NOTICE: WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.
1. Concepts and their vicissitudes

In their article ‘L’Inconscient’ J. Laplanche and S. Leclaire (1961) revealed for the first time the importance of a complex term in Freud: Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz [ideational representative, S.E.]; they proposed to translate it as ‘représentant représentatif’ [lit. representative representative], the adjective ‘représentatif’ being taken as the adjectival form of the psychological term ‘représentation’ (Vorstellung). From a theoretical point of view, what stood out clearly in this text was that this term designated the function of translation of the instinct with which the ‘representation’ (Vorstellung) [idea or presentation, S.E.] was cathexed. Nonetheless, the term ‘représentatif’ was ambiguous; one could think of things as being more or less ‘représentatif’. ‘Repräsentant’, on the other hand, did not translate exactly the nuance of Repräsentanz which stresses more the function itself but which could not be translated by ‘représentation’ because of Vorstellung.

Stemming from this pure difficulty of translation, the proposed translations make an explicit issue in several areas of the very interpretation of the concept. The results are curious indeed.

In a text on the ‘Rat Man’, O. Mannoni (1965) writes, ‘I have already shown how Freud treats this question both with the greatest attention and mastery and in an awkward manner to the extent that he seeks to remain faithful to an ancient conception of language which consists of making language a collection of images of a particular type, namely, the verbal images which are substituted for other images, thus representing, as he says, the representations.’ (My italics.)

2. The function of representation of the instinct in the psychism

Either this text has no sense or it means that the term Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz denotes something very precise in Freud, namely, the relation between two types of images, the verbal images (in Freudian terms, the representations of words, Wortvorstellung [word presentation, S.E.]) ‘representing’ the images of things (in Freudian terms, the representations of things, Sachvorstellung [thing presentation, S.E.]). Clearly, that has nothing to do with the instinct representation problematic that this term appeared to conceptualize. But it is quite useless to wonder how the same Freudian concept could be properly applied to the two problems. Clearly, and with reason, one never finds Freud applying the term Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz, nor even Repräsentanz, to the relation between representations of words and of things. This is a fantasy, an extension of the term by means of ‘association of idea’. Now the sole interest of this theoretical ‘displacement’ is in its symptomatic value. In these discussions a term, instinct, has disappeared. This term, however, is essential, for the term Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz is an apex, the normal form of the concept being Repräsentanz (des Triebs) or Trieubrepräsentanz (instinctual representative).

The sense of this lapse, which leaves the function of Repräsentanz operating between representations (Vorstellung), becomes clear in the translation proposed by J. Lacan: ‘tenant lieu de la représentation’ [lit. taking the place of the representation] and by J. P. Valabréga: ‘représentant de la représentation’ [lit. representative of the representative].

The ‘de’ in the above proposed translations is clearly the essential word; it clinches the concept’s shift. The Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz is ‘set on its feet again’, ‘inverted’. What was ‘représentant’ [lit. representative] (Vorstellung) now becomes ‘représenté’ [lit. represented] ‘de’, by a representative which, as such, is nothing in Freudian theory. One must not confuse the interpretation of Freudian thought with the production of new concepts, as in the case of Lacan with respect to the concept of representative, and this is especially true precisely when the newly constructed concept is propped up by the first and even borrows the same terms. The affair is in no way righted by any ‘freedom of interpretation’ of Freud’s text. To translate Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz by ‘tenant lieu de la représentation’ is not an interpretation of Freud; it will be shown to be a nonsense imposed to no purpose on the Freudian text by a completely new concept.
tion can be adequately understood as it is conceived in 1915 only on condition that, on the one hand, we see that it is one of the forms of a function long thematised under analogous forms and that, on the other hand, we see precisely why it occurs in this form in 1915.

It is in *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (Freud, 1950b) that one finds the first theory of this relation in the form of an affirmed dependence of the psychical apparatus with respect to quantities of excitation which are endogenous, that is, they come from within the body. (Freud, 1950b, pp. 297, 303, 313.) The majority of the characteristics which will ultimately be recognised in the instinct are already present; in the first place there is the ‘interiority’, the internal, endogenous and on that account even inevitable character of instinctual excitation which is assuredly its fundamental predicate. One can, however, ask why, after all, ‘endogenous’ and ‘internal’, since on any hypothesis even ‘what comes from “the interior” of the body’ and ‘endogenous excitation’ appear just as exterior to the psychism, to the psychical apparatus, as is ‘external’ excitation, that is, excitation exercised on the body from the exterior. It is no accident that this internal exteriority, namely, excitation coming from the body, should be perceived by Freud as radically internal; at bottom it is not so much internal as perceived to be capable at each instant of erupting into ‘the internal’ par excellence, namely, the psychism. It is therefore both naturally exterior to the psychism in that it comes from the body as an alien and naturally interior so long as it has its ‘direct pathway’ (schutzlos ausgesetzt). (Freud, 1950b, p. 315.) But even this position makes the instinct the ‘spring’ (Triebfeder) of the psychical mechanism, that which ‘sustains all psychical activity’. (Freud, 1950b, p. 317). Freud says nothing different in *Instincts and their Vicissitudes* (Freud, 1951a): ‘We may therefore well conclude that instincts and not external stimuli are the true motive forces behind the advances that have led the nervous system, with its unlimited capacities, to its present high level of development.’ (Freud, 1951a, p. 120.)

The possibility that under these conditions the psychism should be surrendered to the instinct must therefore not conceal the inverse of the situation, namely, that the instinct is in a position constantly to ‘feed’ the psychism. In any case, there results the fundamental fact which demands the analysis of the concept of Repräsentanz: it is plain that the point of departure is always the instinct and that it is always the transformations of the instinct which are in question; the ‘origin’ of all the operations which might be enumerated within the psychical apparatus will always be exterior to it in order to appear there in one manner or another. The question of the nature or rather of the quality of the instincts is a very secondary one in relation to the prime fact that they are what feeds the psychism. Also Freud made no distinction between instincts and/or between needs and instincts. On the same plan sexuality

* The S.E. translation of ‘psychisch’ is sometimes ‘psychical’, sometimes ‘mental’. I have translated ‘psychisch’ as ‘psychical’ throughout. E. H.
raised in essence by a disturbance in the transformation of the energy or of the communication between the two levels. The essential thing remains the movement by means of which undifferentiated energy can come to be represented in psychical form. In the same way, in the theory of psychoneuroses, the instinct is still the point of departure of the analysis, under the form of a sexual excitation which is punctual, initially not connected associatively to a psychical context, and impossible to integrate without a 'working-over' operation. The disturbance does not here concern the economy of the sexual instinct ‘in itself’ (Triebverarmung) (Freud, 1950a, Draft E, pp. 93–4) but the very operation of the passage into the psychism to the extent that it is subject to conditions of time (psychical maturity) which are not observed precisely in the psychoneuroses. The famous ‘seduction’ is at bottom nothing other than the premature operation of this ‘representation’ ['représentance*'] of the sexual instinct as naturally alien body in the psychism. Whatever its nature, the terms of the function of representation have not changed with the bringing to the fore of the sexual instinct. It is still a question of the psychical effect and translation of an instinct conceived as being originally alien and exterior to the psychism. But if the different neuroses lead to disturbances of affects (Affectstörungen) the only relations between the sexual instinct and its form of ‘psychical working-over’ are either relations of total correspondence (to normal puberty) or relations of regular anomaly (in every other anticipated manifestation); the instinct has no history, nor development, as such.

3. The psychical ‘representative’ [représentant] of the instinct

A. From the first edition of Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (Freud, 1970) onwards, the notion of instinct is established as the notion referring nearly exclusively to sexual instinct. And with reason; from the start everything which Freud attributes to the ‘instincts’ in general is a mode of discourse which is in fact constrained by the paradoxes imposed by sexuality (libido). To the exact extent, then, that Freud’s theoretical problem is to determine the nature of the instinct, of instincts, the very concept of instinct will, between 1905 and 1915, undergo an inflection such that it will come to designate not only the instincual and pressuring force which is ‘translated’ into the psychism but also the form of psychical manifestation of this force itself.

‘By “instinct” is provisionally to be understood the psychical representative of an endosomatic, continuously flowing source of stimulation’. (Freud, 1970, p. 34.) The problematic is slightly different, but it starts from the same functional scheme. Until now the problem of the instinct

* At the end of Section 4A, Tort proposes ‘représentance’ as the translation of Repräsentanz. I propose to translate ‘représentance’ as ‘representation’. E. H.

was how endogenous (somatic) stimulation or instinct becomes translated into the psychism as psychical excitation. It is a question of understanding why, quite simply, the instinct here no longer has a psychical translation but itself becomes the psychical representative. There is clearly no contradiction in that. The problem being to determine the nature of the instinct, the instinct appears as a mixed phenomenon to which a dual approach is possible: a physiological-biological approach treating the source of the excitation as a specific chimism, and a psychological approach in so far as the phenomenon of internal excitation reveals properly psychical forms of manifestation. In reality, the instinct is, then, at one and the same time endogenous excitation and psychical manifestation of it, and this is why it is envisaged successively under these two points of view at the beginning of Instincts and their Vicissitudes. If, nevertheless, in the above quotation from Three Essays and on various other occasions for example, in Instincts (Freud, 1915a, p. 122), Freud seems to reserve the name of instinct for the psychical manifestations, it is doubtless by virtue of the more epistemological point of view which he adopts there. (This interpretation is borne out by the fact that Instincts begins with an epistemological discussion.) First the instinct is the ‘psychical representative’ of the excitation for purposes of research into psychic life (psycho-analysis). (Freud, 1915a, p. 122.) Finally, a compromise consists in asserting that the instinct is a borderline concept (Grenzgriff): ‘If we now turn from the biological aspect to consider the psychical life, the ‘instinct’ seems to be a borderline concept between the psychism and the somatic.’ (Freud, 1915a, pp. 121–22, modified.) This dual perspective is possibly not tenable to the end; in any event, the passage from one to the other stays the same mystery previously designated by the ‘transformation’ of energy or the ‘psychical working-over’. Similarly, to speak of ‘psychischer Repräsentanz’ is simply to put a name to a problem.

We shall bear in mind that it in some way conforms to the very nature of the instinct that in theoretical Freudian discourse this term sometimes designates the organic-somatic aspect, sometimes the psychical aspect, and sometimes both. The same goes for the term ‘libido’. Further, we shall see that representative and represented change positions very freely, and that it is not only the term used to designate the function of the passage which may change. For not only are Repräsentant and Repräsentanz used in identical ways but there are also times when Freud uses the terms Vertretung and Vertreter synonymously; for example, ‘We thus form the representation of a quantum of libido to the psychical representation (psychische Vertretung) of which we give the name “ego-libido.”’ (Freud, 1970, p. 83, modified.) Finally, it must be added that later Freud uses the terms Vertretung and Repräsentanz freely and independently, in slightly different contexts, in order to reflect, for example, the relations of the ego to the external world and the relations of the superego to the parental instance, etc.
B. In these matters, no reference is made to representation in the sense of Vorstellung, and it is no accident. Nor is it an accident that the concept of Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz does not appear in Instincts and their Vicissitudes; it could not appear there. The very title of the first of the metapsychological writings has not been sufficiently considered: instincts and vicissitudes of instincts. The sense of Freud's real problematic in 1915 is falsified by the very importance attached to the main text on The Unconscious (Freud, 1915c), which in appearance essentially concerns the future of representations. It can seem, and in a general way it does seem, that repression, for example, is a process which works selectively on representations. This is true, so true that we shall see the consequences of it later. One thing is certain, however. Repression is defined in Instincts as a specific vicissitude of instinct. This makes it clear first that the reality with which we may be dealing in each case is in the last analysis an instinct subject to this or that contingency. 'Psychical working-over', 'psychical manifestation', 'representatives'—these are only conceived by Freud as forms of manifestation of a final reality which is always an instinctual energy. Of course, in the text of Instincts, this quantity is immediately exploded, split up into aims, the partial objects given in representations. It is no less fundamental that just these determinations should be conceived as the predicates of an original, ineradicable reality, when it might have seemed equally plausible to consider these determinations primary or to consider that this term of origin has no sense. This way of posing the problem is supported by a striking usage. The reality whose vicissitudes or transformations theoretical analysis ought to pursue is the instinct itself, under the form of the instinctual impulse (Triebereignung), and never the representation as such. The first line of the text Repression is 'One of the vicissitudes an instinctual impulse may undergo ...' (Freud, 1915b, p. 146.) Similarly, for purposes of subsequently designating the components of the Oedipus complex, Freud reverts always, as if to the sole pertinent units, to the instinctual impulses which constitute it.

4. The concept of Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz

A. In the text of Repression the function whose genesis we have pursued takes a quasi-definitive form in the concept of Repräsentanz and particularly in the concept of Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz. If the problem of the context in which it is introduced is provisionally left on one side, we can clarify the exact sense of the concept. Its first occurrence we know to be in the definition of fixation: 'a fixation is produced when the 'psychische (Vorstellungs-) Repräsentanz des Triebes' is refused access to the conscious.' (Freud, 1915b, p. 9, modified.)

1. 'psychische' refers simply to the fact that the instinct can, as we have seen, be considered from two points of view.

The Freudian Concept of Representative (Repräsentanz)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>somatic</th>
<th>Trieb (instinct)</th>
<th>psychical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grenzbegriff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trieb (1)
(von der biologischen Seite her)

2. 'des Triebes'. The instinct here is no longer Repräsentanz but 'has' something as 'representation'. In reality, in conformity with the ambiguity defined above, this change of position of the instinct is permitted by the dual access structure itself and poses no problem. This is because when Freud says that the instinct is the Repräsentant of the body, he is making the psychical aspect of the instinct the representative of its somatic aspect; further, when, as he does here, Freud speaks of the Repräsentanz des Triebes or Triebrepräsentanz, he is simply deciding to term Trieb (instinct) not by reference to the psychical aspect but the physiological aspect. Clearly, the sense is exactly the same; it is only what is signified that is slightly different.

We have taken the trouble to make explicit this obvious identity only because of the nonsenses that have in a curious way been produced by ignorance of it. The result is that there is no conceptual difference between Repräsentant and Repräsentanz. However, apart from a small difference in connotation, these terms have their uses fixed more precisely from the text of Repression onwards, Repräsentant referring simply to the dual pole structure outlined above and Repräsentanz, in this opposition, determining more the psychical pole in its duality of aspect (Vorstellung, Affect) and tending to designate even these terms through the function of 'representation'.

3. (Vorstellungs-). The dash indicates the paradigmatic term, Affect, which can be pictured like this:

T(1) ───> des Triebes ───> T(2)

TRIEB psychische Repräsentanz Vorstellungs-Affekt

The point can be put more briefly like this. The representation (Vorstellung) 'repräsentiert' [represents] the instinct. (Cf. Freud, 1915b, pp. 152–54f.) and we shall speak of 'Vorstellungsanteil der Repräsentanz' (of the representation element of the representative), the additional 'Anteil' clearly being the affect.

We conclude on this point. 'Repräsentant de la représentation' or
'tenant lieu de la représentation' are possible analytic concepts, but if they are offered as translations of the Freudian concept they are patent nonsenses. It is the representation as such which is 'representation' of the instinct. The translation difficulty remains a real one. We propose 'representation' for Repräsentanz or repräsentant, and for the unique expression 'Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz' we propose, with J. P. Briand, 'représentant-représentation' [lit. representative representation].

B. What has still to be determined is why the concept appears in this form in Repression and what its implications are. As we have already seen, repression in this work is envisaged as an 'instinctual vicissitude', that is, as one vicissitude among others for an instinctual impulse. But it quickly appears that there exists a completely fundamental relation between repression and the conscious/unconscious opposition in the psychical systems. Also, repression is not an instinctual vicissitude which is immediately possible for an instinctual impulse. (Freud, 1915b, p. 147.) In other words, the very particular connection between the 'vicissitude' of repression (as vicissitude of the instinct) and the unconscious future of representations (consciousness/unconsciousness, which, as is pointed out in The Unconscious, has no relation to the instinct as such) requires the production of an intermediate concept which both denotes this dependence with respect to the instinct, the 'instinctual vicissitude' character of repression, and determines, in conformity with clinical experience of repression in neuroses, this function of 'vicissitude' in relation to the representations and affects which are its currency.

This concept is precisely that of Repräsentanz or Triebrepräsentanz; it permits the unification of the theory of instincts properly so called and of their vicissitudes, as elaborated in Three Essays, Narcissism: an Introduction (Freud, 1914) and Instincts and their Vicissitudes, with the theory of the unconscious which is precisely introduced, and deferred, in the paragraph preceding the one in which the concept of Repräsentanz is introduced. From then on the representations and affects on which repression is properly exercised according to the earlier conceptualisation ought to be in some way marked with a sign connoting their being taken from the problematic of an instinctual vicissitude and their return as 'Repräsentanz des Triebes'. Accordingly, where Freud would previously have said simply 'Vorstellung' he means, so as to integrate Vorstellung in theory to the problematic of the instinct, Vorstellungs-Repräsentanz des Triebes. It can now be seen that in consequence Triebrepräsentanz or Repräsentanz are in each case absolutely synonymous with Vorstellung (or with Affekt, but more often with Vorstellung). There is no denying that a restructuring of terminology has been produced, with the text as a precise starting point and in a very clear sense—explicitly emphasising and conceptualising the relation of representations or affects to the instinct.

5. The ambiguity of Repräsentanz

In fact, the operation is more complex and more ambiguous in its signification and its consequences.

1. On the one hand, it is indeed clear that the function of 'representation' of the instinct in the psychosis, whose elaboration has been pursued above, has been more than just clarified when the psychical aspect of the instinct is determined in this way; and this is for a very simple reason. The function was implicitly obeying the idea of something like a deduction of the psychical, with the instinct representing 'itself' in the psychosis. The concept of Repräsentant and the dual perspective structure presuppose this movement of expression (Ausdruck), of manifestation. Now if the 'representative' [repräsentant] is determined as representation (Vorstellung) or as a series of representations, all deduction becomes impossible. The relation between the instinct and its 'representative' (as representation) is no longer one of an essence to its expression or of somatic excitation to its psychical phenomenon (tension) but a binding, a fixation, the meeting, then, of two exterior elements one with another. The problematic of 'instinctual vicissitude', which started from the 'instinct', could only lead to the supplementation of a sort of mythical state of the 'instinct' which was anterior to its psychical representatives, a myth which is realised in the first transformation schemes of somatic energy into psychical energy. In reality, clearly, and this is the meaning of primal repression, it is the meeting, and the psychical determination of the instinct (in a representation, or affect, in which an object and an aim are given) which are primal.

Given which, to say that the instinct can only be grasped in its 'representatives' means that before being fixed (haften) to a signifying element it is pure psychical quantity, that is, nothing. And, in a number of texts, Freud, evoking the problem of the quality of instincts, maintains, 'the instinct as such has no quality; the instincts possess no quality by themselves but exist only as quantity admitting the production of work in psychical life.' (Freud, 1970, p. 34, modified.) In other words, what is described as 'psychical representation' corresponds in fact, no more and no less, to the actual structuration of the instinct, to its actual production in the 'impressions' (Eindrücke) where the 'objects' of the instinct are determined. (Cf. Freud, 1911, pp. 17-18.)

But, to be more precise, that it is à propos repression that this restructuring has taken place is of further significance, namely, that the origin of the instinct is in all rigour the same as that of the 'psychical' instead of being posed in a fallacious anteriority. This must be agreed. That for Freud repression is connected to the Cs/Ucs systems as an instinctual vicissitude means that before this differentiation the instinct can undergo transformations other than repression. Whilst emphasising, then, that Freud cannot produce a theory of the vicissitudes of the
The Freudian Concept of Representative (Repräsentanz)

why he identifies them in this text. But if 'libido' and 'Bestezung' are interchangeable here, it is precisely because this chapter is concerned to take account not only of the Cs/Ucs relations in general but also of the process of repression in the transference neuroses, and because in some respect all the processes in question are considered as transformations of a homogeneous energy, libidinal in this case. Accordingly, one must not think that the two types of energy are confused by Freud in a general way. But, that they are confused in this case is sufficient to pose problems. For the other energies absolutely do not intervene in the analysis, and everything happens as if, in the event of neuroses, the entire quantity of psychic energy of cathexis had in some way 'turned into' libido. Freud knew not to dispose of the concept of their relation when he wrote, 'our method of research, psycho-analysis, for the moment affords us assured information only on the transformations that take place in the object-libido, but is unable to make any immediate distinction between the ego-libido and the other forms of energy operating in the ego.' (Freud, 1970, p. 84).

We conclude as follows:

first, that on any hypothesis the metapsychological description of repression (The Unconscious, Chapter IV) remains that of an instinctual vicissitude in a theory of instincts, on the occasion of which is developed a theory of the relations between the psychical systems; the theory's point of departure is the opening permitted by their functioning in the very particular case of the psychical processes of repression in psycho-neuroses. The theory of neuroses is the theory of the transformations of the libido;

secondly, that the identification of energies does not correspond to a confusion but very precisely to the fact that one is dealing with repression in the neuroses; this fact only raises the question of the distribution and the displacements of the libido aspect of psychic energy;

thirdly, that of course the relation of this sort of energising psychic mass to the other energies in the psychism remains a complete mystery; it cannot be thought, very precisely as a result of the fact that Freud in no way gives us the functional scheme the origin of which has been retraced here and which made sexuality an energising source globally and periodically invading the psychism. It is simply that this scheme takes another form after narcissism has been introduced and with it a complex problematic of the ego: 'We thus form the representation of a quantum of libido to the psychic representation (psychische Vertretung) of which we give the name 'ego-libido.' (Freud, 1970, p. 83, modified.) This first 'translation' is 'followed' by a second: 'This ego-libido is, however, only conveniently accessible to analytic study when it has become object-libido.' (Freud, 1970, p. 83.) In this way the mythical subsistence of the 'instinct' before any determination is in some way geared down or redoubled in the myth of an ego-libido which is defined as alien and 'anterior' to any determination of object.
The psychology only features as a moment in the deductive chain: instinct—ego-libido—object-libido.

The difficulty encountered at the level of the unconscious depends finally on the implicit persistence of the model of the instinct as need, as an energising source which feeds the psychism as it flows and periodically translates into it. This persistence would explain in particular the prime position of the doctrine of instincts in the meta-psychological description. If, therefore, ‘the binding of repression and the unconscious’ required the theory of instinctual vicissitudes to make a detour by way of the theory of the psychical systems, it is in its turn radically determined by the fact that instinct remains ‘first’ in position. This is the profound meaning of the introduction of the economic hypothesis: to reformulate all the processes with a bearing on representations in terms of ‘instinctual representative’, wish impulse, and instinctual impulse. ‘The nucleus of the Ucs consists of instinctual representatives which seek to discharge their cathexes; that is to say, it consists of wishful impulses. These instinctual impulses are co-ordinate with one another, exist side by side without being influenced by one another, and are exempt from mutual contradiction.’ (Freud, 1915c, p. 188.) Coordination, not contradiction; even this many predicates create no problem if one speaks of representations, or even of signifiers and a signifying chain. Freud doubtless considers ‘the looseness of phraseology’ involved in describing the processes as starting from the instinctual impulses and not the representations to be ‘a harmless one.’ (Freud, 1915c, p. 177.) Naturally; but it is not clear what the ‘co-ordination of instinctual impulses’ might mean and it is precisely the insistence of the term which is most characteristic of what must be revealed here, namely, the persistent myth of the anteriority of the instinct which still remains the point of departure of theoretical analysis, the primitive fact. The result is, finally, that when Freud writes that the instinct can be grasped only by its representatives, only as fixed to an object and to a representative, one can see clearly enough in these expressions the proof of the persistence of the model of ‘expression’.

In their article ‘Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality’ J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis (1968) oppose to the theory of fantasy as ‘expression of the instinct’, theory as it has been developed by the Kleinians, by Susan Isaacs in particular, and deriving in direct line from the Freudian scheme, a passage from From the History of an Infantile Disorder (Freud, 1918) in which the nucleus of the unconscious is not determined as instinct but as ‘primitive psychological activity’ which structures sexual life. Here is the passage they cite: ‘it would not be surprising that it should be very particularly concerned with the processes of sexual life, even though it could not be by any means confined to them’ (Freud, 1918, p. 120.) Of course, this primary fantasmatism functioning is still thought in terms of instinct (Instinktiv, Freud, 1918, p. 120.) But as primarily psychic, whereas The Unconscious, in which one finds the same reference to the instinct (Freud, 1915c, p. 195, and quoted by Laplanche and Pontalis), determined the same nucleus of the unconscious as consisting (Cf. above) in ‘instinctual representatives’ which seek to discharge their cathexis. But how far can we agree with Laplanche and Pontalis that ‘far from deriving fantasy from the drives [sc instincts], he preferred to make them dependent on earlier fantasy structures.?’ (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1968, p. 14.) At a primary level of theoretical elaboration of analytic experience, that appears less contentious because the structural interpretation of fantasy is constituted by taking seriously Freud’s own approach as developed in, for example, A Child is Being Beaten. (Freud, 1919.) But precisely this primary level of thematisation is continually and systematically distorted in Freud by the primacy of the theory of instincts when the problem of its ‘foundations’ is being tackled. For every text where the primitive nature of fantasmatism structuration is taken account of, how many are there where fantasmatisation is considered the expression of the instinct? Whatever the case may be, one thing is certain and it is all that ought to be made clear here. It is that the term Repräsentanz belongs to this second level of theoretical elaboration which biologises the signifying operations of the fantasy. In this respect, Susan Isaacs’ theory of fantasy is perfectly ’Freudian’. It has this major interest in showing plainly what could appear ambiguous in Freud, whilst telescoping in some way the two levels of analysis. When Freud explicated fantasy (Level 1), it is always as a Vorstellung (Cf., for example, A Child is Being Beaten, Freud, 1919); the reformulation in terms of psychical expression is generally theoretical (Level 2). Only the term Repräsentanz provides the tenuous thread which guarantees the passage. In Isaacs, the first level is integrally invested with the second; the function of Repräsentanz finds its employment in the absolutely homological and reversible structure of the ‘instinctual pressure’ and of the fantasy.

6. The biological hypostasis

This ambiguity appears to be central in Freudian thought. It corresponds to an indisputable divorce between the elaboration of clinical experience of neuroses (or of psychoses) and the theory or doctrine of the instincts which Freud styled mythology and whose necessarily speculative character he argued.

1. This distance is nowhere better illustrated than in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (Freud, 1920) where the compulsion to repeat is analysed in the first instance at the signifying level at which it is manifested and in the second instance is ‘founded’ in an entirely speculative and ‘biological’ theory of the nature of the instinct. Once again, the representation (Vorstellung) or the effect is simply the place where there is ‘represented’ (repräsentiert) an activity which leads mythically to the

31
level of an ‘organic’ instinct. A number of concepts are at work at the two levels, sometimes designating a concrete process exercised on the representations, the affects, sometimes designating the ‘essence’ of the process, the biological. Thus ‘fixation’ and ‘susceptibility to fixation’, which were rigorously defined in Repression as the encounter of a signifying element and an instinctual quantity, in other places become predicates of the instinct in itself, an index of its ‘viscosity’ [adhesiveness, S.E.], of its inertia, etc. (Cf. for example, Freud, 1970, p. 108, p. 112n.)

2. The case of the concept of aim (instinctual) is very illuminating. This concept was elaborated in Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and in Instincts and their Vicissitudes, with psycho-analytic experience as the point of departure. (Freud, 1915a, p. 122.) This is illuminating because the first discussion of the Trieb from the biological point of view made nothing like an aim or an object appear. Briefly, there is no ‘organic’ instinct to be ‘expressed’, represented by an ‘aim’ at the psychical level. This is to say that in its organic phenomenon the instinct comprises nothing, nothing to be ‘translated’, nothing analogous to what surfaces in the analysis as instinctual aim. Now the mythologising and biologicalising of the instinct will be exactly conducive to the appearance of the aim at the ‘organic’ level; then it will be possible to speak of the ‘aim’ of Eros, or of the destructive instinct, the ‘final’ aims of the instinct. The single character of finality, even finality in reverse as in the case of the death instinct, would suffice to show that this conception has nothing to do with the rigorous concept of instinctual aim which is delimited in Three Essays and which is characterised precisely by the absence of reference to any ‘finality’. The theory of sexuality as instinct was in fact possible only through the critique of a biologist which the theory of instincts perpetually tends to reintroduce by making psychical phenomena a simple phenomenon, reaction (Cf. An Outline of Psycho-Analysis, Freud, 1940, pp. 184–87), ‘a psychical expression’ of a process, of biological conflicts.

3. In the same way, the Outline states that if ‘the weak point in the ego’s organisation seems to lie in its attitude to the sexual function’ it is because everything takes place ‘as though the biological antithesis between self-preservation and the preservation of the species had found a psychological expression at that point.’ (Freud, 1940, p. 186, my italics.) Now it is clear not only that the term ‘psychological expression’ (psychologischen Ausdruck) designates as always a genuine mystery but also that the comparison sketched here is superficial, purely analogous, manifesting only the Freudian need to find a biological correspondence, when the relation between the instinct and the ego is rightly a problem only because sexuality as instinct is at least irrelevant to the question of the preservation of the species (as Freud was the first to point out, to perfection, in the Three Essays).

4. The concept Repräsentanz appears as one of the artificial devices elaborated by Freud to express a parallelism between the organic and the psychical, the biological and the psychical, or instincts and representations. Now this parallelism is contradictory and untenable, because it demands the biologicalisation of the instinct and the subversion of concepts which are properly analytic in so far as they determine in sexuality an instinct—the sole instinct—which is a reality foreign to the ‘function’. In other words, the Freudian theory of instincts is founded on a genuine paradox, namely, the continual transferring to the ‘biological’ side of all the particular characteristics which clinical analysis discovers in sexuality as instinct. Freud does not fail to perceive that the parallelism is impossible precisely because it is a matter of defining, in the moment of anacrisis, the specificity of sexuality. ‘To begin with, all psychical activity is concentrated on providing satisfaction for the needs of that zone. Primarily, of course, this satisfaction serves the purpose of self-preservation by means of nourishment; but physiology should not be confused with psychology. The baby’s obstinate persistence in sucking gives evidence at an early stage of a need for satisfaction which, though it originates from and is instigated by the taking of nourishment, nevertheless strives to obtain pleasure independently of nourishment and for that reason may and should be termed sexual.’ (Freud, 1940, pp. 153–4.) But if the reversibility of these points of view, the reversibility of the structure of representation, disintegrates visibly here at the essential point in the theoretical chain, it must be added that elsewhere the very specificity of what can be termed ‘the effect of sexual instinct’ is ‘founded’ in a particular chemism of sexual excitation. (Freud, 1970, p. 81.)

5. The introduction of the second topic leads to a restructuring of the relation between instinctual energy and the psyche which is situated entirely in the same theoretical line and is in some sort confined to the gearing down of the psychical expression of the instincts, as indicated very characteristically by a passage from the Outline which related to the Id: ‘It contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, that is laid down in the constitution,—above all, therefore, the instincts, which originate from the somatic organisation and which find a first psychical expression here [in the Id] in forms unknown to us.’ (Freud, 1940, p. 145.) The series of transformations which Laplanche and Pontalis describe in the work of Susan Isaacs applies integrally to this point in connection with Freud: ‘The biological subject is in a direct line of continuity with the subject of fantasy, the sexual, human subject, in accordance with the series: soma—→id—→fantasy (of desire, of defence)—ego mechanism.’ (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1968, p. 14.) One can see how, from the body to the ego, via the Id, the model of the homogeneous transformation of energy is developed, the essential passage from the instinct as somatic process to the Id as psychical process remaining as always as ‘natural’ as it is enigmatic.

6. This deductive series, however, could not by itself take account
of the real relations instituted by Freud between the body, the instinct and the psyche. This is, first, because as the actual functioning of the psychical apparatus it can rightly be reversed according to the sense and go of an imaginary line, and secondly, because the instinct does not totally represent whatever of the body is represented to the psyche. This reversal, which is even more important in that it is thematised from the start by Freud and further in that it is explicitly designated with the same term, Repräsentanz, takes on its clearest form in the writings on the second topic. The differentiation of the ego and of the Id and perhaps more than anything the figuration of the psychical apparatus permit the clarification of first, the fundamental symmetry between the relations instinct/Id and the external world/ego, which are all relations of representation (Repräsentanz), and secondly, the ambiguity of the relation ego/body.

(a) The relation ego/external world is even more analogous to the Repräsentanz of the instinct in the Id, but in deriving more or less from a mechanistic model of the reflex arc, it is also discrete, over the forms of passage into the psyche. To the obscure continuity of instinctual energy and of psychical energy corresponds the no less enigmatic obscurity of external energy and of psychical motive energy.

(b) The relation ego/body, by contrast, shatters the economic model of the Repräsentanz. Between the body and the ego as Körper-ich (and it is a well-known fact that the ego is said to be above all ‘Körperliche’) no relation of ‘expression’ as previously defined is conceivable. It is no longer a question, it can be no longer a question of some form of translation derived from the transformation model but of an absolutely new relation with a physiological concept of ‘projection’ or ‘cerebral representation’ providing the analogous model which (but for the concept) is itself biological.

(c) In the same way that the Vorstellung is taken from the area of the instinct, in a series of transformations as a form of manifestation, a psychical expression of it, taken, that is, from the area opposed to the psychical apparatus, so it is taken in an inverse series as the redoubling of perception: ‘we must recollect that all presentations originate from perceptions and are repetitions of them.’ (Freud, 1925, p. 237.) The reproduction of perception in representation hangs exactly on the psychical representation of the instinct.

It must be noted, lastly, that the existence of a double series clearly leaves nothing changed in the problem of representation since the status of the passage from one term to another in one or the other sense is equally at issue.

7. But the consequences of the scheme of representation go further. As we have seen, indeed, the relation of the libido to the ‘other psychical energies’ which designates, still in terms of energy, the relation between the instinct and the psyche in general and, at bottom, the insufficiency of the ‘deduction’, stayed quite obscure in 1915. To the extent that

Freud has reaffirmed the instinctual dualism by distinguishing two fundamental instinctual sources, namely, life-instinct (Eros) and death-instinct, the problem of their relation, in particular with respect to the transformation of love into hate, requires that the hypothesis be made of a displacable (verschiebar) psychical energy which is purely quantitative, that is, which is determined neither as libidinal energy nor as ‘destructive energy’. Now on close examination the Freudian solution (Freud, 1923, p. 44) is quite remarkable, consisting in maintaining at one and the same time both that there is indeed such an undifferentiated psychical energy and that it proceeds from a desexualisation. In this way the deduction of psychical energy and in a general manner of the psychical processes starting from the instinct, such as has been made more explicit here, is retained in full. But it is at the price of a paradox, namely, imputing to initial sexual energy (Eros) as such the psychical characteristics which conceptualised the structuration of the sexual instinct by the psyche (the concept of displacement over objects); in future the term ‘displaceability’ is used. After this, in the second instance, these characteristics are found once again, as if by good fortune, in psychical energy itself, under the heading of products of a ‘desexualisation’. Yet one might express this procedure by saying that the signifying psychical structure which, in the case of sexuality alone, produces the instinctual phenomena and their characteristics (the absence of functional binding to an object and the shift from ‘objects’ to ‘objects’ by means of the signifying chain) is in Freud, by virtue of the model of the transformation of the instincts, realised in the instinct as ‘organic’, then ‘expressed’, and ‘rediscovered’ in the psychical processes as ‘expression’. This expression, in order to be redoubled, remains equally obscure at the two levels, that is, from instinct to Id (the passage to psychical energy) and from Id to ego (new expression: ‘desexualisation’).

The theory of sublimation is developed very logically in this same line of representation. It is not so surprising if the ‘displacements’ of the thought processes (Denkvorgänge) (Freud, 1923, p. 45) realise the ‘displaceability’ of the sexual instincts to the best advantage, since in reality the structure of these instincts results well and truly from a ‘biological’ realisation of the thought processes in so far as they structure sexuality. Nowhere else, certainly, do the obscurity of the deductive schema, the inadequate character of the primacy of the instinct, and the confused concept of the transformation of energies appear more clearly. But it is clear, at the same time, that the problem raised by this notion of sublimation is in no way the problem of knowing how to double the scheme of a deduction of the thought processes beginning with the instinct by a teleology of consciousness. Without discussing the vulgar ideological aim of the operation, it is clear that in its great haste it deems incontrovertible the very thing which must be doubted in order to think sublimation differently and, this time, without a trace of ideology,
namely, the scheme of representence which institutes nothing other than a pseudo-teleology of the ‘instinct’.

8. In short, all the difficulties raised by the concept and the function designated in the term Repräsentanz come very precisely from the fact that the differential character of sexuality as instinct, that is, as instinctual only, in relation to needs and functions, can only be marked in Freudian theory by a biological, organic particularity of sexuality (a specific chemism with difference in the source, in the quality of instincts, as is the case with the concept of anachysis), when this particularity appears to be able with difficulty to take account of the psychical manifestations of sexuality in a way which is not arbitrary. The notion of Repräsentanz, like those which preceded it in Freud’s elaboration, is fit for designating the reversibility of the point of view between the organic manifestation which is at the origin of a need and its psychical manifestation under the form of an undifferentiated tension. But is not what distinguishes sexuality the determination, the severance of this tension itself by representations in which there are given objects that are impossible to deduce from the organic modification as such? Freud himself saw this in certain texts where he refused to attribute a quality to the instinct as organic phenomenon. The ambiguity of the notion of instinct is thus resumed in the rather badly revealed problem of the quality of instincts which Freud takes up periodically. Finally, exactly in as much as sexuality is not even a specific need it dispenses of this very particular ‘psychical expression’. The use of this expression therefore results from a sort of compromise between the accepted specificity of sexuality and the persistent application of the model of expression which is of value for the other needs. This in turn implies the projection into the organic aspect of sexuality of the difference noted at the level of its ‘psychical manifestations’ (which are observable only in clinical experience).

On the other hand, the fact that, in considering biology the model of (inaccessible) scientificity for an essentially provisional psycho-analytic theory, Freud should finish up with pure speculation is sufficient to indicate without ambiguity that this ‘biology’ is an ideological myth, the escatology of psycho-analysis. The very necessity, emphasised by Freud, of the speculative character of this biology of the instincts is the seal which designates it ideology; it is, to parody Freud, its ‘made in Ideology’. A form of scientificity which can only be imported into a domain in a speculative form is ideological for sure. It is a familiar looking business. Biological evolutionism, then, the ideological product of biological theory is imported into the most diverse fields at the cost of the specific objects’ being produced there.

One must appreciate that it was in a way much more difficult to produce a concept of this specificity in psycho-analytic theory of the instincts than it was for Marx, faced with the same ideology, to reject the Darwinism of historical materialism. Indeed, one must lend all support to the Freudian declaration that before psychoanalysis there was quite simply no theory of the instincts. That means that the reality of the instinct was at first necessarily thought as biological and that it is as such that the instinct has been the very instrument of the epistemological break of Freudism. The irruption of sexuality into the psychism, which is the foundation of the model of Repräsentanz, is the same irruption of the ‘instinct’ under a biological travesty in ‘psychology’. If, more than elsewhere perhaps, the theory ought to be explicated here in the language of its break, it is equally the case that in certain respects this language had in itself rupture value. This, moreover, is why it would be necessary to agree on the term ‘biologism’. If there is no question of deductively engendering the entire life of fantasy beginning with the sexual instinct, one is not prevented from seeing, in a certain deficiency in sexuality as ‘instinct’ in man which has as its consequence a remarkable indetermination of the sexual life, one is not, to repeat, prevented from seeing here the condition of biological possibility of the enactment of the life of fantasy, and this without any a priori deduction of the ‘origin’ of that specific phenomenon, a represented sexuality. In other words, in Marx’s case, biological ideology is in a much looser relation to the theory of history than is possible in the psycho-analytic theory of the instincts. This is not only for historical reasons relating to the constitution of the theory but also for intrinsic reasons. It is because biology can function only in part as speculative ideology in the case of the instinct. The problem today is precisely to separate clearly the theory and its ideological formulations whilst roting the Freudian break and its true effect, instead of taking them literally and humming a homogenised Freudian tune. Instinct analysed in aim, object, source and pressure is a concept but not a biological concept. The instinct hypothesised at the start of an investigation into the ultimate nature of the Trieb (Freud, 1920, p. 34) is a speculative ideology; it is improperly and entirely nourished by clinical material and in addition deprived, like biology, of all biological (scientific) meaning.

In conclusion, then, the concept of Repräsentanz, to the extent that it is still caught up in a problematic of the deduction of the psychism beginning with the biological and in a problematic of the reversibility of psychical and biological points of view, is not a rigorous concept but the ideological designation of an absolutely new relation between sexuality as instinct and the representation imposed by clinical experience. In addition, this ideological character of the biology of the instincts does not merely constitute a theoretical illusion. It takes at least partial account of a certain mode of psycho-analytic interpretations when they do not directly concern the clinic, that is, more precisely, their tendency to be transformed into psychologist geneses. This difficult problem will get no further treatment here but one can at least pose in a hypothetical way that the model of the deduction of the psychical and of the ‘expression’ of instincts constitutes precisely the base-scheme which requires
the psychologist gloss for psycho-analytic thought. Psycho-analytic interpretation can avoid this step only by conceiving the 'instinctual' libidinal structuration as the structuration of an object which can be articulated in other determinations.

These ideological consequences are not surprising. The ideological model, with its (ideological) determination of the object, introduces a whole set of elements and in particular a mode of causality and a certain type of equally ideological time. Briefly, to the exact extent to which the specific object of psycho-analysis is subjected to the distortion of an ideology, the theory of its relation to the other types of interpretation or structuration capable of producing equally specific objects is just as distorted. The wildly ideological character of certain analytic interpretations in the domain of 'culture' has no other epistemological foundation than the linearity of the theoretical scheme which has been exposed here. This will be discussed in another work.

Translated by Elizabeth Hindess.

Notes

1. Cf. 'We know this power as the 'will’—the derivative of the instincts.' (Freud, 1920b, p. 317.)

2. There is no opposition in Freud between needs and instincts, which is to say that sexuality is one of the 'instincts' (like hunger and respiration). The difference between sexuality and the other instincts therefore lies in the interior of the concept of instinct. By the same token we understand the obscurity of the Freudian concept of instinct. All the predicates of organic 'functions' are imputed to the sexual instinct, whilst the problematic opened up by the only instinct, sexuality, is generalised over the functions or needs which are called instincts. Sexuality is therefore a need (Bedürfnis). The only difference between the terms of instinct and need which has been established by Freud (Freud, 1915a, pp. 118-19.) is possibly that 'need' connotes specifically the psychical manifestation of instinctual excitation, the instinct designating both aspects. Under these conditions one can understand how Freud can speak of 'instinctual needs' (Triebbedürfnis, Freud, 1915a, p. 119) without the slightest difficulty.

3. So, 'a fixation consisting in the fact that the psychical representative (-representation) [le représentant (-représentation)] of the instinct,.' (Freud, 1915b, p. 148, modified.)

4. 'It seems to us now that, in view of the very great extent to which repression and what is unconscious are correlated, we must defer probing more deeply into the nature of repression until we have learnt more about the structure of the succession of psychical agencies...' (Freud, 1915b, pp. 147-8)

5. Or the affect, of course, in so far as affects and representations have the fact that they are both signifiers in common.

6. Since Freud, deferring the real analysis, writes, 'Till then, all we can do is to put together a purely descriptive fashion a few characteristics of repression that have been observed clinically, even though we run the risk of having to repeat unchanged much that has been said elsewhere.' (Freud, 1915b, p. 148)

7. Indeed, even when in 1915 Freud is closest to a monism and to the

Abbreviations


References

Freud, S. (1910) Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoide), S.E., 12.
Freud, S. (1915c) The Unconscious, S.E., 14.
Unproblematic archaeology*

Karel Williams

Foucault, M., A Review The Archaeology of Knowledge*

The English have long managed to consign the problem of reading and writing to the primary school. But at last in this country, the problem of reading has become a pressing concern for a few who work on the margins of, and in opposition to, social science, history and literary criticism. New questions are being asked. What is it to read a text, and correspondingly to write? What techniques are to be used? What is the object of a reading? It is in the light of these new concerns that this article considers the work of Michel Foucault.

Foucault has produced three major historical studies—*Histoire de la Folie, Naisance de la Clinique, Les Mots et les Choses*—dealing mainly with pre-scientific theoretical ideologies which between 1500 and 1900 took man, or the attributes of man, as a problem (Foucault, 1961, 1973, 1966). At least this is so on an impressionistic characterisation which is contrary to Foucault's argument that man is a nineteenth century invention (Foucault, 1970: 303-43). A difference between Foucault and History of Ideas and Science can hardly be overlooked. The three studies provide conclusions which are radically different from those of History of Ideas: they are resolutely discontinuist, anti-teleological and anti-realist. This body of work is rounded off by a fourth text, *L'Archéologie du Savoir* (1969), an explicitly theoretical work which on Foucault's own claims deals with 'what made it possible to say what I did' in the earlier studies (1972: 114). The last text clearly also establishes a difference between Foucault and his fellow 'progressives'—the Structuralists and Louis Althusser—who, like Foucault, reject the History of Ideas and Science.

This article will argue that what is at stake in these differences is a difference about theories of reading. Its aim is to elucidate the difference about reading which has been imperfectly appreciated.

Most of Foucault's work is now available in translation and there is no language barrier to be surmounted. But there is little English criticism of his work. Even the best of the body of criticism has distinct limitations. Hussain very much brings Foucault to the Althusserian bar and condemns him for not having a science/ideology distinction (Hussain, 1971). While Whyte collapses all of Foucault's work into *Les Mots et les Choses* and extracts a prison house of language thesis (Whyte, 1973).

Of course, it may be argued that what the English say or do not say about Foucault does not matter because there must be sufficient critical