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A PECULIAR INTERMEDIARY STATE BETWEEN
WAKING AND SLEEP*

(A Comparison of the Language and Thought Processes Manifested During this State
with those Observed in some Psychopathological Conditions.)

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the following article, certain phenomena of speech and thought will be described which show up a very short time before falling asleep, when the waking mind flickers down into the state of sleep. I have chosen for them the term "transition phenomena" because I believe that they differ from dreams inasmuch as a functioning consciousness is present while they are taking place. They differ from the waking-thinking through their logic, form and content. I believe that a great many people have had experiences similar to those which are to be described here. That they have not yet been described by other writers is probably due to two circumstances. The phenomena may not have been within the scope of their interest or else the phenomena were too difficult to remember on awakening. I have been studying this problem for about 15 years. Only in the last two years did I succeed in focusing them repeatedly in the spotlight of waking thinking. (See the examples.) I have failed to do so for many years, because, as a rule, after violent attempts at bringing myself back to a full state of waking they would vanish from my memory. Contrary to Trumbull-Lad(1) who considers his faculty of awakening by himself as a result of self-training, I do not think that training accounted for my eventual success. In my own case I could not notice a gradual improvement in my efforts. My faculty developed over night, as it were.

In tracing the ideas of transition I had a distinct feeling of annoyance. I then asked myself why this should be the case, and, secondly, which of my mental and physical faculties were the ones that felt irritated. As to the second question, I think that it was the critically inclined waking mind which reacted that way during the experiences in the state of transition, as the waking mind had not been completely obliterated. It also was the "feeling of certainty"(2) which
we regularly attain through the logical work of our waking mind, that felt insulted. As the waking logic and the feeling of certainty were not totally extinguished, they were interfered with by the processes which went on in different spheres of the personality, namely, the sphere of a peculiar pseudo-logic, and the sphere of another "feeling of certainty" which is localized within the domain of transition. In other words, two levels of the personality were in conflict with each other. The one was the logical thinking with its corresponding feeling of certainty—which we are accustomed to perceive while in the state of being awake; the other was an additional mental process which behaved as if it were logical and carried with it another feeling of certainty. The logic and the joined feeling of certainty as perceived in the state of being awake rejected as wrong the corresponding processes that were going on in the state of transition.

It is my conviction that the difference between our waking thinking on the one hand, and dreams and the state of transition on the other, lies in the fact that dreams and the state of transition may become subject to the criticism of the waking mind while the dream thinking and the transition thinking are neither capable nor desirous of criticizing the logic of the waking state.

My belief that the mind of many people is passing through the state of transition is partly supported by the fact that some of my friends upon request, succeeded in "catching" transition phenomena.

The following examples are only a few out of a larger number; they were selected at random. Since the native tongue of some of the test persons was German, many of the following thought fragments contain scattered German words alongside the English phrases.
II. EXAMPLES

1.) *Most important in every-day life are the lititions.* (In this case I was fully aware of the meaning of "lititions" namely "trifles").

2.) *One must distinguish between hoffen und es leider nicht finden kennen.* (The meaning of the German words is: "To hope and, unfortunately, not to be able to find it").

3.) *Deres no everything in order.

4.) *Men leagueing constitution.

5.) Immediately before gliding into the state of transition, I was thinking of the mineralogic department of the Museum of Natural History in Vienna. Transition: Mineralogic folk's cabinet.

6.) In the state of waking I thought of the anterior scalenes muscle. Transition: *One of the most characteristic features is the acceleration of the sixteen.*

7.) *Da ist mir lieber gar nichts, als reacher im Unterbrechen.* (If any translation were possible at all it would read: "I would rather have have nothing than be reacher in interrupting").

III. AN ATTEMPT AT A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE EXAMPLES

1.) Grammar and syntax normal; one neologism.

2.) Words are all right, also grammar and syntax, and yet the "es" (it) does not fit in.

3.) "Deres" is probably a contamination of German "Das ist" and its English translation: "There is".

4.) "Leagueing" is a neologism probably deriving from "league".

5.) "Folk's cabinet" seems to be equivalent to the German expression "Volkskabinett" which is a cabinet of the President consisting not of former officials but of members elected directly by the people. Mineralogic, folk's cabinet represents a kind of "sense contamination" as the word cabinet in Austria also applies to a scientific collection, for instance the geographic or the mineralogic "cabinet of a school".

6.) No neologism; no unusual grammatic-syntactic form. The whole phrase, however, is incomprehensible unless a psychoanalytic procedure could bring forth its real meaning.

7.) Shows analogous peculiarities as No. 6. Reacher is a neologism.
8.) Vielleicht weil die Oas Emidies nicht mehr waren. (Translation: Perhaps because the Oas Emidies did not exist any longer).

9.) They are exposed to verbally interlection.

10.) Es gibt Untersuchungen in traumatic opposition und Leibesruehrigkeiten. (Translation: There are examinations in traumatic oppositions and Ruhrigkeiten of the body.)

11.) Das Gewicht der Wellen direct into the ink bottle. (Translation: The weigh of the waves . . . .)

12.) Garage and apple.

13.) Understanding is adversability of understanding.

14.) Vermont Hagen (Hagen is a German name) ist ueberhaupt als sehr gut bekannt. (Translation: .... is widely known as very good).

15.) They are hessing around. (At the end of the waking state the person thought of Rudolf Hess).

16.) Iscupium.

17.) One is hol stitched chin lengthened against the other.

18.) Undestemountable.

19.) If that not were so, they would not come the head up.

8.) Grammar and syntax normal. "Oas" and "Emidies" are neologisms.

9.) The adverb "verbally" is all out of place. "Interlection" is a neologism. The whole phrase is incomprehensible.

10.) "Leibesruehrigkeiten" is a neologism. Grammar and syntax don't show peculiarities. The whole phrase in incomprehensible.

11.) No neologism. Syntactically it seems as if one word has been omitted, namely "went" (went directly into the bottle).

12.) Consisting of 3 words only, it may represent an abbreviation of a phrase as frequently used in waking life.

13.) "Adversability" is a neologism. Grammar and syntax seem correct.

14.) Grammar and syntax seem correct.

15.) "Hessing" is a present participle of a verb neologically formed from a family name.

16.) "Isocupium" is a neologism.

17.) Although each of the words contained except "hol" and "lengthed" has a well known meaning, the phrase is utterly incomprehensible.

18.) "Undestemountable" is a neologism.

19.) Grammar and syntax seem to be correct.
IV. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TRANSITION STATE AND DREAMS

According to Hoche, in the state of falling asleep speech impulses are frequently generated and words pass through our mind.

In his own dreams Hoche found 1.7% "slips of the tongue" which were corrected in the dream and 14.7% motor paraphrasias which have

*No attempt is made here to evaluate through analytical interpretation the neologisms created during the transitional state.

It may be worth mentioning that the great majority of the examples are formed in the present tense.
been recognized as such only after awakening. Among these, paraphrasias were instances where wrong letters or mutilated syllables were used. Also nonsensical combinations of words and 9% of neologisms occurred. Hollingworth\(^4\) pays much attention to the state of drowsiness. "They do not tend to lead on to new situations as do dream states. They all occur during waking moments. Yet most of them are hallucinatory in character." Superficial and uncontrolled associations occur. Hollingworth brings the following example: "A remarks to B: 'Let's hurry and get there by ten o'clock.' B replies drowsily: 'Oh, that's easy. I could get there by a nickel of ten'." Kleitman\(^5\) quotes Meyerson's statement that dreaming exhibits the same complex psychic co-ordination which characterizes the waking state.

From all that and many analogous observations follows that the thoughts and speech exhibited by the individual in the state of transition are not identical with the thoughts and words which are used in dreams, the latter showing much more similarity to the logic of the waking state than the former. If one were to schedule the three states, namely waking, dreaming and transition, with respect to their logical level, the result would be: (1) waking, (2) dreaming, (3) transition. This order would, of course, be somehow "prejudiced," because it is the result of the criticism of the waking logic of itself as well as of the two other states. But there seems to exist a good reason for this "prejudice," namely the fact mentioned above, that it is only the logic of the waking mind which is interested in criticizing itself as well as the "logic" of the two other states, while the latter neither criticizes the waking state nor the state of transition.

We therefore are forced to conclude that the state of transition is a peculiar one, well distinguishable from the state of waking and from that of dreaming.*

**Comparison between the Transition State and Some Psychopathologic States**

Some of the examples vaguely remind us of the language of some of our aphasic patients. No. 21 could be called a "word salad." Epileptics gradually awakening from their seizures sometimes also utter

\*) It is also distinguishable from Maury's "hallucinations hypnagogique" which he describes as true hallucinations, because the words sound as if spoken by a strange voice ("car les mots sonnent à l'oreille interne comme si une voix étrangère les prononçait").

phrases which present some anomalies of thought and language similar to our examples. The epileptic articulation, however, is weak and sometimes blurred while the articulation in the transition state gives the impression of normalcy. The most striking similarity exists between the schizophrenic language and thoughts and the language and thinking which is characteristic for transition. Compare e. g. the reproduction of a schizophrenic girl's speech given by Despert. A part of it reads: "Do you know nase I'm sitting here ... nice log ... do I say those things ... right a good nay ... do you know what appetch I don't know ... whaw appetch. That is a phona." Another example published by Benjamin reads: "That means feline absence and rodential job." Compare further Cameron's quotations: "Because it is a sort of hydrantic evering."

In pointing to a striking similarity between different utterances resulting from different states of mind, the fact should not be overlooked that there exists only a limited number of possible deviations from normal language. One of them is based on wrong articulation and omission of sounds, as found in small children, in dysarthries, dyslalics, and dysphasias. Another consists of the omission of words or parts of words, as, for instance, again in dysarthries, dyslalics and dysphasias, but also in aphasic patients. Furthermore, the deviation from the norm may appear in a replacement of a missing word by a wrong one or by an inaccurate circumscription, as it is characteristic for some aphasics. Word salad is another well known example (in temporal aphasia). Neologisms are sometimes created by small children and by schizophrenics as well as, sometimes, by paranoids. Grammatical and syntactic failures are physiological phenomena observed in early states of speech development and pathologic signs in aphasias, especially in the so-called paragrammatism. In the feebleminded all the deviations, mentioned above, sometimes can be seen together. The constant presence of all possible deviations from the normal language, except those of a faulty articulation, seems to be a characteristic feature of many schizophrenias, and—of the state of transition.

Another peculiarity of my examples is that they show "egocentric speech" exclusively. This term first used by Piaget means that the person speaks without addressing anybody in particular. We shall take up this point later in this paper.

As far as the mental state in schizophrenia is concerned, which is "more or less foreign to normal or average conscious life", the same seems to hold true for the thinking accomplished during the state of
transition. But while the peculiar thoughts and the corresponding language in this state are felt like foreign bodies by the still partly waking mind, the schizophrenics, at least those in advanced stages, do not show any criticism of their thoughts and their language, which is hardly if at all comprehensible to the normal individual.

As to the "egocentric language" mentioned above, Piaget examined two normal 6 1/2-year-old boys, and found that some of their talks were not addressed to anybody, but were monologues. In Piaget's cases these monologues occurred solely while the boys handled objects. He considered them as related to the inner speech which is also directed to one's self. (The term "inner speech" has been used in the literature for the inner formation of phrases before these phrases are uttered to a listener. I believe that it is chiefly this meaning which Piaget had in mind.) According to Vigotsky, (11) egocentric speech has developed from social speech, and not apart from it.

VI. THE TRANSITION STATE AND THE SUBCONSCIOUS

As every one of my friends whom I asked to watch the state of transition could prove its presence and furnish me with words derived from this state, it stands to reason that the transition state is a physiological one. Whether it is amenable at all to the methods of interpretation as used in psychoanalysis and individual psychology remains to be seen. It is, however, clear that the thoughts and the speech produced in the state of transition are not of the kind we are used to find in normal persons in whose minds the consciousness exercises its full control. Therefore, we assume that in the state of transition the subconscious plays an overwhelming part, as is also the case in dreams. But while the latter represent an order similar to that of our waking thinking (although some dream events would seem impossible in waking life), to the observer, the transition state hardly ever offers anything but a chaos. The question arises why the subconscious works in this peculiar way at a time when the conscious mind still may execute some degree of control. However, no answer to this question suggests itself as yet.

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