

Freud meets Janet. Notes towards a psychology of the Plural-Ego

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My emotional life has always insisted that I should have an intimate friend and a hated enemy. I have always been able to provide myself afresh with both, and it has not infrequently happened that the ideal situation of childhood has been so completely reproduced that friend and enemy have come together in a single individual

(FREUD, 1899)

Without metapsychological speculation and theorizing – I had almost said «phantasying» – we shall not get another step forward.

(FREUD, 1937)

Towards the end of the last century, Pierre Janet began to be seen as «the noble ancestor» of a theoretical trend¹ centred on the dissociative processes (e.g. Putnam, 1989; Van der Hart & Friedman, 1989; Van der Kolk & Van der Hart,

¹ In 2013 *Psychological Automatism* was published in Italy, while in 2016 some of Janet's clinical writings were translated into Italian as *Trauma, coscienza, personalità*. The international wave was also ridden by the translation in 2014 of a text which revives the dispute with Freud (Janet, 2014). In this connection, I quote Musatti's words from 1956: «It seemed appropriate to Gemelli, on the occasion of Freud's centenary, to recall Pierre Janet's work.... He thought it helpful "to submit to readers' meditation" the pages in which Janet... criticizes many aspects of psychoanalysis.... In my university lectures on psychoanalysis it is my habit to refer to Janet's work, I do it insistently, and my students know that this is such a hobby-horse of mine that as soon as I start to talk about it in a lecture, ironic smiles come onto the faces of the habitués, with comments like "Here we go again with negative hallucinations and post-hypnotic suggestions." So I won't be complaining about the appreciation of Janet which Father Gemelli has seen fit to make on this occasion.... But... I must also express all my reservations about his simultaneous attempt to use Janet as a way of challenging Freud. If there were pages to quote on this occasion, they were from *L'automatisme psychologique* and not *Médications psychologiques*; and Gemelli has done a really bad service to Janet's memory. Indeed, the *Médications psychologiques* are from 1919, and the substantial part dedicated to psychoanalysis reflects the resentment of the man who, being aware that he has made partial discoveries and made them public before others did, has seen himself overtaken by someone else's doctrine which, in its extent and vastness of application, was already starting to make a great impact, leaving his own work in the shade.... Priority of publication goes indisputably to Janet. However... nobody ever discovers anything out of nothing, and there comes a time when we

1989). This is a current which concerns clinical psychiatry, neurosciences, cognitivism, and psychoanalysis; and it originates from a renewed attention to the disturbances of identity and post-traumatic syndromes.

During the same years in which Psycho-traumatology returned to prominence, Bemporad revealed that «we may have been a bit hasty in burying Janet, and his ghost continues to reappear in very strange guises» (1989, 635).

Bromberg has expanded this metaphor thus:

If one wished to read the contemporary psychoanalytic literature as a serialized Gothic romance, it is not hard to envision the restless ghost of Pierre Janet, banished from the castle by Sigmund Freud a century ago, returning for an overdue haunting of Freud's current descendants. With uncanny commonality, most major schools of analytic thought have become appropriately more responsive to the phenomenon of dissociation, and each in its own way is attempting actively to accommodate it within its model of the mind and its approach to clinical process (1995, 189).

The rediscovery of Janet began in 1970 when the mutual influence between him and Freud was examined in the two volumes of *The Discovery of the Unconscious*. However, even Ellenberger's detailed work leaves some questions open. For example, why did Freud so exert himself to make psychoanalysis into an alternative to Janet? Indeed, the Frenchman's shadow hovers over concepts entirely rejected by Freud, such as Breuer's *hypnoid states* (Breuer & Freud, 1895, 183), Bleuler's schizophrenia (Moskowitz & Heim, 2011), Adler's *inferiority complex* (see Adler, 1912, vii, for a parallel with Janet's *sentiment d'incomplétude*), and various ideas of Jung's (Carotenuto, 1995).

In 1924 Freud made the following response:

According to Janet's view a hysterical woman was a wretched creature who, on account of a constitutional weakness,² was unable to hold her mental acts together, and it was for that reason that she fell a victim to a splitting of her mind and to a restriction of the field of her consciousness. The outcome of psycho-analytic investigations, on the other hand, showed that these phenomena were the result of dynamic factors—of mental conflict and of repression. This distinction seems to me to be far-reaching enough to put an end to the glib repetition of the view that whatever is of value in psychoanalysis

achieve maturity through progress which is often the work of many scholars» (149-151). Today there are many who are moving in the direction of integration. Craparo and Van der Hart are busy publishing the first English edition of *L'automatisme psychologique*, while with Ortu they are editing an international volume entitled *Rediscovering Pierre Janet*.

² Freud constantly attributed a strongly degenerationist view to Janet, although Janet himself was not so categorical about it: «What does psychological misery depend on?... Very often on heredity... In some cases it may depend on a state of physical fatigue incurred by chance, as in convalescence from certain diseases, and perhaps on other moral causes unknown to us» (1889, 465).

is merely borrowed from the ideas of Janet. The reader will have learned from my account that historically psychoanalysis is completely independent of Janet's discoveries, just as in its content it diverges from them and goes far beyond them. Janet's works would never have had the implications which have made psycho-analysis of such importance to the mental sciences and have made it attract such universal interest. I always treated Janet himself with respect, since his discoveries coincided to a considerable extent with those of Breuer, which had been made earlier but were published later than his. But when in the course of time psycho-analysis became a subject of discussion in France, Janet behaved ill, showed ignorance of the facts and used ugly arguments. And finally he revealed himself to my eyes and destroyed the value of his own work by declaring that when he had spoken of 'unconscious' mental acts he had meant nothing by the phrase—it had been no more than a *façon de parler* (Freud, 1925, 30-31).

Conversely, Janet's opinion of Freud had been revised a year before in 1923, after being expressed on other occasions.

A foreign physician, Dr S. Freud from Vienna, came to the Salpêtrière and was interested by these last studies. He ascertained the reality of the facts and published some new observations of the same kind. In those he mainly modified the terms I used: he called psychoanalysis what I had called psychological analysis, he named complex what I had named psychological system in order to designate the whole group of psychological phenomena and of movements, whether of the limbs or the viscera, which remain associated together and thus constitute the traumatic memory; he understood as a repression what I had ascribed to a narrowing of consciousness, and he gave the name of catharsis to what I had indicated as a psychological dissociation or moral disinfection. But above all he transformed a clinical observation and a therapeutic treatment with a definite and limited field of use into an enormous system of medical philosophy (Janet, 1923, 41).

THE QUARREL

The quarrel between Janet and Freud began at the Salpêtrière in Paris where the twenty-nine year old Freud had come in October 1885 to study with Charcot. In November 1885 Paul Janet, Professor of Philosophy at the Sorbonne, presented his nephew Pierre's experiments with hypnosis (Ellenberger, 1970) to the Société de Psychologie Physiologique, of which Charcot was President. We do not know if Janet and Freud ever met, but it is hard to believe that «Janet's name was never so much as mentioned», as Freud declares in his «Autobiographical Study» (1925, 13).

From 1885 to 1889 Janet continued his research and, in August 1889, newly graduated from the Sorbonne, he presented the results at two important conferences, both attended by Freud (cf. Ellenberger, 1970) and held on the occasion of the Universal

Exhibition. In the same year, Janet published his doctoral thesis entitled *Psychological Automatism*. In 1890 he qualified in Medicine and was appointed by Charcot as Director of the Laboratoire de Psychologie Expérimentale at the Salpêtrière.

If it is true that Freud saw Charcot as an ideal teacher (Borgogno, 1981a), it is possible that in Janet he may have found his ideal rival (Freud, 1899, 483): a rivalry between an outsider and an insider with important connections in academic circles. Freud would write to Jung (McGuire, 1974, 25) that Janet could boast of «a good mind» and had at his disposal the best-known hospital in Europe for research into hysteria.

Nevertheless, before going to Paris, Freud had already become acquainted with the case of a woman, Anna O., who Breuer, with whom Freud had established a close collaboration and friendship, had treated from 1880 to 1882 by means of what Breuer had called, at his patient's suggestion, a «talking cure». Freud and Breuer had often discussed the case, and in Paris Freud had tried to interest Charcot in it, but without success (Makari, 2008, 40).

Breuer's pioneering treatment of Anna O. in 1880-82, together with the thoughts which the two had developed about it and the knowledge of hypnosis and hysteria which Freud had brought with him, formed the basis on which Freud would later find a method of analysis capable of competing with Janet's, whose hypnotic practices were already evolving into a procedure which he had called «psychological analysis». In fact, Janet, in 1892 presented a procedure called «automatic talking» consisting of «letting the patient talk aloud at random» (Ellenberger, 1970, 366).

In their «preliminary communication» of 1893, Breuer and Freud anticipated the theoretical premises of *Studies in Hysteria*. Janet welcomed it in two articles in the *Archives de Neurologie*, stating that he considered one of the most significant works of the age (1893a, 432). Furthermore, he was pleased that it confirmed what he called *désagrégation psychologique* and *dédoublement de la personnalité* (1893b, 25-26).

In July 1893, Freud wrote to Fliess, «Our work on hysteria has at last received due recognition on the part of Janet in Paris» (Masson, 1985, 51). In the same month, Freud published in the *Archives* an essay on hysterical paralysis in which he assured readers «I can only associate myself fully with the views advanced by M. Janet» (1893, 169) founded on the psyche's «power of dissociation» (164): «the conception of the arm cannot enter into association with the other ideas constituting the ego of which the subject's body forms an important part. The lesion [considered as functional or dynamic] would therefore be *the abolition of the associative accessibility of the conception of the arm*» (170, italics in original).

However, in 1894 Freud criticized Janet for the first time. In «The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence» he challenged the idea that the neurotic bears an «an innate weakness of the capacity for psychical synthesis,» a weakness which would cause dissociation and the narrowing of the field of consciousness (1894, 46). Against Janet's

hypothesis, Freud opposed his own, based on the notion of defence, introduced specifically for this occasion (47).

1895 saw the publication of *Studies on Hysteria* where Breuer and Freud showed themselves still more critical of Janet. Freud is especially so in the case of Emmy von N.: «I must confess, too, that I can see no sign in Frau von N.'s history of the 'psychical inefficiency' to which Janet attributes the genesis of hysteria» (104).

It is not clear what induced Freud to change his tone towards Janet from 1893 to 1894. Perhaps he could not tolerate the insistence with which Janet asserted his rights to priority. Indeed, in 1894, in the second volume of *État mental des hystériques*, Janet writes, «MM. Breuer and Freud expressed very well the idea we have long maintained when they said, "The provocative cause acts still, after years, just as a moral pain, kept within the remembrance, provokes tears long after the event... The hysterical suffers, above all, from *reminiscences*"» (408, italics in original). He goes on to warn Breuer and Freud about the efficacy of the cathartic method: «we do not believe that the cure is so easy as that, and that is suffices to bring the fixed idea to an expression to carry it off. The treatment is unfortunately of a much more delicate nature» (412).

From 1894 onwards, Freud set out not to engage in dialogue with Janet, but to confront him. This led him to stamp a specific form on psychoanalysis. At the origin of this form – and it is the fulcrum of the present paper – there is what Prévost (1973) called the mutual misunderstanding between Janet and Freud, which «crystallized the two men's views of each other in a partly distorted image» (65). If Janet missed the opportunity to link up his own thinking in a more constructive manner with Freud's and to be better acknowledged as one of the pioneers of psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis greatly delayed its study of dissociative processes (Berman, 1981). Thus, the opportunity was lost to theorize the Ego more explicitly,³ albeit in a metapsychological framework, as a plural entity.⁴

³ It would be worthwhile making a separate study of the «transfer of subjectivity» taking place in English-speaking countries from the Ego to the Self. I can only offer a quick reflection here. The I (*Ich*) has been translated into English with the impersonal *Ego*, generating a distortion in the subjective perception of this entity. As Rycroft noted, «in German the word for referring to oneself is "*ich*" and that for conceptual thinking about the idea of oneself is "*das Ich*", but in English the equivalent terms are "*I*" and "*ego*". As a result it is easy for an English reader of the psychoanalytical literature to lose sight of the fact that the ego, which is so often presented to him as though it were an impersonal structure with properties and characteristics and occasionally even a shape, is really nothing than himself being thought of in conceptual terms» (1968, xv). To complicate the picture further, Janet used the French term *Moi*, which Freud translated into German as *Ich*, and which was translated back in French as *Moi* (e.g. from *Das Ich und das Es* to *Le Moi et le Ça*). This has several repercussions, for example in relation to the Lacanian view of the difference between the *Moi* (Me) and the *Je* (I). For all these reasons I consider it preferable, in this context, to return to the metapsychological concept of the Ego, as the depository of character, personality, and subjectivity, while at the same encouraging the reader to keep all this complexity in mind.

⁴ In 2015 Riefolo spoke about Janet and the *plural subject* at the Rome Centre for Psychoanalysis. The Roman Centre has itself published a volume on *Dissociation, Splitting, Repression* (2012). Finally, I note the work of Bastianini (2017) who reminds us about «the numerous publications of the study group on Psychoanalysis and the Neurosciences at Rome's two Psychoanalytic Centres which explored this topic in particular depth from 2001 to around 2009 in the reflections of various members of the group (Bastianini, Castriota, Falci, Moccia, Moniello, etc.)» (564).

CONSCIOUSNESS AND SUBJECTIVITY IN JANET

In *Psychological Automatism* (1889) Janet develops the idea that consciousness is not a given entity, invariable and immutable, «without nuances and degrees» (I. 44).⁵ Rather, according to Janet, it is a process in a continual state of becoming, an aggregation of its rudimentary forms.

These rudimentary forms originate from sensations and images (I. 45) which nevertheless rely on «I see», «I feel»: on the «subject-Ego» (I. 46). An assemblage of sensations and images goes into composing what Janet calls the idea of the I (*le moi*), which «includes the memories of past actions, the notion of our situation, of our powers, our body, even of our name» (*ibid.*). Perceptions felt as «personal» are therefore creative acts of synthesis, moment by moment, of elements which come together on various hierarchical-organizational levels, making themselves ever more discriminable as they become conscious, or rather as they become consciousness:

Small, elementary syntheses endlessly repeated become the elements of other, superior syntheses. Being more complex, these new syntheses are much more varied than their predecessors; although they are still units, they are units with qualities which differ from each other. Just as single-celled creatures are all alike and creatures composed of many cells begin to take on distinct forms, the vague conscious awareness of pleasure and pain little by little becomes determined sensations of different kinds. Each sensation is thus a whole, a composite, in which elements of consciousness which themselves correspond to very simple movements have been combined. We must not say that a child learns to feel such a sensation, and that he subsequently learns to make the corresponding complex movement: he has learned the two things at the same time, and the coordination of his movements is done at the same time as the organization of the elements of the sensation (II. 179).

To such a *creative activity* – for Janet the mind is always «in the making» – is added a *conserving activity* which ensures that «once constructed, the syntheses are not destroyed; they endure, they preserve their unity . . . if the previously accomplished synthesis is not given completely, if only some of its elements still exist in the mind, this conserving activity will complete it» (II. 180). The first activity *creates*, the second *reproduces*. That is, it tends to repeat a perceptual configuration even in the absence of the sensory elements. Thus, its principal expressions are «association of ideas and memory». This is how identity is generated, providing a sense of *continuity in discontinuity* and *unity in plurality*.

As I have said, Janet believes that at a certain threshold the rudimentary forms of consciousness must be differentiated into *personal perceptions*, grasping the idea of

⁵ [Janet 1889 has been translated directly from the French original by the translator of this article.]

the «I», and *sensations or impersonal images*: forms of «elementary consciousness» (I. 48) whose subject remains implicit:

The normal state undoubtedly does not present us with such clear examples [as that of someone who has just fainted or experienced a syncope], but we can nevertheless recognize that the idea of the I does not always attach itself equally to all the sensations we experience. On the contrary, the majority arouse the idea of the I so little that we do not hesitate to attribute them to the outside world; instead of saying that it is we who experience the sensation of the colour green, we say it is the tree which possesses it. Often, we do not even make this distinction and, faced with a spectacle which engrosses us, all we have in our consciousness are the sensations of the spectacle without applying them to ourselves, without distinguishing what is internal from what is external. It is true that in ordinary life we can always recover ourselves, emerge from these *absorbing* sensations and recognize that it is we who have had them. But we can conceive that certain creatures, such as the lower animals, may never be able disengage their personality from these elementary sensations, and that other more complex creatures may momentarily be reduced to purely *affective* life without knowledge and reflection (I. 48-49, italics in original).

Janet goes on to liken these mental states of immersion in «absorbing sensations» (in which the internal is no longer, or not yet, distinguished from the external) to an «intermediate consciousness» between more organized forms and «the pure mechanism» (I. 49): impersonal psychological automatism. He compares them to a «consciousness in the nascent state, so to speak, which manifests itself when the mind wakes after a fainting fit» (ibid.). It leads, for example, to highly regressed psychopathological conditions such as catalepsy. He describes the consolidation of such transitory states in simultaneous existences which can have such differing degrees of organization and isolation that they become structured into multiple personalities (van der Hart, Nijenhuis & Steele, 2006).

Nevertheless – like Freud who in «His Majesty the Ego» identifies «the hero alike of every day-dream and of every story» (1907, 150) – he still seems to anchor himself on the fixed point of a primary-I which coagulates around one's name, at the very least, and remains the depository of «all these scattered ideas» (Janet, 1889, I. 46). Nonetheless, he persuades us to take a look at the dissociative abyss and to contemplate the dizzying possibility that every identity is only a temporary illusion.

A PROCESS OF INDIVIDUATION: INFANTILE SEXUALITY

In 1898, Freud wrote to Fliess, «I opened a recently published book by Janet, *Hystérie et idées fixes*, with a pounding heart and put it aside again with my pulse calmed. He has no inkling of the key» (Masson, 1985, 302). What the key might be, Freud

would reveal in the postscript to the case of Dora: «The emphasis laid by Janet upon the “*idée fixe*” which becomes transformed into a symptom amounts to no more than an extremely meagre attempt at schematization... The symptoms of the disease are nothing else than the *patient’s sexual activity*... sexuality is the key to the problem of the psychoneuroses and of the neuroses in general» (1901, 114-115).

The enormous clinical repercussions of this theoretical difference are evident a few lines later, when Freud introduces the transference, from which he will arrive at the transference neuroses and the theory of the analytic technique. Put briefly, the process by which Freud differentiates himself from Janet sets up such substantial modifications that it is impossible to maintain, as Fitzgerald (2017) has recently done, that Freud simply «described Janet’s ideas better than Janet» (358).

In «On Psychotherapy» (1904) Freud illustrated the difference between his own method and Janet’s. First, he highlighted the kinship between the two methods, because for both of them «unconscious ideas – or better, the unconsciousness of certain mental processes – are the direct cause of the morbid symptoms» (266). However, he then distinguished the psychoanalytic unconscious from the Janetian subconscious, characterizing the former as a repressed unconscious whose constitution derives from infantile sexuality (266-267).

In the years before 1898, Freud had given pride of place to a link between the infantile and the sexual. In «Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses» (1898) he had admitted the existence of a neuropathic predisposition, but had ruled out the possibility that it represented the «sign of a general degeneracy» (an idea which, as we have seen, he attributed to Janet) and that «the conjunction of a neuropathic disposition with precipitating causes [traumatic events] occurring in later life constitutes an adequate aetiology of the psychoneuroses» (280). At this point Freud advances the idea of infantile sexuality: «the chief factors on which the theory of the psychoneuroses is based: the deferred nature of the effect [*Nachträglichkeit*] and the infantile state of the sexual apparatus and of the mental instrument» (281). These factors are not compatible with a dissociative I of Janet’s kind.

On his return from Paris, during the years from 1892 to 1894, Freud devoted himself to translating Charcot’s *Leçons du mardi de la Salpêtrière* into German. In one of these he hints at the theme of sexuality:

Can it be a matter of chance that attacks in young people of whose good upbringing and manners Charcot speaks highly take the form of ravings and abusive language? This is no more the case, I think, than the familiar fact that the hysterical deliria of nuns revel in blasphemies and erotic pictures. In this we may suspect a connection which allows us a deep insight into the mechanism of hysterical states. There emerges in hysterical deliria material in the shape of ideas and impulsions to action which the subject in his healthy state has rejected and inhibited -has often inhibited by a great psychical

effort. Something similar holds good of a number of dreams, which spin out further associations which have been rejected or broken off during the day. I have based on this fact the theory of 'hysterical counter-will' which embraces a good number of hysterical symptoms (Freud, 1892-94, 137).

The theory of Counter-will reappears in «A Case of Successful Treatment by Hypnotism: with some remarks on the origin of hysterical symptoms through "Counter-Will"» (1892) where Freud reports on Emmy von N. and a mother who was unable to breastfeed. The theory of Counter-will consists in the hypothesis of a conflict between the aims and expectations of what Freud, using «the terminology of Janet», calls the «primary ego» and a series of «antithetic ideas» (Breuer, Freud, 1895, 92) which are generated on the occasion of an affective state of «expectation» and contemplate the possibility that the expectation or aim are dismissed. The growth of antithetical ideas increases the sense of «subjective uncertainty» by which someone in a «healthy ideational life... with the powerful self-confidence of health... suppresses and inhibits them as far as possible» (Freud, 1892, 121).

On expectation and uncertainty, Freud had in previous years considered that

Our interest is most particularly engaged by the mental state of expectation, which puts in motion a number of mental forces that have the greatest influence on the onset and cure of physical diseases. Fearful expectation is certainly not without its effect on the result.... The contrary state of mind, in which expectation is coloured by hope and faith, is an effective force with which we have to reckon, strictly speaking, in all our attempts at treatment and cure (Freud, 1890, 289).

Anxious, catastrophic expectation can be understood as a deficiency of the ego if we follow Janet. However, Freud adds that if the primary ego is weak, what happens is that the «distressing antithetic ideas» (1892, 121-122) start to fibrillate. Thus, they become apparent «at a moment of special excitement» (Freud, 1892, 128), causing disorientation and alienation. «They enjoy an unsuspected existence in a sort of shadow kingdom, till they emerge like bad spirits and take control of the body, which is as a rule under the orders of the predominant ego-consciousness» (127).

However, they do not constitute disorganized and senseless manifestations but, in line with Janet's thinking, subjectivities with a certain degree of organization which for the most part remain silent, although in particular circumstances they are expressed via symptoms and behaviours. In subsequent years, Freud would extend the idea of counter-will from the tics of Emmy to male impotence (1912b, 185), slips and lapses. Again, in an addition of 1920 to *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, he writes about how «an intention that had in the first place been suppressed broke through in the form of "counter-will" and led to an unpleasant situation» (1901, 155).

So, repressed unconscious and counter-will coexist in Freud's thought. Intentions, expectations, and other unconscious derivatives which have emerged into consciousness but later been repressed, can become counter-will.

FROM THE HEGEMONY OF THE PRIMARY EGO TO THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A PLURAL EGO

The term «counter-will» leads us to adopt the vertex of the primary Ego, whose aims and expectations are obstructed, sometimes as far as paralysis, by the antithetic ideas. If we instead conceived of counter-wills as co-primary Egos, they would open the way to a plural view of the I as composed of an assemblage of subjectivities which are found at various developmental stages: more advanced areas of the personality may coexist with more regressed areas.

Bromberg adopts a Janetian dissociative model. It is no accident that he has on many occasions confronted the first of the cases indicated by Freud as an example of counter-will: Emmy von N.

Emmy's «symptoms» had minds of their own, and it is not too difficult for a contemporary reader of that case history to hear Emmy's body voicing protests that her mind could not process as thought. Freud's efforts to help were being frustrated, and, despite his determination to succeed, he grew a bit impatient with what he referred to as Emmy's «unruly» self (2006, 110).

Emmy rejects the imposition of hypnotic order and therapeutic massages.⁶ Despite Freud's idealization of her disciplined primary Ego which functions well in society, there is also a co-primary ego living in Emmy, which Freud later described, once the treatment had been ended, as «a cruel and ruthless tyrant» (Breuer, Freud, 1895, 105n).

Bromberg detects a sign of transference in the patient's admission that she fears she may have offended Freud with a discourteous phrase during a massage (1996, 230-231). Freud does not yet have the tools for exploring and differentiating the sensations of an Ego excited by a type of stimulation which may have awakened drives of a sexual or aggressive nature in her; for connecting this to the anorexia later developed by Emmy and sustained in discriminating images of disgust and pleasure about food, and likewise about the treatment and her physician; for connecting them to an infantile Ego; or even, little by little, contacting a breastfeeding Ego which feels «fear and security towards the same object at the same moment» (Bromberg, 2006, 110).

⁶ Musatti writes that with Emmy «Freud employs hypnosis in a mixed way: sometimes to make the patient remember something, but also very often to avoid certain memories, using a method more like Janet's than Breuer's (Breuer, Freud, 1895, 94).

Under the hegemony of an efficient and respectable adult ego – the «true lady» idealized by Freud – Emmy could not do all this on her own. Her co-primary egos were not «authorized to express their existence in a *true lady*. . . someone who could not possibly be furious that, in her relationship with Freud, including her relationship to his therapeutic massages, she was allowed to exist only as either a highly moral person who had renounced her sexuality in the interest of motherhood or as a patient possessed by craziness» (Bromberg, 1996, 236-237).

The second case of counter-will discussed by Freud, the new mother unable to breastfeed, has been taken up by Borgogno. Freud hypnotizes the woman on two successive evenings:

On the first day, Freud, having caught the hostility and the less than excessive confidence of his patient, reassures her about her abilities as a mother and her strength to resist the unpleasant sensations she was experiencing. On the second day, he does not stop there, but credits the patient's sensations and communications, and glimpses a frightened and desolate child behind the rejecting and vomiting mother (Borgogno, 1981b, 34-35).

As Borgogno observes, it was only on the second evening that Freud was able to offer «something new which actually generated something different and put in motion a new internal emotional impulse» (35). He offered an «imaginative listening» which allowed him to identify with the patient's unconscious counter-will. Today we could see this counter-will as a co-primary Ego whose aims and expectations – which we could explore more deeply in analysis – were not only unspeakable but unimaginable for her and her immediate family.

Indeed, Borgogno interweaves the Ego and the environment in connecting the patient's aim (the «abandonment of her child») to her expectation («the abandonment which. . . she might undergo in fantasy and in reality by her own mother») (ibid.). Thus, the composition of the plural Ego becomes even more complex since every Ego's aims and expectations in relation to every other Ego would be articulated in it, along with the environment's aims and expectations of every Ego, and every Ego's aims and expectations of environment. In essence, a reintegration of Janet's legacy would be impossible without the complexity of psychoanalytic thought about the processes of projection-introjection, infantile sexuality, identifications, and the Oedipus complex.

Adding Janet's piece to the mosaic of psychoanalytic thought would instead lead to the formulation of further hypotheses: for example, that in the mother-environment's rapport with the new-born infant (which is reflected in the analyst-patient relationship) certain organizing factors of the child's Ego. can become linked during the course of development to dissociated portions of the mother's Ego. Within these Ego-nuclei of the infant, dissociated relational experiences would be left deposited but

capable of being reactivated if they should happen to encounter «the right trigger» in the later environment. With a further speculative leap we could hypothesise the inter-generational transmission of the dissociative fissures.

We have seen how Janet understood the early states of consciousness as intermediate stages between the idea of the I and pure mechanism (1889, I. 42). Adopting a Freudian perspective, the mechanism moved by events and heredity (obsolete also in modern cognitive science and neuroscience; Solms & Turnbull, 2002) would be replaced by a dynamic unconscious. We may believe that the modification of the «psychical id, unknown and unconscious, upon whose surface rests the ego» which creates the ego «by the direct influence of the external world» (Freud, 1922, 24-25) occurs in various ways in different segments of this surface.

It is as if the unconscious, with its impersonal tropisms (Bion, 1959) emitted *signs* (symptoms) which, should they happen to encounter a recipient-depository, would become *signals*. A series of rudimentary elements – sensations and images – would agglomerate at this point around *organizers* (Spitz, 1965). It will depend on the relationship between the energetic quantum of that nucleus⁷ – how much of the sexual and aggressive drives it pulls with it – and on the quality of the environmental-regulatory responses whether or not it evolves and becomes more and more a person, or turns in on itself and remains encapsulated (Hopper, 1991).

While Janet implicitly located the organizers of identity in the external world (the very attribution of one's name being a good example of it (1889, I.46), with the passage from automatism to the bodily Id, the organizers come to be located at the threshold between the internal instinctual current and its external working. The environment weaves the instinctual threads from which the fabric of the plural Ego is woven.

A SECOND DIFFERENCE: PHANTASIEREN

Freud often alludes to a multiple Ego. He does so clearly in 1907 in «Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming [*Phantasieren*]», noting that the *ars poetica* consists in «overcoming the feeling of repulsion» towards fantasies that make us feel ashamed, «which is undoubtedly connected with the barriers that rise between each single ego and the others» (153). Therefore, in «The Psycho-Analytic View of Psychogenic Disturbance of Vision», he defines the Ego as a «collective concept of the “ego” – a compound which is made up variously at different times» (1910, 213). Furthermore, a year later he addresses the transformation of the pleasure Ego into a reality Ego and, as in a dual developmental process, links this ego development with the sexual drive's transition from its initial auto-eroticism to object love (1911, 219).

⁷ With Bleger (1967) we could think in terms of an *agglutinated nucleus*, thereby building a bridge towards the Argentinian's thinking about the psychotic-symbiotic portion present in every personality.

Janet, or rather his thinking about the *fonction du réel*, is in fact Freud's starting point in «Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning» (1911, 218). For Freud, the first consequence of establishing the reality principle in the psychic apparatus – that is, the modification of the surface of the Id into Ego – is the birth of the function of attention, which «meets the sense-impressions half way instead of awaiting their appearance.» In parallel, a system of annotation was set up, whose task it was to lay down the results of this periodical activity of consciousness – a part of what we call *memory*». Then, in place of repression, there is «an impartial passing of judgement», a highest judge (who in a plural setting could be rethought of as a supreme court) ensuring accordance of a given representation with reality based on a comparison «with the memory-traces of reality». Thus, the disorganized motor discharge becomes organized action because part of the representational activity flows into a process of thought which opens a spatiotemporal window in the psyche sufficient to organize a directed action (220-221). These are functions of the Ego, whose efficacious operation was attributed by Janet to an integration between the creative and preservative activities of the psyche (Janet, 1889, II. 180).

Freud, however, goes further: «With the introduction of the reality principle one species of thought-activity was split off; it was kept free from reality-testing and remained subordinated to the pleasure principle alone. This activity is *phantasying*, which begins already in children's play, and later, continued as day-dreaming, abandons dependence on real objects» (Freud, op. cit., 222).

In my opinion, there is a second fundamental difference between Freud and Janet, one which is consistent with the Freudian idea of *Phantasieren*.⁸ Although Janet anticipated the rule of free association, calling it «automatic talking» (Ellenberger, 1970, 366), he did not do the same with its «necessary counterpart» (Freud, 1912a, 112). I am referring to the technical innovation which encouraged Freud to identify no longer with the hypnotist-Ego which commands hypnotic order nor with the educator-Ego which – as Janet recommends – forces the patient's attention «to look for this or that memory» and urges him «to make every possible effort» (2016, 40), but with a particular mental state of waiting and attention directed to the unconscious. The functions which Freud cites – in negative – to delineate the analyst-Ego

⁸ Freud introduced Varendonck's book on *Phantasieren* (day-dreaming, fantasizing or lucid dreaming) with these words: «the author has succeeded in getting hold of the mode of thought-activity to which one abandons oneself during the state of distraction into which we readily pass before sleep or upon incomplete awakening» (Freud, 1921, 271). Freud sees this this «freely wandering or phantastic thinking» as being «in opposition to intentionally directed reflection» (272). Moreover, it is not intrinsically «fore-conscious» because it «does not owe its peculiarities to the circumstances that it proceeds mostly fore-consciously, nor are the forms changed when it is accomplished consciously.» Finally, «even phantastic thinking is not invariably in want of an aim and end-representation» (ibid.). Along the same lines as Janet's thinking about the conserving and creative activities of consciousness, Ricoeur differentiates between *obligatory-substitutive* and *creative-inventive* modes of *Phantasieren* (1978, pp. 112-113). On the relationship between *Phantasieren* and metapsychological thought, see Luchetti (2002) and Contardi (2010).

are deliberate attention, conscious memory, intellectual synthesis (1912a, 112ff): functions which must therefore be suspended.⁹

CONCLUSIONS

Currently there is a heated debate about the best method for treating dissociative and post-traumatic disturbances and identity disorders, in the course of which there has been much reference to the old rivalry between Janet and Freud (e.g. Lesley, Varvin, 2016; Søndergaard, 2017). In this paper I wanted to contribute the idea that, if it is understood in a way that integrates Janet's thinking, or at least does not exclude it, the analytic process, with its intense frequency, its long duration, and its attention to the intimately bodily, can reveal itself as particularly suitable for work with dissociative states and the rudimentary forms of consciousness: those sensations and images (among which Janet would include dreams) which present themselves as extraneous to the person, but are not completely impersonal. Think, for example, of traumatic memories which are represented in images, intrusive flashes rather than genuine recollections, or remain encysted in the body (Van der Kolk, 2014). From a Janetian standpoint, *Phantasieren*, day-dreaming, is a dissociative state in which the boundaries of the I are blurred. The internal and external links which keep the plural-Ego cohesive are loosened. It is possible that this condition may facilitate the decomposition (to recall the etymology of analysis) of dissociated structures with the consequent liberating of the linked (or fixed, to use a term common to Janet and Freud) instinctual energy, with a view to a composition of new syntheses activated on a more elevated level: followed by new syntheses on a still higher level, and so on.¹⁰

We can, in fact, understand dissolution of the dissociative space among several Egos as the genesis of a supraordinate I more complex than its predecessors and thus capable of understanding them. This supraordinate I should nevertheless have sent the extraneous Egos back to their own field of consciousness. At the moment in which an I can be seen, can become an object-Ego of observation, and is no longer identified with «*absorbing sensations*» and with a «*purely affective life without knowledge and without reflection*» (Janet, 1889, I. 48-49, italics in original), a new subject-Ego is generated which will then be able to be observed in its own turn.

⁹ Speziale-Bagliacca (2008) links evenly suspended attention to the original meaning of *rêverie*: *dreaming*, but also *raving*. What occurs to me in this connection is the fact that a drug and a medication can share the same active principle; or indeed Hölderlin's lines to Patmos: «But where there is danger/A rescuing element grows as well» (1802, 39). Speziale-Bagliacca understands *rêverie* in general as a *psychic activity not subjected to attention*, which can be translated in a specifically psychoanalytic context as a *dream with the eyes open, closed or half-closed, but without being asleep*.

¹⁰ According to Peto, «States of disintegration occur constantly during normal development, creating possibilities of further integration, or a starting-point for faulty fixations» (190, 416). In a similar way, an interpretation to good purpose provokes a temporarily depersonalizing and traumatic effect, a kind of «transitory disintegration within the ego» (ibid.).

Furthermore, a Freud-Janet integration would lead us to admit that the analyst can indeed function as an auxiliary Ego (Spitz, 1965), especially in strongly regressed psychic conditions in which the Ego's synthetic activity is paralysed and not sufficiently developed, or when the necessary dissociation between observing and observed Egos (Sterba, 1934) cannot happen because one is confronted with a «permanently unified ego, such as we meet with in cases of excessive narcissisms or in certain psychotic states where ego and id have become fused» (ibid., 120).

It seems to me that all this is close to the Winnicott of «Primitive Emotional Development» (1945) where he puts forward the notions of unintegration and primary dissociation, and describes analysis as a process of *integration, personalization and development of the sense of reality* by being «known in all his bits and pieces by one person»: because «to be known means to feel integrated» (150). In this connection, it should be stressed that after Freud's death in 1939, Janetian dissociation took centre stage in British psychoanalysis.

From his medical thesis onwards, Fairbairn (1929) concentrated his energies on the relationship between Freudian repression and Janetian dissociation, but only with his investigation of schizoid phenomena, undertaken in 1940, did Janet's legacy return to the foreground in his work. Indeed, for him, there is no fundamental difference between Janet's dissociation and that splitting of the Ego which he described as characteristic of schizoid states (Fairbairn, 1954). A few years later, Klein used Fairbairn's ideas to create the paranoid-schizoid position (1946, 3ff).

In 1943 the Vice-President of the British Society, Edward Glover, published 'The Concept of Dissociation', in which he discussed the importance of reintroducing Janet's concept of dissociation into psychoanalysis (12). As I said, Winnicott devoted himself to exploring «dissociation... in its initial or natural forms» (151). So in 1946 Klein relied on this work of Winnicott's to maintain that «the early ego largely lacks cohesion, and a tendency to integration alternates with a tendency towards disintegration, a falling into bits» (4).

To conclude, from a Janet-Freud perspective, analysis can also be thought of as a growth medium in which – independently of the fact that there may be the conditions and the opportunity to make a regressed Ego progress, to strengthen a weak Ego, heal a wounded Ego, repair a deficient Ego, give life back to a dying Ego – an analysed Ego has the opportunity to germinate by contact with the analyst and his own internal voices, an Ego in which the person can trust at times when the previous Egos are unable (because too regressed, weak, wounded, deficient, or dying to benefit from the psychotherapeutic possibilities of analyst) to deal with existence.

SUMMARY AND KEY WORDS

Janet meets Freud. The Perspective of a plural-Ego Psychology. In the last decades, a renewal of interest has occurred in Psycho-traumatology. The main authors dealing with this field found in Janet their own «noble father»; yet, in doing so, they marginalized Freud's legacy. This was a sort of retaliation for an ostracism by psychoanalysts of Janet's legacy. I retrace the Freud-Janet quarrel, in order to argue that their legacies are not incompatible. Conversely, a meeting between Freud and Janet could generate new theoretical and clinical insights.

KEYWORDS: Consciousness, dissociation, plural-Ego, pre-verbal, psycho-traumatology.

FREUD RENCONTRE JANET. NOTES POUR UNE PSYCHOLOGIE DU MOI-PLURIELLE. Au cours des dernières décennies, nous avons assisté à une renaissance de la Psycho-traumatologie, dont les principaux représentants ont retracé leur «noble père» jusqu'à Janet, mais ce faisant, ils ont marginalisé l'héritage de Freud. Comme s'il s'agissait d'un contrepoint, cela s'est également produit en raison d'une réticence des psychanalystes à reconnaître l'héritage de Janet comme pertinent pour la théorie et la pratique analytiques. Je retrace donc les origines de la controverse Freud-Janet afin de montrer que leurs héritages ne sont pas incompatibles, mais que leur rencontre peut plutôt générer de nouvelles occasions théoriques et cliniques.

MOTS-CLÉS: Conscience, dissociation, moi-pluriel, pré-verbal, psychotraumatologie.

FREUD ENCUENTRA JANET. NOTAS PARA UNA PSICOLOGÍA DEL YO-PLURAL. En las últimas décadas, hemos sido testigos de un retorno de la Psicotraumatología, cuyos principales exponentes han individuado en Janet su «padre noble» pero al hacerlo han marginado el legado de Freud. Como si fuera un contrapunto, esto sucedió también a causa de la renuencia de los psicoanalistas a reconocer el legado de Janet como relevante para la teoría y la práctica analítica. Por este motivo hago el recorrido de los orígenes de la querelle de Freud-Janet para mostrar cómo sus legados no sean incompatibles, sino que el encuentro pueda ser generador de nuevas ideas teóricas y clínicas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Conciencia, disociación, yo-plural, pre-verbal, psicotraumatología.

FREUD TRIFFT JANET. BEMERKUNGEN ZU EINER PSYCHOLOGIE DES PLURALEN ICH. In den letzten Jahrzehnten haben wir eine Rückkehr der Psychotraumatologie erlebt, deren bedeutendste Vertreter in Janet ihren ‚Ziehvater‘ ausfindig gemacht, dabei jedoch das Vermächtnis Freuds marginalisiert haben. Gleichsam eine Vergeltung von Gleichem mit Gleichem ist dies auch zurückzuführen auf die Weigerung seitens der Psychoanalytiker, Janets Erbe als für die analytische Theorie und Praxis relevant anzuerkennen. Ich zeichne mithin die Ursprünge der Auseinandersetzung Freud-Janet mit dem Ziel nach, zu zeigen, inwiefern ihre Vermächtnisse nicht inkompatibel sind, sondern dass im Gegenteil ihr Aufeinandertreffen neue theoretische und klinische Anstöße generieren kann.

SCHLÜSSELWÖRTER: Bewusstsein, Dissoziation, plurales Ich, Präverbales, Psychotraumatologie.

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Original italian version:
Riv. Psicoanal., 2018, 4, 681-700

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(DOI10.26364/RPSA20180640681)

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