung gelangt man, wenn man sie im Lichte eines Abwehrvorganges betrachtet. Die Abwehrvorgänge sind die psychischen Korrelate des Fluchtreflexes und verfolgen die Aufgabe, die Entstehung von Unlust aus inneren Quellen zu verhüten; in der Erfüllung dieser Aufgabe dienen sie dem seelischen Geschehen als eine automatische Regulierung, die sich schließlich allerdings als schädlich herausstellt und darum der Beherrschung durch den bewußten Denken unterworfen werden muß. Eine bestimmte Art dieser Abwehr, die mißglückte Verdrängung, habe ich als den wirkenden Mechanismus für die Entstehung der Psychoneurosen nachgewiesen. Der Humor kann nun als die höchststehende dieser Abwehrleistungen aufgefaßt werden. Er verschmälert es, den mit dem peinlichen Affekt verknüpften Vorstellungsinhalt der bewußten Aufmerksamkeit zu entziehen, wie es die Verdrängung tut, und überwindet somit den Abwehrautomatismus; er bringt dies zustande, indem er die Mittel findet, der bereitgehaltenen Unlustentbindung ihre Energie zu entziehen und diese durch Abfuhr in Lust zu verwandeln. Es ist selbst denkbar, daß wiederum der Zusammenhang mit dem Infantilen ihn die Mittel zu dieser Leistung zur Verfügung stellt. Im Kinderleben allein hat es intensive peinliche Affekte gegeben, über welche der Erwachsene heute lächeln würde, wie er als Humorist über seine gegenwärtigen peinlichen Affekte
The exaltation of his ego, to which the humorous displacement bears witness, and of which the translation would no doubt be 'I am too big (too fine)' to be distressed by these things', might well be derived from his comparing his present ego with his childish one. This view is to some extent supported by the part played by the infantile in neurotic processes of repression.

On the whole humour is closer to the comic than to jokes. It shares with the former its psychical localization in the preconscious, whereas jokes, as we have had to suppose, are formed as a compromise between the unconscious and the preconscious. On the other hand humour does not participate in a peculiar characteristic common to jokes and the comic, on which we have perhaps not yet laid sufficient stress. It is a necessary condition for generating the comic that we should be obliged, simultaneously or in rapid succession, to apply to one and the same act of ideation two different ideational methods, between which the 'comparison' is then made and the comic difference emerges [p. 196]. Differences in expenditure of this kind arise between what belongs to someone else and to oneself, between what is as usual and what has been changed, between what is expected and what happens. In the case of jokes, the difference between two simultaneous methods of viewing things, which operate with a different expenditure, applies to the process in the person who hears the joke. One of these two views, following the hints contained in the joke, passes along the path of thought through the unconscious; the other stays on the surface and views the joke like any other wording that has emerged from the preconscious and become conscious [p. 214 f.]. We should perhaps be justified in representing the pleasure from a joke that is heard as being derived from the difference between these two methods of viewing it. Here we are saying of jokes what we described

1 In the original 'gross(artig)'.

2 We can accept this formula without question, since it leads to nothing that would contradict our earlier discussions. The difference between the two expenditures must in essence come down to the in-

lacht. Die Erhebung seines Ichs, von welcher die humoristische Verschiebung Zeugnis ablegt — deren Übersetzung doch lauten würde; Ich bin zu groß(artig), als daß diese Anlässe mich peinlich berühren sollten — könnte er wohl aus der Vergleichung seines gegenwärtigen Ichs mit seinem kindlichen entnehmen. Einigermaßen unterstützt wird diese Auffassung durch die Rolle, die dem Infantilen bei den neurotischen Verdrängungsvorgängen zufällt.


Beim Witz kommt die Differenz zwischen zwei sich gleichzeitig ergebenden Auffassungsweisen, die mit verschiedenem Aufwand arbeiten, für den Vorgang beim Witzhörer in Betracht. Die eine dieser beiden Auffassungen macht, den im Witze enthaltenen Andeutungen folgend, den Weg des Gedankens durch das Unbewußte nach, die andere verbleibt an der Oberfläche und stellt den Witz wie einen sonstigen aus dem Vorbewußten bewußt gewordenen Wortlaut vor [S. 199 f.]. Es wäre vielleicht keine unberechtigte Darstellung, wenn man die Lust des angehörten Witzes aus der Differenz dieser beiden Vorstellungsweisen ableiten würde.

Wir sagen hier vom Witze das nämliche aus, was wir als seine Janus-

1 Wenn man sich nicht scheut, dem Begriff Erwartung einen Zwang anzuzuwenden, kann man nach dem Vorgange von Lipps ein sehr großes Gebiet des Komischen der Erwartungskomik zurechnen, aber gerade die wahrcheinlich ursprünglichsten Fälle der Komik, die aus der Vergleichung eines fremden Aufwandes mit dem eigenen hervorgehen, würden sich dieser Zusammenfassung am wenigsten fügen.

2 Man kann an dieser Formel ohne weiteres festhalten, denn sie läßt auf nichts heraus, was im Widerspruch zu früheren Erörterungen stünde. Die Differenz zwischen den beiden Aufwänden muß sich im wesentlichen auf den ersparten Hemmungsaufwand
VII. JOKES AND THE COMIC

[p. 215] as their possessing a Janus head, while the relation between jokes and the comic had still to be cleared up.¹

In the case of humour the characteristic which we have just brought forward becomes effaced. It is true that we feel humorous pleasure when an emotion is avoided which we should have expected because it usually accompanies the situation, and to that extent humour too comes under the extended concept of the comic of expectation. But with humour it is no longer a question of two different methods of viewing the same subject-matter. The fact that the situation is dominated by the emotion that is to be avoided, which is of an unpleasurable character, puts an end to the possibility of comparing it with the characteristics of the comic and of jokes. Humorous displacement is in fact a case of a liberated expenditure being used elsewhere—a case which has been shown to be so perilous to a comic effect [p. 218].²

We are now at the end of our task, having reduced the mechanism of humorous pleasure to a formula analogous to those for inhibitory expenditure that is saved. The lack of this economy in inhibition in the case of the comic, and the absence of quantitative contrast in the case of jokes, would determine the distinction between the comic feeling and the impression of a joke, in spite of their agreeing in the characteristic of using two kinds of ideational activity for the same view.

¹ This peculiarity of the 'double face' [in French in the original] has naturally not escaped the authorities. Mélinand (1895), from whom I have borrowed this phrase, states the determinants of laughter in the following formula: 'Ce qui fait rire c'est ce qui est à la fois, d'un côté, absurde et de l'autre, familier.' ["What makes one laugh is what is on the one hand absurd, and on the other familiar."] This formula fits jokes better than the comic, but does not completely cover the former either.—Bergson (1900, 98) defines the comic situation by the "interférence des séries": 'Une situation est toujours comique quand elle appartient en même temps à deux séries d'événements absolument indépendantes, et qu'elle peut s'interpréter à la fois dans deux sens tout différents.' ["A situation is always comic when it belongs at the same time to two series of events that are absolutely independent, and when it can be interpreted simultaneously in two quite different senses."]—Lipps regards the comic as 'the bigness and smallness of the same thing'.

² [Over twenty years after the publication of this book, Freud returned to the subject of humour in a short paper (1927d), reflecting his new views on mental structure.]

VII. Der Witz und die Arten des Komischen

köpfigkeit beschrieben haben [S. 200], solange uns die Beziehung zwischen Witz und Komik noch unerledigt erschien.²

Beim Humor verwischt sich der hier in den Vordergrund gerückte Charakter. Wir verspüren zwar die humoristische Lust, wo eine Gefühlserregung vermieden wird, die wir als eine der Situation gewohnheitsmäßig zugeordnete erwartet hätten, und insofern fällt auch der Humor unter den erweiterten Begriff der Erwartungskomik. Aber es handelt sich beim Humor nicht mehr um zwei verschiedene Vorstellungsweisen desselben Inhalts; daß die Situation durch die zu vermeidende Gefühlserregung mit Unlustcharakter beherrscht wird, macht der Vergleichbarkeit mit dem Charakter beim Komischen und beim Witzte ein Ende. Die humoristische Verschiebung ist eigentlich ein Fall jener andersartigen Verwendung eines frei gewordenen Aufwandes, der sich als so gefährlich für die komische Wirkung herausgestellt hat [S. 202 f.]

Wir stehen nun am Ende unserer Aufgabe, nachdem wir den Mechanismus der humoristischen Lust auf eine analoge Formel zurückgeführt reduzieren. Das Fehlen dieser Hemmungsersparung beim Komischen und der Wegfall des quantitativen Kontrastes beim Witz würden, bei aller Übereinstimmung im Charakter der zweierlei Vorstellungsaufgaben für die nämliche Auffassung, den Unterschied des komischen Gefühls vom Eindruck des Witzes bedingen.

² Die Eigentümlichkeit der "double face" ist den Autoren natürlich nicht entgangen. Mélinand, dem ich obigen Ausdruck entnahm ("Pourquoi rit-on?" 1895), faßt die Bedingung für das Lachen in folgender Formel: 'Ce qui fait rire, c'est ce qui est à la fois, d'un côté, absurde et de l'autre, familier.' Die Formel paßt auf den Witz besser als auf die Komische, deckt aber auch den ersteren nicht ganz. — Bergson (1900, S. 98) definiert die komische Situation durch die "interférence des séries": 'Une situation est toujours comique quand elle appartient en même temps à deux séries d'événements absolument indépendantes, et qu'elle peut s'interpréter à la fois dans deux sens tout différents.' —Für Lipps ist die Komik "die Größe und Kleinheit desselben".

¹ [Nach über zwanzig Jahren kehrte Freud in der kurzen, im vorliegenden Band auf S. 275 ff. abgedruckten Arbeit (1927 d) noch einmal zum Thema des Humors zurück. Diese Schrift spiegelt seine neuen Einsichten in die Struktur der Seele wider.]
comic pleasure and for jokes. The pleasure in jokes has seemed to us to arise from an economy in expenditure upon inhibition, the pleasure in the comic from an economy in expenditure upon ideation (upon cathexis) and the pleasure in humour from an economy in expenditure upon feeling. In all three modes of working of our mental apparatus the pleasure is derived from an economy. All three are agreed in representing methods of regaining from mental activity a pleasure which has in fact been lost through the development of that activity. For the euphoria which we endeavour to reach by these means is nothing other than the mood of a period of life in which we were accustomed to deal with our psychical work in general with a small expenditure of energy—the mood of our childhood, when we were ignorant of the comic, when we were incapable of jokes and when we had no need of humour to make us feel happy in our life.
APPENDIX
FRANZ BRENTANO'S RIDDLES

The account of Franz Brentano’s riddles given by Freud in his footnote on p. 32 is so obscure that a further explanation is called for. In 1879 Brentano (under the pseudonym of ‘Aenigm-matias’) published a booklet of some two hundred pages with the title Neue Rätsel (New Riddles). It included specimens of various different types of riddle, the last of which was described as ‘Füllrätsel’—‘fill-up riddles’. He gives an account of these in the introduction to the booklet. According to him, this type of riddle was a favourite pastime in the Main region of Germany, but had only recently reached Vienna. The booklet includes thirty examples of the ‘fill-up riddles’, among them the two quoted, not quite accurately, by Freud. A complete translation of these will be the simplest way of making their construction plain:

‘XXIV.
‘How our friend is plagued by his belief in premonitions! The other day, when his mother was ill, I found him sitting under a tall tree. The wind was blowing through its branches, so that some of its large leaves came away, and one of them happened to fall in his lap. Thereupon he burst into tears. His mother, he moaned, was going to die: das lasse ihn das herabgefallene [literally: this he was led by the fallen] daldaldal—daldaldal.

Answer: ‘Platanenblatt ahnen’ [plane tree leaf to think].

‘XXVIII.
‘A man from Hindustan fell ill. His doctor was in the act of writing him out a prescription when he was suddenly called away by an urgent message. He finished writing out the prescription as quickly as possible and went off on the other call. Soon afterwards the news reached him that the Asian, hardly had he tasted the drug prepared for him, had died in convulsions. “Unhappy wretch!” the doctor said to himself in horror. “What have you done? Is it possible that you indem du den Trank dem [literally: when you the potion for the] daldaldaldaldaldal—daldaldaldaldaldal?”’
Answer: ‘In der Hast verschrieben’ [Indian prescribed, in your haste made a slip of the pen].

An English specimen may make things clearer still:

‘Burglars had broken into a large furriers’ store. But they were disturbed and went off without taking anything, though leaving the show-room in the greatest confusion. When the manager arrived in the morning, he gave instructions to his assistants: “Never mind about the cheaper goods. The urgent thing is to get the daldal—daldal.”’

Answer: ‘first-rate furs straight.’
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[Titles of books and periodicals are in italics; titles of papers are in inverted commas. Abbreviations are in accordance with the World List of Scientific Periodicals (London, 1952). Further abbreviations used in this volume will be found in the List at the end of this bibliography. Numerals in thick type refer to volumes; ordinary numerals refer to pages. The figures in round brackets at the end of each entry indicate the page or pages of this volume on which the work in question is mentioned. In the case of the Freud entries, the letters attached to the dates of publication are in accordance with the corresponding entries in the complete bibliography of Freud's writings to be included in the last volume of the Standard Edition.

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