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TRANSLATION OF FREUD'S LETTERS TO SIMMEL

by

Dr. David Brunswick and Mrs. Frances Deri

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February 20, 1918

Dear Colleague:

Few communications from beginners in psychoanalysis who are personally unknown to me have provided me with so much satisfaction as your article about "War Neuroses and Psychic Trauma."

Instead of simply thanking you I permit myself to make some remarks about it in the assured expectation that in my critical discussion you will not overlook my appreciation.

Your therapy should be called a cathartic one rather than psychoanalytic. You take essentially the point of view of the "Studies on Hysteria"; and the emphasis on psychic trauma in the title, the stressing of Jung's findings and several other points, also negative ones, confirm me in this judgment. One notices little influences of the further development of psychoanalysis since the introduction of the concept of narcissism in 1914.

I do not in any way blame you for having worked with the help of hypnosis; I can understand that very well and can approve of the reasons you give for it: the vast number of patients, the short

time available and the necessity for therapeutic successes. I myself would reach back for the hypnotic method if faced with similar case material and for certain psychoses.

However, your hypnotic technique is responsible for some of your formulations which to me did not seem tenable. For example, that the repressed complex is afraid to be discovered. I can say that actually the repressed complex tries nothing else than to get through to consciousness, but is prevented from doing so by the aversion of the pre-conscious (resistance). Hypnosis leads by necessity to underestimating or overlooking the factor of resistance, upon which the whole theory of neurosis is based.

In this way, you have let escape you the strongest argument against criticisms in your section about psychoanalytic etiology, the tone and content of which otherwise makes us simply friends. Whoever makes use of hypnosis has to renounce his judgment concerning the presence or absence of psychoanalytic etiology. I discovered the psychoanalytic motivating forces only after relinquishing hypnosis. On the other hand, your remark on page 71 almost makes up for your omission.

I look forward keenly to your further publication and send you cordial greetings,

Yours.

FREUD