

ON JANET.

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JANET, like Freud, met the problem of explaining why certain people have not conscious memory of past, for them, tremendous experiences, and yet those experiences exert a marked influence on conduct. To account for these facts he assumed the existence of a force inherent in consciousness, enabling this to hold to itself memories of events. A loss of conscious memory of some past tremendous event would thus be due to consciousness being too weak to hold that event to itself—an hypothesis which also explains why great joy can be as disturbing as great sorrow.

Such losses of conscious memory Janet termed dissociation, and in explanation of the fact that some individuals seem more prone than others to develop dissociation he suggested that this force of consciousness was stronger in some than others, so that those in whom this force was strong were better able to hold events to consciousness than those in whom the force was weak.

If, however, there be this force inherent in consciousness and welding the events of the psychic life together, it implies that there must be some other force inherent in, or acting through events, tending to keep events away from consciousness, because no force would be required to hold things together unless those things had a tendency to be parted from their holder. Janet's simile of the shopper with many parcels is here apt, since it would be gravity that would part a parcel from the shopper.

Since also events dissociated from consciousness can still be welded together into a coherent whole, as Janet himself has shown, it seems to me necessary to assume that some other force welds together these subconscious events, or that there is some cohesive force among events. Incidentally, it should be noted that I use here the term "events," as would Janet, whereas data of events would, I consider, be a more correct description.

But events dissociated from consciousness are events of great intensity, so that if they are welded together by some external

force, this force must be greater for dissociated events than for conscious ones. And this welding force being of consciousness, we should be more conscious of dissociated events than associated ones—a *reductio ad absurdum*. Hence we must assume the existence of some internal cohesive force welding events together, and grant to the whole some conscio-fugal action.

Starting, then, from Janet's hypothesis that there is a force inherent in consciousness holding to its events, we find there must be also some opposite force inherent in events. Hence consciousness and events represent opposing forces. Consciousness would, thus, be able to hold to itself any event of a strength up to its own inherent strength, and there would be equal consciousness of all events that consciousness could hold. This last result holds whether consciousness be identified with the force, or the force considered to be attached to consciousness.

We deduce from these results that every parent is as equally conscious of the failings and virtues of his own child as he is of those of his neighbour's child, or that a lover is as equally conscious of the faults and failings of the loved one as of a hated one. Having made those deductions we find them so little in accord with reality that we must presume that the original idea of a holding force associated with consciousness is not accurate.

But we find also from Janet's original idea two subsidiary ones, *viz.* :

1. There is a limit to the forces of psychic life, this limit being twice the intensity of the force of consciousness.
2. Consciousness and events are associated with opposite forces.

In addition, Janet's conception of "misère psychologique" implies that the limit of force of psychic life differs in different individuals.

I have, therefore, to suggest that Janet's hypotheses lead to my own conceptions of the psychic mechanism. He seems really to have been groping after that factor which I term *T*, so that the person who, according to Janet, owns only "misère psychologique," possesses, according to my findings, a small *T*.

Like Janet, we would make consciousness mediated by or associated with energy, but make the energy force in general, not attraction in particular. And, instead of the force inherent in consciousness being weak in some and strong in others, we make the factor *T*, or the sum-total of the intensities of consciousness and the data of events, weak in some and strong in others. Also we place individual

limitations on this sum total or T , instead of individual limitations on the force associated with consciousness.

Janet also found that individuals with "misère psychologique" were emotional, and was hence led to suggest that emotions depleted the organism of psychic energy. I have to suggest that Janet here confuses consequence and cause.

Emotional states are well known to be incompatible with good judgment, which, put in terms of my mechanism, is equivalent to stating that the excitation processes mediating them contain relatively much of the factor L , and a correspondingly diminished amount of the factor H which mediates judging capacity. But if two individuals differing in the factor T develop equal amounts of the factor L over anything, the possessor of the greater T can apply to this factor L more of the factor H than can the possessor of the smaller T . Other things being equal, then, possessors of the greater T will always be more reasonable than possessors of the smaller T , the average man, for example, "keeping his head" easier than the average woman.

Again, other things being equal, the possessor of the smaller T will be more emotional than the possessor of the larger T . Hence defining Janet's "misère psychologique" as the possession of a small T , we learn that emotional instability results from "misère psychologique," rather than, as Janet thought, that emotional instability causes "misère psychologique."
