

Part I

Eroticism

There is something almost perverse about beginning *The Masculinity Studies Reader* with a section on eroticism, since it remains among the most difficult and vexed of terms. No concept appears simultaneously more transparent and more obscure. None seems more decisive yet more incidental for the construction of masculinity. None so radically undermines oppositions between gender and sexuality, between the psychic and the social. Both a mode of desire and of sexual practice, eroticism is commonly understood – like masculinity itself – in terms of the binary categories of homo- and heterosexuality. Yet, as the essays by David Halperin and Roger Lancaster demonstrate, these designations are historically contingent and severely limited in their applicability. Likewise, eroticism is commonly described as either a psychological or a social phenomenon. Yet the essays in this section implicitly or explicitly undermine the distinction between the two by proving eroticism to be the most destabilizing and unpredictable of terms.

We begin the *Reader* with psychoanalysis because it remains central to most attempts to theorize the relationship between masculinity and eroticism. The publication of Sigmund Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* in 1905 revolutionized the study of gender, eroticism, and childhood sexuality. Although Freud's work is heavily indebted to nineteenth-century sexology and his own previous studies of hysteria, *Three Essays* lays out theories of sexual development and categorizes the so-called sexual aberrations in a highly systematic way, going to great lengths to challenge then-prevailing notions of congenital and essentialized sexual predispositions. Freud maintains instead that psychic structures are socially produced, principally (but by no means exclusively) by the nuclear family. And his theories of eroticism and desire are inextricably linked to the study of masculinity and male subjectivity. As a result of these arguments, *Three Essays* has had an incalculable impact on subsequent scholarship on gender, particularly work committed to analyzing the psychoanalytic dimensions of sexuality. Even those who rightly critique Freud for being masculinist or bourgeois offer alternative theories of subject formation in the shadow of *Three Essays*.

Like so much recent work on eroticism, *Three Essays* testifies to the difficulty in separating gender from sexuality, masculinity from the male

anatomy. For much of the twentieth century, for example, effeminacy has been considered a privileged marker of male homosexuality. Yet history teaches us that this connection is far more tenuous than it often seems. As the product of a society in which the very concept of sexual orientation was ill-defined and in flux, Freud never completely worked out the relationship between gender and sexuality. In the first of the essays, he observes that homosexuality is not always accompanied by gender deviance, but in the third, "The Transformations of Puberty," which most explicitly attempts to theorize gender identity in relation to desire, he simply takes heterosexuality for granted. There he analyzes how children take up opposed – and heterosexualized – gendered positions by rejecting incestuous attachments to their own parents. The mechanism for this transformation is the Oedipus complex, which demands that the child identify with and imitate the parent of its own sex and desire the parent of the opposite sex (and later, a surrogate for that parent). In charting the transformations of the child's libido as it moves beyond the nuclear family, Freud shows how the normative system of gender requires that desire be decisively separated from identification. That is, once someone has identified as a man, he must, by definition, desire women.

Although the resolution of the Oedipus complex grants a primacy to heterosexual relations, Freud's theorization of homosexuality is curiously contradictory and far less condemnatory than that of the sexologists who preceded him. On the one hand, he classifies it as a pathology and sexual aberration; on the other, he insists that all human beings are innately bisexual. Not only are they "capable of making a homosexual object choice," but "have in fact made one in their unconscious" (1962: 11). Yet Freud's theory never accounts for the centrality of heterosexuality. It requires that the subject internalize the prohibition against homosexuality before the incest taboo by proposing that a child can be successfully Oedipalized only if he or she has previously forsaken desire for the parent of the same sex. But he never explains in psychic terms why homosexual object choices in most individuals are suppressed. Decades later, scholars of sexuality would return to Freud's complex and often sympathetic writings about homosexuality to develop more consistent psychoanalytic accounts of male eroticism.

When Freud turns in *Three Essays* to questions of gender identity, he is forced to admit "that the concepts of 'masculine' and 'feminine'...are among the most confused that occur in science" and he carefully distinguishes among different uses of the terms. Yet his assertion that "pure masculinity or femininity is not to be found either in a psychological or biological sense" is contradicted by his somewhat reductive, if widely influential, understanding of sexual difference and desire. Like many before and after, Freud understands sexual difference to be a result of the presence or absence of the penis. He argues that because the penis is decisive for the production of sexual identity, male and female, both sexes may be subject to what he calls the castration complex. In males, this results from a (mistaken) belief that females are castrated and males' anxiety that they could fall victim to a similar fate. In females, this complex is linked to

what Freud – notoriously and controversially – calls penis envy, the desire to be male, which is sometimes accompanied by what he describes as a “masculinity complex in women” when the latter “refuse to accept the fact of being castrated” (1953: 191). Because the castration complex defines women entirely by their relation to the penis, it leads Freud to a conclusion that has long troubled feminists: “libido is invariably and necessarily of a masculine nature, whether it occurs in men or in women” (1962: 85).

Beginning in the 1930s, Freud’s theories of gender, sexuality, and subject formation were revisited (and in some cases, radically revised) by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan who arguably has been even more important than Freud for theorizing the relationship between men and masculinity. Although Lacan defies easy summarization, he is perhaps most important for his insistence on the primacy of language, his theorization of gender and desire as the products – and producers – of signifying systems. The linchpin to Lacan’s theory is the mirror stage during which the child understands itself as an autonomous subject for the first time. Seeing its reflection, the child (mis)recognizes itself as a complete being and assumes “the armour of an alienating identity” (1977: 4). This stage marks the separation of subject from object, self from other, and signals the child’s entrance into what Lacan calls the symbolic, that order of representations and linguistic signs by which meaning is produced. The mirror stage also inaugurates desire, which Lacan understands as the product of loss, the absence of the mother and the plenitude she represents. Thus for both Freud and Lacan, eroticism is always founded on a desire (for the mother) that can never be satisfied.

One aspect of the work of both Freud and Lacan that has had a tremendous impact on masculinity studies is their conceptualization of sexual difference and eroticism in visual (or specular) terms. Thus, even the essays in this anthology that analyze purely linguistic texts routinely focus on visual signs. For Freud, sexual difference is founded on the recognition of the penis – or lack of it. For Lacan, the entrance into subjectivity is the result of a specular (mis)recognition. Moreover, one of the most important contributions of Lacanian psychoanalysis to studies of eroticism is its elaboration of the difference between the visible and the invisible, the penis and the phallus. The Lacanian phallus is not an organ but a sign, a privileged symbol of patriarchal power and authority that becomes associated with the penis, but cannot be that with which it is associated. As Elizabeth Grosz notes, “the phallus is the valorized signifier around which both men and women define themselves” (1990: 116). The fact that the penis is phantasmatically linked to, but cannot become, the phallus, is a source of considerable anxiety. Following Freud, Lacanian psychoanalysis proposes that because no subject can actually possess the phallus, both men and women suffer the mark of castration, albeit in different ways. Men and women in a patriarchal society usually take up complementary positions of desiring subject and desired object; the one performs as if she “has” the phallus; the other as if he “is” it. Kaja Silverman’s essay on male masochism demonstrates the potential for translating Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis into feminist terms. According to Silverman, male eroticism is

always articulated in relation to castration, to the impossibility of ever really having the phallus. She focuses on masochistic – non-phallic, wounded, or vulnerable – masculinities because they make visible the lack at the center of male subjectivity, thus posing a radical threat to a phallicized masculinity and to sexual difference itself.

As the essays in this section attest, psychoanalysis does not provide the only account of masculine eroticism. Among the approaches that challenge psychoanalytical explanations of male desire and sexuality, the most influential have been provided by social scientists and, more recently, by various elaborations of Foucauldian historicism within the humanities. Both represent forms of social constructionism that differ radically from the Freudian and Lacanian paradigms. The sociological (or anthropological) models theorize subjectivity in a dialectical relationship to social formations, which both produce and are produced by the subject. Like Roger Lancaster's essay in this volume, they usually foreground the social, economic, and political construction of identity, while de-emphasizing psychic and familial structures. Lancaster's fieldwork on machismo in Nicaragua pluralizes sexual identities, demonstrating that the modern American or European understanding of heterosexual masculinity makes little sense in other parts of the world.

Michel Foucault's influential *History of Sexuality* has provided scholars in the humanities with another alternative to the psychoanalytic study of eroticism, one that has been particularly important to lesbian/gay/queer studies. Foucault shares the sociological skepticism about psychoanalysis and fascination with historical discontinuities. But particularly in his later works, he becomes distrustful of any and all totalizing systems, especially the economic determinism, invocation of science, and notion of linear historical development of certain orthodox Marxisms. At the same time, it was Foucault, more than any other theorist, who was responsible for historicizing sexuality. For example, he argued that the homosexual is not a universal type but an invention of the nineteenth century, a new "species" whose "sexuality" was believed to be "at the root of all his [*sic*] actions because it was their insidious and indefinitely active principle" (1980: 43). The more varied history of sexuality provided by Foucault is a foundation for work such as David Halperin's study of male sexual practices in classical Athens. Instead of connecting sexual acts to personal identity, Halperin argues, as is the case with the modern categories of homo- and heterosexuality, the ancient Greeks defined sex in relation to citizenship.

Despite the diversity of approaches taken by the authors of the essays in this section, all could be said to endorse modes of constructionism, which assert that eroticism is not an essential quality of self but a set of practices and desires formed (often in unpredictable ways) through the subject's interaction with family and society. And despite their divergent attitudes toward psychoanalysis, all could be said to be analyzing the positioning of the phallus, understood as both a signifier of desire and a particular kind of socially sanctioned, patriarchal – but not necessarily heterosexualized – masculinity. Even those writers who reject the vocabulary of psychoanalysis still make use of, and sometimes explicitly problematize, the binary oppos-

itions between “having” and “being,” masculinity and femininity, subject and object, activity and passivity. Their work demonstrates that eroticism remains as indefinite and historically contingent a category as masculinity itself.

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I

Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes

Sigmund Freud

In my own writings and in those of my followers more and more stress is laid upon the necessity for carrying the analyses of neurotics back into the remotest period of their childhood, the time of the early efflorescence of sexual life. It is only by examining the first manifestations of the patient's innate instinctual constitution and the effects of his earliest experiences that we can accurately gauge the motive forces that have led to his neurosis and can be secure against the errors into which we might be tempted by the degree to which they have become remodelled and overlaid in adult life. This requirement is not only of theoretical but also of practical importance, for it distinguishes our efforts from the work of those physicians whose interests are focussed exclusively upon therapeutic results and who employ analytic methods, but only up to a certain point. An analysis of early childhood such as we are considering is tedious and laborious and makes demands both upon the physician and upon the patient which cannot always be met. Moreover it leads us into dark regions where there are as yet no sign-posts. Indeed, analysts may feel reassured, I think, that there is no risk of their work becoming mechanical, and so of losing its interest, during the next few decades.

In the following pages I bring forward some findings of analytical research which would be of great importance if they could be proved to apply universally. Why do I not postpone publication of them until further experience has given me the necessary proof, if such proof is obtainable? Because the conditions under which I work have undergone a change, with implications which I cannot disguise. Formerly, I was never one of those who are unable to hold back what seems to be a new discovery until it has been either confirmed or corrected. My *Interpretation of Dreams* [1900] and my "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" [1905] (the case of Dora) were suppressed by me – if not for the nine years enjoined by Horace – at all events for four or five years before I allowed them to be published. But in those days I had unlimited time before me and material poured in upon me in such quantities that fresh experiences were hardly to be escaped. Moreover, I

was the only worker in a new field, so that my reticence involved no danger to myself and no risk of loss to others.

But now everything has changed. The time before me is limited. The whole of it is no longer spent in working, so that my opportunities for making fresh observations are not so numerous. If I think I see something new, I am uncertain whether I can wait for it to be confirmed. And further, everything that is to be seen upon the surface has already been exhausted; what remains has to be slowly and laboriously dragged up from the depths. Finally, I am no longer alone. An eager crowd of fellow-workers is ready to make use of what is unfinished or doubtful, and I can leave to them that part of the work which I should otherwise have done myself. On this occasion, therefore, I feel justified in publishing something which stands in urgent need of confirmation before its value or lack of value can be decided.

In examining the earliest mental shapes assumed by the sexual life of children we have been in the habit of taking as the subject of our investigations the male child, the little boy. With little girls, so we have supposed, things must be similar, though in some way or other they must nevertheless be different. The point in development at which this difference lay could not clearly be determined.

In boys the situation of the Oedipus complex is the first stage that can be recognized with certainty. It is easy to understand, because at that stage a child retains the same object which he previously cathected with his pregenital libido during the preceding period while he was being suckled and nursed. The further fact that in this situation he regards his father as a disturbing rival and would like to get rid of him and take his place is a straightforward consequence of the actual state of affairs. I have shown elsewhere [“The Passing of the Oedipus Complex”] how the Oedipus attitude in little boys belongs to the phallic phase, and how it succumbs to the fear of castration, that is, to narcissistic interest in their own genitals. The matter is made more difficult to grasp by the complicating circumstance that even in boys the Oedipus complex has a double orientation, active and passive, in accordance with their bisexual constitution; a boy also wants to take his *mother's* place as the love-object of his *father* – a fact which we describe as the feminine attitude.

As regards the prehistory of the Oedipus complex in boys we are far from complete clarity. We know that that period includes an identification of an affectionate sort with the boy's father, an identification which is still free from any sense of rivalry in regard to his mother. Another element of that stage is invariably, I believe, a masturbatory stimulation of the genitals, the masturbation of early childhood, the more or less violent suppression of which by the persons in charge of the child sets the castration complex in action. It is to be assumed that this masturbation is attached to the Oedipus complex and serves as a discharge for the sexual excitation belonging to it. It is, however, uncertain whether the masturbation has this character from the first, or whether on the contrary it makes its first appearance spontaneously as an activity of a bodily organ and is only brought into relation with the Oedipus complex at some later date; this second possibility is by far the more probable. Another doubtful question is the part played by bed-wetting and by the breaking of that habit through the intervention of training measures. We are inclined to adopt the simple generalization that continued bed-wetting is a result of masturbation and that its suppression is regarded by boys as an inhibition of their genital activity, that is, as having the meaning of a threat of

castration; but whether we are always right in supposing this remains to be seen. Finally, analysis shows us in a shadowy way how the fact of a child at a very early age listening to his parents copulating may set up his first sexual excitation, and how that event may, owing to its after-effects, act as a starting-point for the child's whole sexual development. Masturbation, as well as the two attitudes in the Oedipus complex, later on become attached to this early experience, the child having subsequently interpreted its meaning. It is impossible, however, to suppose that these observations of coitus are of universal occurrence, so that at this point we are faced with the problem of "primal phantasies." Thus the prehistory of the Oedipus complex, even in boys, raises all of these questions for sifting and explanation; and there is the further problem of whether we are to suppose that the process invariably follows the same course, or whether a great variety of different preliminary stages may not converge upon the same terminal situation.

In little girls the Oedipus complex raises one problem more than in boys. In both cases the mother is the original object; and there is no cause for surprise that boys retain that object in the Oedipus complex. But how does it happen that girls abandon it and instead take their father as an object? In pursuing this question I have been able to reach some conclusions which may throw light upon the prehistory of the Oedipus relation in girls.

Every analyst has come across certain women who cling with especial intensity and tenacity to the bond with their father and to the wish in which it culminates of having a child by him. We have good reason to suppose that the same wishful phantasy was also the motive force of their infantile masturbation, and it is easy to form an impression that at this point we have been brought up against an elementary and unanalysable fact of infantile sexual life. But a thorough analysis of these very cases brings something different to light, namely, that here the Oedipus complex has a long prehistory and is in some respects a secondary formation.

The old paediatrician Lindner once remarked that a child discovers the genital zones (the penis or the clitoris) as a source of pleasure while indulging in sensual sucking (thumb-sucking)¹: I shall leave it an open question whether it is really true that the child takes the newly found source of pleasure in exchange for the recent loss of the mother's nipple – a possibility to which later phantasies (fellatio) seem to point. Be that as it may, the genital zone is discovered at some time or other, and there seems no justification for attributing any psychical content to its first stimulations. But the first step in the phallic phase which begins in this way is not the linking-up of the masturbation with the object-cathexes of the Oedipus situation, but a momentous discovery which little girls are destined to make. They notice the penis of a brother or playmate, strikingly visible and of large proportions, at once recognize it as the superior counterpart of their own small and inconspicuous organ, and from that time forward fall a victim to envy for the penis.

There is an interesting contrast between the behaviour of the two sexes. In the analogous situation, when a little boy first catches sight of a girl's genital region, he begins by showing irresolution and lack of interest; he sees nothing or disowns what he has seen, he softens it down or looks about for expedients for bringing it into line with his expectations. It is not until later, when some threat of castration has obtained a hold upon him, that the observation becomes important to him: if he then recollects or repeats it, it arouses a terrible storm of emotion in him and forces him to believe in the reality of the threat which he has hitherto laughed at.

This combination of circumstances leads to two reactions, which may become fixed and will in that case, whether separately or together or in conjunction with other factors, permanently determine the boy's relations to women: horror of the mutilated creature or triumphant contempt for her. These developments, however, belong to the future, though not to a very remote one.

A little girl behaves differently. She makes her judgement and her decision in a flash. She has seen it and knows that she is without it and wants to have it.²

From this point there branches off what has been named the masculinity complex of women, which may put great difficulties in the way of their regular development towards femininity, it cannot be got over soon enough. The hope of some day obtaining a penis in spite of everything and so of becoming like a man may persist to an incredibly late age and may become a motive for the strangest and otherwise unaccountable actions. Or again, a process may set in which might be described as a "denial," a process which in the mental life of children seems neither uncommon nor very dangerous but which in an adult would mean the beginning of a psychosis. Thus a girl may refuse to accept the fact of being castrated, may harden herself in the conviction that she *does* possess a penis and may subsequently be compelled to behave as though she were a man.

The psychical consequences of penis-envy, in so far as it does not become absorbed in the reaction-formation of the masculinity complex, are various and far-reaching. After a woman has become aware of the wound to her narcissism, she develops, like a scar, a sense of inferiority. When she has passed beyond her first attempt at explaining her lack of a penis as being a punishment personal to herself and has realized that that sexual character is a universal one, she begins to share the contempt felt by men for a sex which is the lesser in so important a respect, and, at least in the holding of that opinion, insists upon being like a man.³

Even after penis-envy has abandoned its true object, it continues to exist: by an easy displacement it persists in the character-trait of *jealousy*. Of course, jealousy is not limited to one sex and has a wider foundation than this, but I am of opinion that it plays a far larger part in the mental life of women than of men and that that is because it is enormously reinforced from the direction of displaced penis-envy. While I was still unaware of this source of jealousy and was considering the phantasy "A Child Is Being Beaten" [1919], which occurs so commonly in girls, I constructed a first phase for it in which its meaning was that another child, a rival of whom the subject was jealous, was to be beaten. This phantasy seems to be a relic of the phallic period in girls. The peculiar rigidity which struck me so much in the monotonous formula "a child is being beaten" can probably be interpreted in a special way. The child which is being beaten (or caressed) may at bottom be nothing more nor less than the clitoris itself, so that at its very lowest level the statement will contain a confession of masturbation, which has remained attached to the content of the formula from its beginning in the phallic phase up to the present time.

A third consequence of penis-envy seems to be a loosening of the girl's relation with her mother as a love-object. The situation as a whole is not very clear, but it can be seen that in the end the girl's mother, who sent her into the world so insufficiently equipped, is almost always held responsible for her lack of a penis. The way in which this comes about historically is often that soon after the girl has discovered that her genitals are unsatisfactory she begins to show jealousy of

another child on the grounds that her mother is fonder of it than of her, which serves as a reason for her giving up her affectionate relation to her mother. It will fit in with this if the child which has been preferred by her mother is made into the first object of the beating-phantasy which ends in masturbation.

There is yet another surprising effect of penis-envy, or of the discovery of the inferiority of the clitoris, which is undoubtedly the most important of all. In the past I had often formed an impression that in general women tolerate masturbation worse than men, that they more frequently fight against it and that they are unable to make use of it in circumstances in which a man would seize upon it as a way of escape without any hesitation. Experience would no doubt elicit innumerable exceptions to this statement, if we attempted to turn it into a rule. The reactions of human individuals of both sexes are of course made up of masculine and feminine traits. But it appeared to me nevertheless as though masturbation were further removed from the nature of women than of men, and the solution of the problem could be assisted by the reflection that masturbation, at all events of the clitoris, is a masculine activity and that the elimination of clitoridal sexuality is a necessary precondition for the development of femininity. Analyses of the remote phallic period have now taught me that in girls, soon after the first signs of penis-envy, an intense current of feeling against masturbation makes its appearance, which cannot be attributed exclusively to the educational influence of those in charge of the child. This impulse is clearly a forerunner of the wave of repression which at puberty will do away with a large amount of the girl's masculine sexuality in order to make room for the development of her femininity. It may happen that this first opposition to auto-erotic stimulation fails to attain its end. And this was in fact the case in the instances which I analyzed. The conflict continued, and both then and later the girl did everything she could to free herself from the compulsion to masturbate. Many of the later manifestations of sexual life in women remain unintelligible unless this powerful motive is recognized.

I cannot explain the opposition which is raised in this way by little girls to phallic masturbation except by supposing that there is some concurrent factor which turns her violently against that pleasurable activity. Such a factor lies close at hand in the narcissistic sense of humiliation which is bound up with penis-envy, the girl's reflection that after all this is a point on which she cannot compete with boys and that it would therefore be best for her to give up the idea of doing so. Thus the little girl's recognition of the anatomical distinction between the sexes forces her away from masculinity and masculine masturbation on to new lines which lead to the development of femininity.

So far there has been no question of the Oedipus complex, nor has it up to this point played any part. But now the girl's libido slips into a new position by means – there is no other way of putting it – of the equation “penis = child.” She gives up her wish for a penis and puts in place of it a wish for a child: and *with this purpose in view* she takes her father as a love-object. Her mother becomes the object of her jealousy. The girl has turned into a little woman. If I am to credit a single exaggerated analytic instance, this new situation can give rise to physical sensations which would have to be regarded as a premature awakening of the female genital apparatus. If the girl's attachment to her father comes to grief later on and has to be abandoned, it may give place to an identification with him and the girl may thus return to her masculinity complex and perhaps remain fixated in it.

I have now said the essence of what I had to say: I will stop, therefore, and cast an eye over our findings. We have gained some insight into the prehistory of the Oedipus complex in girls. The corresponding period in boys is more or less unknown. In girls the Oedipus complex is a secondary formation. The operations of the castration complex precede it and prepare for it. As regards the relation between the Oedipus and castration complexes there is a fundamental contrast between the two sexes. *Whereas in boys the Oedipus complex succumbs to the castration complex, in girls it is made possible and led up to by the castration complex.* This contradiction is cleared up if we reflect that the castration complex always operates in the sense dictated by its subject-matter: it inhibits and limits masculinity and encourages femininity. The difference between the sexual development of males and females at the stage we have been considering is an intelligible consequence of the anatomical distinction between their genitals and of the psychical situation involved in it; it corresponds to the difference between a castration that has been carried out and one that has merely been threatened. In their essentials, therefore, our findings are self-evident and it should have been possible to foresee them.

The Oedipus complex, however, is such an important thing that the manner in which one enters and leaves it cannot be without its effects. In boys . . . the complex is not simply repressed, it is literally smashed to pieces by the shock of threatened castration. Its libidinal cathexes are abandoned, desexualized and in part sublimated; its objects are incorporated into the ego, where they form the nucleus of the super-ego and give that new structure its characteristic qualities. In normal, or rather in ideal cases, the Oedipus complex exists no longer, even in the unconscious; the super-ego has become its heir. Since the penis (to follow Ferenczi) owes its extraordinarily high narcissistic cathexis to its organic significance for the propagation of the species, the catastrophe of the Oedipus complex (the abandonment of incest and the institution of conscience and morality) may be regarded as a victory of the race over the individual. This is an interesting point of view when one considers that neurosis is based upon a struggle of the ego against the demands of the sexual function. But to leave the standpoint of individual psychology is not likely to be of any immediate help in clarifying this complicated situation.

In girls the motive for the destruction of the Oedipus complex is lacking. Castration has already had its effect, which was to force the child into the situation of the Oedipus complex. Thus the Oedipus complex escapes the fate which it meets with in boys: it may either be slowly abandoned or got rid of by repression, or its effects may persist far into women's normal mental life. I cannot escape the notion (though I hesitate to give it expression) that for women the level of what is ethically normal is different from what it is in men. Their super-ego is never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it to be in men. Character traits which critics of every epoch have brought up against women – that they show less sense of justice than men, that they are less ready to submit to the great necessities of life, that they are more often influenced in their judgements by feelings of affection or hostility – all these would be amply accounted for by the modification in the formation of their super-ego which we have already inferred. We must not allow ourselves to be deflected from such conclusions by the denials of the feminists, who are anxious to force us to regard the two sexes as completely equal in position and worth; but we shall, of course,

willingly agree that the majority of men are also far behind the masculine ideal and that all human individuals, as a result of their bisexual disposition and of cross inheritance, combine in themselves both masculine and feminine characteristics, so that pure masculinity and femininity remain theoretical constructions of uncertain content.

I am inclined to set some value on the considerations I have brought forward upon the psychological consequences of the anatomical distinction between the sexes. I am aware, however, that this opinion can only be maintained if my findings, which are based on a handful of cases, turn out to have general validity and to be typical. If not, they would remain no more than a contribution to our knowledge of the different paths along which sexual life develops.

Notes

- 1 Cf. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* [1905] (English translation, 1949).
- 2 This is an opportunity for correcting a statement which I made many years ago. I believed that the sexual interest of children, unlike that of pubescents, was aroused, not by the differences between the sexes, but by the problem of where babies come from. We now see that, at all events with girls, this is certainly not the case. With boys it may no doubt happen sometimes one way and sometimes the other; or with both sexes chance experiences may determine the event.
- 3 In my first critical account of the "History of the Psychoanalytic Movement," written in 1914, I recognized that this fact represents the core of truth contained in Adler's theory. That theory has no hesitation in explaining the whole world by this single point ("organ inferiority," "the masculine protest," breaking away from "the feminine line") and prides itself upon having in this way robbed sexuality of its importance and put the desire for power in its place. Thus the only organ which could claim to be called "inferior" without any ambiguity would be the clitoris. On the other hand, one hears of analysts who boast that, though they have worked for dozens of years, they have never found a sign of the existence of a castration complex. We must bow our heads in recognition of the greatness of this achievement, even though it is only a negative one, a piece of virtuosity in the art of overlooking and mistaking. The two theories form an interesting pair of opposites: in one of them not a trace of a castration complex, in the other nothing at all but its effects.