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JOSEPH BREUER

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Psychoanalysis, conceived of just before the turn of the century, has grown and prospered throughout the world. And together with it, Sigmund Freud has become famous as its creator. Yet, the first published work on psychiatry by Freud also bears the name of Joseph Breuer, at that time a practitioner well-known in Vienna for his clinical acumen. But since then his name has faded into relative obscurity, and what little has been written about him is scattered and inaccessible. This paper is an attempt to rectify that lack and to evaluate his contributions to psychiatry and medicine.

Joseph Breuer was born in Vienna, on January 15, 1842.¹ His father, Leopold Breuer, was a teacher of the Jewish religion in that city, and the author of a number of religious treatises and texts.

Of his father, it is known that he was born in Matersdorf, and was orphaned at an early age. When 13 years old, he went to the theological seminary in Pressburg, where he studied three years; he then traveled to Prague. There, under the influence of the Haskalah, the movement that took the Jews out of the ghetto and transformed them into productive segments of the European population, he underwent the metamorphosis of a Talmud scholar into a man of the 19th century. He was of the generation of Jews that was the first to leave the ghetto and become "westernized".² Of this generation, Joseph later wrote:

"One cannot evaluate highly enough the spritual energy which was developed by this generation.. It needed a maximum of intellectual effort to exchange the jargon for correct German, the neglect of the ghetto for good manners of the Occident, to participate in the literature, poetry, and philosophy of the German People.. A great amount of observation of the environment, of sympathetic endeavors of assimilation, of unsupported studies, was needed; and we, the sons and grandsons of these pioneers, to whom all paths are cleared...owe them devoted admiration." 3a

During this "metamorphosis" Leopold earned his living by tutoring. He became a famed educator and practiced in Prague, Pest, and Vienna.. In 1836 he was appointed teacher of religion of the Vienna community, and in 1840 he married one of the daughters of that community. 4

Little is known of Joseph's mother.. She died after the birth of a second son.. Little that is documented remains of her memory save her epitaph: "She died in the flower of her youth and beauty." 5

After the death of his mother, Joseph's maternal grandmother, "a very intelligent and witty woman," took over the care of the two boys and "became a mother" to them. 6

He and his brother were not subjected to the same penniless existence which characterized their father's early life, and were raised "under the most favourable circumstances: 'in the aurea mediocritas' 7," which might account for both the singular lack of aggressiveness which characterized his later life and his careless attitude toward money, which he lacked neither as a child nor as an adult..

We can speculate that the environment in which Joseph grew up was quite well controlled and free from most of the childhood stresses. In addition to his secure economic status he did not attend grade school, but was tutored by his father and was able to read "perfectly" by the time he was four years old.⁸ He was taught at home until he was eight, at which time he was prepared to enter the Gymnasium (1850).

His retrospective impressions of the Gymnasium are interesting in their own historical right as well as demonstrating the foundations for his later discipline of thought and fondness for a stable environment:

"In calling back the memories of these eight years, I must say that I never felt the hatred and embitterment against the school which now, and perhaps even more before the war, seemed to fill our youth. The principle of the humanistic gymnasium was not under discussion, but was something given. The duplication of the instruction, its repetition, and elaboration in the Ober-gymnasium were even a blessing in facilitating understanding by the pupil. The scientific disciplines were, sometimes at the expense of the philological ones, sufficiently represented in the curriculum. And the scientific branches were much better taught than the classic languages. The latter were taught in the lower classes by old clergymen, 'taliter---qualiter,' as the old monk proverb says, though the century old tradition of the classic languages compensated for their weaknesses. Mathematics.. natural history...physics...were very well taught by young lay teachers. History was very mediocre almost through the whole school period. The best part was that when we entered the higher classes teachers and methods became younger and more lively. Especially the last and most important of all teachers, Professor Reichel (German Language), influenced us very strongly in the upper classes, not the least through some external elegance. We enjoyed a

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truly liberal education where criticism and opposition were rather favored than suppressed. When the final examination was over I think one was entitled to call the class and its average knowledge and abilities satisfactory, perhaps with the exception of the classic languages. In every other respect I remember the gymnasium with affection and gratefulness."⁹

He graduated from the Gymnasium in 1858, with not recorded honors, and he entered the university in 1859.¹⁰

Although he had decided to enter the study of medicine long before graduating from the gymnasium (Kreidl says at the age of eight the decision was already made¹¹) when he entered the university his father advised him to devote the first year of his advanced studies to general education and to choose his subjects freely. Breuer writes that as far as his education was concerned, this year was wasted, because he chose a great many courses to which he could devote too little time. Those courses which did impress him were lectures concerning philosophy by Schenach and the lectures on economic history by Lorenz von Stein.^{12, 13}

After this year of "general education" he entered the medical faculty in 1859, and "Therewith underwent the hardships which were at that time connected with medical studies." He described the traveling to the various lectures, necessitated by the government's action in decentralizing the school because of the active participation of the students in the revolution of 1848.

In his first year he studied chemistry, anatomy, mineralogy, zoology, and botany; of them all he says that only the first two were well-attended. He described

his anatomy professor, Hyrtl, in a few words: "He completely fascinated me like all sensitive beginners. But the fascination lasted with few (students) beyond the first year."¹³

In 1860, his second year, he came to Brücke and physiology, and "took my roots in physiology for the rest of my life." He took a great liking to his professor, which lasted all his life. Later, Breuer was much complemented when Brücke chose him as his personal physician.¹⁴

In the physiology laboratory he learned a smattering of physics and histology, as well as a lifelong love for physiology. There was also, during that year, a small amount of work in pathology and pharmacology, which he felt was quite insufficient: "When I remember some of the so-called smaller disciplines and when I compare them with what is offered today to the student I can only admire the progress made."¹⁵

But more important than the mere fact that Breuer worked with Brücke was the fact that in his laboratory Breuer was exposed to--and adopted--a particular orientation, a philosophy of study characterized later by Du Bois-Reymond, one of the founders, as having the following theses:

"No other forces than the common physical-chemical ones are active within the organism. In those cases which cannot at the time be explained by these forces one has either to find the specific way or form of their action by means of the physical-mathematical method or to assume new forces equal in dignity to the chemical-physical forces inherent in matter, reducible to the force of attraction and repulsion."^{16, c}

Breuer learned this method first-hand, and in view of his youth and the power of Brücke's personality, these precepts must have made a profound impression on Joseph, and provided a basis for critical reasoning by which he measured and weighed new data for the remainder of his life.

In his third year he attended the clinic of Skoda. The curriculum included pathological anatomy taught by Rokitansky. But Breuer was not favourably impressed: "The lectures of our great master could not bring us into the interior of the subject. They were very poorly attended and only toward the end of (each) lecture was the classroom filled with students: partly from the older years, and with young physicians who surrounded Rokitansky. Then he examined the preparations from the autopsies of the morning which he had not yet seen, and he gave 'monologues of a great scientist' in orienting himself to these preparations. We learned next to nothing concerning pathological histology. During all my student years I have never seen a cancer cell !!" '7

To complete his medical studies he spent a year (1862) in Oppolzer's Clinic of Internal Medicine in the Allgemeines Krankenhaus and in 1863 he graduated from the University of Vienna with the degree of Doctor of Medicine and Surgery.

He remained with Oppolzer until the latter's death in 1871. In 1868 he had been made an assistant and in

the same year published a paper on the reflex regulation of respiration as mediated through the vagus nerve; in the same year he was made a privatdozent in the University of Vienna medical school.¹⁸

His years with Oppolzer were pleasant ones, and aside from the knowledge and clinical aptitude gained, he was greatly influenced in his personal orientation, even more so than he had been influenced by Brucke. Brucke was a scientist, "shy, but stern and exceedingly silent...the most dreaded of examiners...The general opinion had him labeled as a cold, purely rational man." There was another side, of course: "This man was completely free of vanity, intrigue, and lust for power. To the student who proved his ability he was like a most benevolent father, extending counsel and protection far beyond scientific matters."¹⁹

Little is known of Oppolzer's personality, but the atmosphere was probably quite different at Oppolzer's clinic in contrast to Brucke's, and that the former was probably the most important single figure in Breuer's education, in view of the fact that he is spoken of as "my beloved and honored chief"²⁰ in the Autobiography, and in view of the tenderness with which Breuer wrote: "Oppolzer, who had hardly ever published anything...lives today only in the memory of a few survivors, and will soon be a forgotten name...To me he was a cordial, well-meaning paternal friend and a beloved example."²¹ Oppolzer's influence was

so strong on Breuer that that particular phrase might well have been Breuer's own epitaph, for throughout his career, Breuer published only nine papers, and biographical data is obtainable from very few sources.

In 1865, while in Oppolzer's clinic, Breuer began working on a project in conjunction with Professor J. E. Hering, of the University of Vienna.²² The problem was concerned with the regulation of inspiration and expiration, and Breuer had been attracted to it by a chance remark of one of his colleagues, the professor of physiology at the Josephinum. On November 5th, 1868, the paper was presented to the Academy of Sciences by Hering as "The auto-regulation of respiration by the vagus nerve," by Dr. Joseph Breuer, clinical assistant." Breuer nevertheless gave much credit to Hering: "It is obvious that in this first work of a pupil the greater part of the intellectual content is due to the teacher."²³ Apart from the credits which each heaped upon the other, it is apparent that there was a genuine affection between the professor and the bright young clinical assistant. Breuer wrote: "It was a period of enjoyable and fruitful work." and in the later years of the lives (around 1920) Hering wrote to Breuer in the spirit of their early friendship, saying, "It was a good time when we wound up the kymograph over and over again. Now nobody will wind up both of us any more."²⁴ In later years the reflex pattern which they demonstrated was

named the Hering-Breuer reflex by another friend, the pharmacologist H. H. Meyer.²⁵

After Oppolzer's death in 1871 Breuer entered private practice but retained his title as Dozent in the university. He remained there for four years, lecturing on diseases of the kidney and digestive apparatus.²⁶ In 1875 Billroth wanted to sponsor him for an assistant professorship but Breuer declined.^{27, 28} It is obvious that his refusal was motivated not by a dislike for teaching, for he continued to teach until 1890, but that there were some other reasons. In his autobiography he says rather bitterly: "I gave up the attempt to participate as Dozent after my acceptance into the faculty after a short time; essentially, because the position of Dozent does not suffice to overcome the difficulties which stand in the way of participation of an internist as an instructor without significant clinical material."²⁹ He nevertheless retained some academic role until 1923, for a student wrote: "The perfect spiritual vigour, the familiarity with the most recent medical publications, the accurate judgment of the 80 year old man evoked my sincere admiration, to which immediately joined a deep awe in the face of so much sincerity and goodheartedness."³⁰

While he was in private practice, and although he was still teaching, Breuer never forgot the laboratory, and in 1873 he published a paper which was printed in the Yearbook of Viennese Medicine entitled "Über die

Function der Bogengänge des Ohrlabyrinthes" in which he proved that the semicircular canals, as the seat of the peripheral apparatus of the sense of equilibrium, are stimulated by positive and negative acceleration. This hypothesis had been proposed by Mach in his book The Sensations of Movement on November 6, 1873, following the pilot work by Goltz in 1870. Mach reached his conclusions by mathematical means and self-experimentation. Within several months came a publication by Crum Brown with the same thesis (January 19, 1874), arrived at by self-experimentation and a priori reasoning. But Breuer's work, published on November 14, 1873, was the first to have the foundations of experimental proof, the work having been done on doves. ^{31, 32}

Close on its heels came a publication devoted to the elucidation of the static sense, "Beiträge zur Lehre vom stätischen Sinne (Gleichgewichtsorgan, Vestibularapparat des Ohrlabyrinths)", published again in the yearbook of 1875. It was in this paper and in "Über der Function der Otolithenapparat", 1875, that he made a differentiation between the semi-circular canals and the otolith apparatus, which plays such a role in the production of nystagmus, and included was a section on the mechanism and interpretation of nystagmus. There was also a section dealing with the histological structure of the otoliths which he arrived at using a relatively new technique and instrument de-

veloped by Ewald.^{33, 34, 35}

In the midst of all his experimentation Breuer found time to become one of the most successful physicians in Vienna. Having entered private practice in 1871, he soon had so large a practice that in order to complete his ~~found~~ ^{found} he found it necessary, at times, to spend the night away from Vienna.³⁶ He numbered, among his patients, many university faculty professors and their families: Brücke, Exner, Fleischl, Dumreicher, Billroth, Gersuny, Chrobak, Frisch, Kaposi, Schnabel, and Brentano.^{37, 38} And he did all his research at home (he considered it secondary to his practice) as he related in a polemic with von Cyon in later years, defending his work against complaints that the experiments had not been done on a varied number of animals: "As far as I am concerned, these omissions have their basis in my personal situation. I am a practicing physician; my working hours are the later evening and night and, therefore, my home is my laboratory. There I can work on doves, but I cannot practice similar operations on mammals."³⁹

His personal fame notwithstanding, his experiments were relatively unknown until later than 1884, since there is no mention of Breuer in Brücke's textbook of physiology of that year.⁴⁰

But by 1894, his position in the scientific world was assured, as evidenced by the fact that in that year Mach, Hering, and Exner submitted his name for appoint-

ment as a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, and he was elected.⁴¹

Although he had already terminated his academic connections, Breuer still worked in Brücke's laboratory on occasion in the later 1870's (although most of his later work was done at home.) It was there that he met a young student, Sigmund Freud.

The fact that nothing is recorded about their early years together is easily explained by noting that by this time Breuer was already established as a physician and had a growing reputation as a physiologist, whereas Freud was only a medical student with promise. There is also the matter of ages--Breuer was 15 years older than Freud. But soon their paths crossed with increasing frequency (although it is not chronicled as such their common Jewish heritage must have been a strong drawing card in a relatively closed Gentile university population) and by 1881 Breuer was subsidizing his young friend's education with both comradeship and money.^d

Freud became a regular visitor to Breuer's home, and frequently spoke of the comfort and peace there. He eventually named his eldest daughter after Breuer's wife, Matilde.⁴² Their friendship is well reflected in correspondence between Freud and Martha Bernays, as translated by Jones: "He is such a sunny person, and I don't know what he sees in me to be so kind."..."He is a man who always

understands one."..."One does not adequately characterize him by only saying good things about him; one has also to emphasize the absence of so much badness."⁴³ This correspondence was in the "golden age" of their ^ffriendship. (Contrast this with the tone of the obituary written by Freud in 1925, in which the most personal parts were: "He was a man of rich and many-sided gifts and his interests extended in many directions far beyond his special professional work.")⁴⁴

There was another aspect to their friendship; aside from playing the role of "friend" Freud placed Breuer into a much more authoritarian role. Jones says: "Breuer hardly ever tried to influence Freud, who often sought his advice, Breuer would always divine Freud's real attitude and encourage him in it, but by actively sharing the problem. Breuer would offer his objections to Freud in very few words, but being quite definite."⁴⁵ As an example, in 1883 Freud consulted Breuer about the possibility of his specializing in neurology, although this would curtail his income and keep him from marrying for a greater length of time. Breuer counseled him to keep up with his private practice but to work more and more with neurologic problems.⁴⁶

Breuer often took Freud on his rounds, and looked after him. One day when they were forced to stay at an inn in Baden he registered Freud as his brother so that Freud would not have to tip the waiter.⁴⁷

And as a final example of their relationship, there is the occurrence (from Jones) involving Freud's return to Vienna from a brief stay in Berlin, during the time that he was trying to accumulate enough money to marry. When he visited Breuer (within two weeks of his return) "Breuer kissed and embraced (Freud) warmly". Breuer was asked about the best way for Freud to establish himself in Vienna, professionally and monetarily, and Breuer counseled him by expressing himself pessimistically about Freud's professional chances, and suggested that the best plan of attack would be to take low fees and to treat a good many people gratis.⁴⁸ When Freud began private practice in 1886 the greater part of his paying patients came from Breuer. He wrote then: "Breuer is doing everything possible."⁴⁹

In summing up their personal relationship, Jones has listed four men as being the most important of Freud's older friends: Bernays, Schönberg, Fritz Wahle, and Breuer. Of Breuer, he says, "Breuer, the only Jew among them, was the most sympathetic personality. He was the only one whom a psychologist would regard as very nearly 'normal', a rare compliment." And later, in speaking of Freud's letters of that period, he says, "His (Breuer's) intelligence, his wide range of knowledge, his practical sense, his wisdom, and, above, all, his delicate understanding, are qualities that again and again shine out... Breuer 'comes out best' of all the people mentioned."⁵⁰

These, then, are the bonds which held the two men

First, common ground in work at Brücke's laboratory. Second, common interests socially. Third, common religious heritage. And over all of these ties rides Breuer's personality--rich, freely giving of itself, and yet not stifling in its very magnitude. There was no indication, at the beginning, that either might attempt to solve the question of psychic mechanisms or therapy. This was at best a by-product of their friendship.

In 1880 Breuer began treating Miss Bertha Pappenheim,^{51, e} an intelligent 21 year old girl who had developed multiple hysterical symptoms following the death of her father. He treated her daily by inducing her to relate to him the tribulations which beset her and augmented this therapy with hypnosis, finding that the multitude of material which was brought forth was useful not only in itself but also in the very fact that it was aired. It was the patient herself who brought his attention to the feeling of relief following her recitation of daily frustrations, and particularly following probings of her symptomatology under hypnosis. Breuer became cognizant of this feature of his interviews and watched for and aimed at it. Having seen symptoms disappear after such discussions he named this psychic purge "catharsis". He terminated her treatment in June, 1882.⁵² Breuer communicated his findings and experiences to Freud on November 18, 1882. Of this Jones relates, "It was so far outside his (Freud's) experience that it made

a deep impression on him, and he would discuss the details of it with Breuer over and over again."⁵³

There are two aspects of Breuer's findings which are of importance, aside from a critical evaluation of their content. One is a realization of how great their impact was on Freud, and the other an understanding of the importance of the discovery of catharsis.

At the time of Breuer's disclosures Freud was struggling to keep his head above water financially and still trying to find his niche in medicine, having already done work work in physiology, neuroanatomy, and clinical ~~neurology~~ in the Allgemeines Krankenhaus. In 1885, he went to Paris as Privatdozent in neuropathology with the intention of studying under Charcot, whose recent papers on hysteria had aroused so much interest.⁵⁴ Of the results of that period in Paris (1885-6) Jones remarks: "It was assuredly the experience with Charcot in Paris that aroused Freud's interest in hysteria, then in psychopathology in general, and so paved the way for resuscitating Breuer's observations and developing ~~the~~ psychoanalysis."⁵⁵ It is difficult for this writer to reconcile this statement with both Jones' earlier description of Freud's extremely receptive attitude toward Breuer's work and subsequent events in Paris. For when Freud went to Paris one of the first things he tried to accomplish was the bringing of Breuer's work to Charcot's attention⁵⁶--hardly the deed of a new convert; rather, the actions of a man whose interests have already

been aroused in a subject and who wishes to broaden the scope of further work done. Breuer's importance in being the first to bring Freud into the study of psychopathology cannot be overlooked. And he is deserving of more credit than that relegated to him by Jones: "Breuer was of very considerable significance to Freud personally through the necessary encouragement he supplied at a critical period, but that his intellectual contributions were of less importance."⁵⁷

The other important contribution of Breuer's work, was the technique. This type of interview therapy, so extensive in scope and intensive in mood, had never before been carried out. Its value is summarized by Freud in Breuer's obituary:

"We (who)..are now..accustomed to devote hundreds of hours to a single patient can scarcely picture how novel such an attempt must have seemed (then). Probably a high degree of personal interest and 'medical libido' was bound up with it; but at the same time it implied a considerable measure of freedom of thought and unerring judgment...When he treated his first case none of these works (Charcot, Janet) as yet existed. It would seem that Breuer's researches were entirely original."⁵⁸

With this in mind, it is necessary to re-evaluate Charcot's contribution to Freud's intellectual development. With Breuer's findings fresh in his mind, Charcot's recognition of hysteria as a clinical entity must have only fanned the embers of ideas already present, not started him off on a completely new field.

When Freud returned to Vienna he began work on the use of electro-shock therapy for hysteria; not satisfied with either the method or the results, he began using hypnosis and suggestion, having been introduced to them by the works of Bernheim and Liebault.⁵⁹ It was in this period (1886-1890) that Freud became interested in the resolution of hysterical phobias, obsessional ideas, etc., since, Breuer's iteration in 1882 that "in these structures, regarded as morbid symptoms, solution and treatment go hand in hand. Where it has been possible to trace a pathological idea back to those elements in the psychic life of the patient to which it owed its origin, this idea has crumbled away, and the patient has been relieved of it."⁶⁰

In 1891 Freud wrote and published a monograph, "Zur Auffassung der Aphasien." and dedicated it to Breuer.⁶¹ However Jones quotes a letter from Freud to Minna Bernays in 1891 as saying that Freud did not dedicate the book to Breuer out of gratitude alone, but that "he had hoped thereby to win Breuer into a better humor and was disappointed that for some obscure reason it had the opposite effect."⁶² This is the first intimation that the friendship between Breuer and Freud was not as fast as it had been.

Since his return from Paris Freud had been urging Breuer to publish the results of his work with Anna O. By June, 1892, Breuer finally agreed⁶³ and in January, 1893,

they published "Über den psychischen Mechanismus hysterischer Phänomene. Vorläufige Mitteilung," the famous "preliminary publication", in the Neurologische Zentralblatt. Freud's irritation with Breuer is already apparent in a letter to Fliess dated December 18, 1892, in which he wrote:

"Es hat Kämpfe mit dem Herrn Kompagnon genug gekostet."⁶⁴

(It cost enough pitched battles with Mr. Collaborator)

The source of Freud's discomfort will be considered later.

In 1895 Studies on Hysteria was published. it consisted of five clinical studies headed by Breuer's Anna O., a theoretical essay by Breuer, and a chapter on Therapy by Freud.

In this publication it was pointed out that symptoms could be traced to actual psychic traumata which the patient could not consciously recall, but which could be demonstrated under hypnosis. These symptoms, therefore, are not accidental, but had an actual cause. In some cases, there is only a symbolic relation between the cause and the hysterical phenomenon. These psychic traumata, or their memory, act like foreign bodies in consciousness, and even long after their occurrence continue to influence like causative factors. The fact that the hysterical symptoms are reminiscences is proved by its disappearance if it is possible to awaken the memories of the causal process with its accompanying affects and if the patient discussed the process, giving free play to the affect.

At the time of its occurrence the emotion could not be completely expressed, and was therefore ineffectively strangled.⁶⁵

This last concept was later referred to by Freud:

"As one of the latest achievements of psychoanalysis, we have lately been admonished to put the actual conflict and the cause of the illness into the foreground of analysis. This is exactly what Breuer and I did in the beginning of our work with the cathartic method. We guided the patient's attention directly to the traumatic scene in which the symptom had arisen; we endeavored to find therein the psychic processes of the neuroses which I later named repression. The associations of the patient went back from the scene to be explained, to earlier experience, and forced the analysis which was to correct the present to occupy itself with the past.. This regressive direction became an important characteristic of the analysis. It was proved that psychoanalysis could not clear anything actual, except by going back to something in the past. It even proved that every pathological experience presupposes an earlier one, which though not in itself pathological, lent a pathological quality to the later occurrence."⁶⁶

There were four editions of the "Studien" published in Breuer's lifetime, without any changes having been made.

It is interesting that Breuer has relatively little to say about this work in his autobiography:

"In 1880 I had observed a female patient who suffered from profound hysteria and showed such strange symptoms that I came to the conviction that she offered insight into the deeper layers of the psycho-pathological process. The results obtained were submitted by S. Freud and me first in a short publication, then in the "Studies" by Breuer and Freud. This book was received first rather unfavorably, but has appeared during the last year in its fourth edition. It is the seed out of which psychoanalysis has grown in Freud."⁶⁷

From the foregoing statements it would seem that in the main these two collaborators were in agreement with each other. However, in Breuer's theoretical chapter there appear references to physio-psychological expressions like "hypnoid states" and ideas steeped in the terminology of the physiology laboratory, e. g.: symptoms correspond to abnormal use of undischarged sums of excitement. This very important difference between Breuer's and Freud's thinking has been recognized by Bernfeld: "Unlike Freud, Breuer's writings are closely tied to the terminology and thoughts of the physiology of his time."⁶⁸ It is this difference which proved to be the turning point in their relationship.

There have been a number of other hypotheses put forth to explain the break. Freud mentioned a basic difference between their approaches to the problem of psychotherapy in Breuer's obituary, while recounting his own role in the publication of the Studies.²

"My principal service consisted in re-kindling in him an interest which seemed to have been extinguished and then urging him to publish his conclusions. A certain characteristic shyness, an inner modesty, which was surprising in so brilliant a personality, had induced him to keep secret his amazing discovery till that time (1893). Later, I had reason to suppose that another, purely affective consideration made further work at the elucidation of the neuroses repugnant to him. He had encountered the inevitable transference of the patient to the physician and he had not grasped the impersonal nature of the phenomenon."⁶⁹

In other places Freud has given us a more detailed analysis of their difficulties, indicating that Breuer's main reason

for breaking with Freud was his rejection of the sexual etiology of the neuroses, and the misinterpretation of the "...fact that a gross sexual, tender, or inimical, transference occurs, in every treatment of a neurosis, although this is neither desired nor induced by either party."

"When I emphasized more and more the significance of sexuality in the etiology of the neuroses, Breuer was the first to show me those reactions of resentful rejection which it was my lot to become so familiar with later on."⁷⁰

Although in speaking of Anna^o. Breuer had told Freud:

"The sexual element in her make-up was astonishingly underdeveloped and never contributed anything to her very marked morbid picture", nevertheless "To cure the patient Breuer utilized the most intensive suggestive rapport, which may serve as prototype of that which we call 'transference'..". In addition, "after the removal of the symptoms, Breuer must have discovered the sexual motivations of this transference by new signs, but that the general nature of this unexpected phenomenon escaped him, so that he stopped his investigation right there, as though hit by 'an untoward event'".⁷¹

Jones has more to add to Freud's story:

"Freud has related to me a fuller account of the peculiar circumstances surrounding the end of this novel treatment. It would seem that Breuer had developed what we should nowadays call a strong counter-transference to his interesting patient. At all events he was so engrossed that his wife

became bored at listening to no other topic, before long jealous...It was a long time before Breuer, with his thoughts elsewhere, divined the meaning of her state of mind. It provoked a violent reaction in him, perhaps compounded of love and guilt, and he decided to bring the treatment to an end. He announced this to Anna O., who by now was much better, and bade her good-by. But that evening he was fetched back to find her in a greatly excited state, apparently as ill as ever. The patient, who according to him had appeared to be an asexual being and had never made any allusion to such a forbidden subject throughout the treatment, was now in the throes of an hysterical childbirth, the logical termination of a phantom pregnancy that had been invisibly developing in response to Breuer's ministrations. Though profoundly shocked, he managed to calm her down by hypnotizing her, and then fled the house in a cold sweat."⁷²

There is no doubt in this writer's mind that the transference phenomenon was the crux of Breuer's retreat. However, one should not stop at that point and consider Breuer's actions explained. Before drawing any conclusions it is necessary to take into consideration the sum total of all of his character which has heretofore been shown.

It will be remembered that Breuer was fond of stability: he was reared in a controlled environment, enjoyed discipline in his schooling, deplored the waste resulting from freedom of choice of subject matter in college, chose a regulated curriculum, and took his early training in a school which taught accuracy, thoroughness, and--most important of all--near-worship of correctly postulated, experimentally proved theses. His work as an adult reflected all his early training; each paper was well done, thoroughly documented, and proved experimentally. Breuer was a physiologist by temperament as well as by

training; he was not a revolutionary--but Freud was. It was possible for Freud to determine the true nature of the transference phenomenon, but Breuer could not grasp the concept. Jones summarized Freud's flexibility:

"The principles on which he constructed his theories were those he had acquired as a medical student under Brücke's influence. The emancipation from this influence consisted not in renouncing the principles, but in becoming able to apply them empirically to mental phenomena while dispensing with any anatomical basis. This cost him a severe struggle..." 73

But Breuer could not emancipate himself, could not make that new application. He could not break the tradition which held him to anatomical groupings and physiological quantities. Therein lies the basis for the conflicting views within the studies between "non-communication of hypnoid states" of Breuer and "defense"(regression) of Freud. And it was because of that basic difference between Freud and Breuer, involving their ages, familial background, and personalities, which allowed Freud to say that by 1894 he was completely independent of Breuer's contributions.⁷⁴ In further proof of this explanation is a statement by Freud:

"The first difference of opinion between Breuer and myself came to light on a question of the more intimate psychic mechanism of hysteria. He still favored a physiological theory..." 75

With the hypothesis that Breuer did not shy away from the transference phenomenon because he was afraid of it but rather that his training and background precluded any acceptance of such a concept,

it is easier to understand what followed.

Freud wrote to Fliess in November, 1895, saying that Breuer had represented himself in a speech as a follower of the sexual etiology of neurosis. When Freud thanked him for that support Breuer told him "I still don't believe it."⁷⁶ It is easy to see that although Breuer found that he could not work in what was to him a nebulous neo-scientific terminology it was still possible to accept it as a phenomenon.

There is another episode in which Breuer's acceptance is seen. In 1900 Freud wrote to Fliess of a patient whom Breuer had sent to him and whom he had been able to help. When this patient related to Breuer that Freud had found the key to her difficulty, Breuer "clapped his hands and cried, 'So !He is right !'"⁷⁷

With the publication of the "Studies" Breuer returned to his physiology. In 1897 he published a defence of his work on equilibrium (directed against von Cyon and Hensen): "Über Bogengänge und Raumsinn", and in 1903 his last publication on the static sense appeared: "Studien über den Vestibularapparat". In 1905 he wrote "Galvanotropism bei Fischen", a work dealing with the direction and posture of fish under the influence of the galvanic current. And in 1907 his last scientific work appeared: "Über das Gehörorgan der Vogel, in which he described the histological structure of the ear of the bird and developed a theory of hearing.

He continued his medical practice until 1911, but rather than stop suddenly he "tapered off" by accepting no new patients and slowly discontinuing his older ones. He exchanged his home (and laboratory) for a new dwelling and stopped experimenting. ^{78, 79}

There is one more authenticated publication, the exact date of which is unknown (between 1903 and 1906) called "Vorträge und Besprechungen über des Krisis/des Darwinismus." It was printed privately and was the transcription of a lecture which he delivered. The publisher is not known. *

In his retired years he still continued to visit the Institute of Physiology, still hale and hearty, particularly to visit his old friend Exner, who maintained his old office on the third floor. ⁸⁰

He died June 20, after two years of a painful and drawn-out illness. ^{81, 82} Medical papers carried a brief notice of his demise: "Dr. Joseph Breuer, 83 years old, the well known physician and co-founder of psychoanalysis, died in Vienna." ⁸³

Footnotes

- a. This material, and much of the forthcoming data is found in Breuer's autobiography, "Curriculum Vitae". This short article was written for the Akademie der Wissenschaften in Vienna, who required new members to submit a 'Brief resume' of their careers. Although Breuer was accepted as a corresponding member in 1894 the pamphlet was not written at that time. In 1823 it was deposited in the Archives of the Akademie and a limited edition was published privately. Various dates of composition and publication have been incorrectly listed: de Kleyn says 1894⁸⁴ and a biographical lexicon (Biographische Lexicon hervorragendes Ärzte der letzten fünfzig Jahre) lists the date of publication as unknown but presumed to be around 1929.⁸⁵ However, the preface of the autobiography (inserted, not written by Breuer) expressly states 1923 to be the year of composition and publication, and this is born out in the fact that the tone is reminiscent rather than current and Breuer makes several references to his eighty years.⁸⁶ Although this date is confirmed by Kreidl⁸⁷ there is no mention of its publication in the trade journals of that year or in the Bibliographie der Deutschen Zeitschriften-Literatur.
- b. This early interest in general knowledge was carried to its logical conclusion later in Breuer's life, and he was well known for the wealth of knowledge at his fingertips, knowledge not confined to the sphere

of medicine. In his eulogy at Breuer's interment, H. H. Meyer voiced this very thought:

"I know of no facet of spiritual life, the...art, writings, politics or history, anthropology, and the most profound philosophy from Plato and Kant to Mach, Vaihinger or Bergson--nothing with which he was not familiar, mostly even well-versed." 88

- c. The "School of Helmholtz," as it was called, was a direct reaction against the "naturphilosophie" or "speculative physics" prevalent up to the 1840's. It was founded by Emil DuBois-Reymond, Ernst Brucke, Herman Helmholtz, and Carl Ludwig. Physiology in the early 19th century was characterized by Bernfeld as having "unbalanced megalomaniac emotionalism" and "fantasy" in the style of its writers, and held to the idea that "The Universe, Nature, is one vast organism; ultimately consisting of forces, of activities, of creations, of emergences--organized in eternal basic conflicts, in polarity; reason, conscious life, mind, being only the reflection, the emanation, of the unconscious turmoil." 89
- d. Breuer helped support Freud from 1881 to 1885 or 1886, in monthly installments. These payments reached the sum of \$920, of which Freud said (in letters to his fiancée): "It increases my self-respect to see how much I am worth to anyone." It was Breuer's attitude that made these loans bearable to Freud: "Breuer seems to regard these loans as a regular

institution, but I always mind them." As long as he was on good terms with Breuer, this indebtedness was bearable, since Breuer insisted that he could afford it and that Freud should recognize his own value in the world. But after their break, the debt became a very tender matter with Freud.⁹⁰

- e. Miss Pappenheim was perpetuated in psychiatric literature as the "Anna O." of Breuer's case study.⁹¹
- f. In the publishers' trade journals of the years 1914-1925 there appear several book titles under the name of Joseph Breuer; These titles appear under the same name as the author of Studies in Hysteria. The impression is that the same man was the author of them all. The books in question, however, are all books having to do with the Jewish religion, and there is little to indicate that Breuer was an orthodox Jew. There are two bits of information, conflicting, which further confuse the matter. In the Autobiography, Breuer expressly states that he thinks a great deal of Vienna and its cultural heritage and regarded himself as a true Viennese, a direct product of its ways of thinking.⁹² This does not indicate a strong tendency toward orthodox Judaism. Yet there is the fact that Breuer thought enough of his Jewish heritage so as to include a relatively long dissertation on

his religious origin in a paper for a not particularly broadminded body--The Academy of Sciences in Vienna.⁹³

At any rate, these publications are:

Das Buch Jermejah, 1914

Die Piutim von Rosch Haschana, 1919

Sepher Jecheskel, date unknown (1921-1925)

and Am Heiligstumsquell des jüdischen Ehelebens, 1923

The first three deal with commentaries on various writings:

the book of Jeremiah, the hymns of the Jewish New Year (actually chants), and the book of Jecheskel.

The fourth one, however, is unique, and if actually written by Breuer, indicates an entirely different temperament than heretofore described, or at least and entirely different intellect during his declining years. It is a small pamphlet on the duties and responsibilities of a young Jewish wife, and in it he writes as if it were a letter to a young girl about to be married. In it he states that she is, has been, and always will be a Jew; and, as such, the meaning and content of her life is according to the will of God. (This must be contrasted with the views of Helmholtz and his school, ed.) After some discussions of the general necessity for following God's laws, the remainder of the paper is devoted to a discussion in detail of several of them, the most important of which is an impassioned insistence that married women must cover their heads public.⁹⁴

It is obvious that the same Breuer who worked with Hering could not have written this paper---unless

it is assumed that there is much about Breuer which is not known, and has not been recorded.

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