

Criminology Comes Back to Pierre Janet

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ABSTRACT

Returning to the work of the psychologist Pierre Janet, a contemporary and friend of Henri Bergson,² is no exercise in nostalgia: new psychological therapeutic practices structured around the concepts of trauma *and* dissociation—which argue that the disintegration of consciousness can lead to an uncontrollable splitting of the personality—make increasingly explicit reference to his work. This is the case for the European Society for Trauma and Dissociation (ESTD),³ which is affiliated with the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (ISSTD).⁴

Keywords: Janet, criminology, dissociation, psychology

La criminología vuelve a Pierre Janet

RESUMEN

Volver al trabajo del psicólogo Pierre Janet, un contemporáneo y amigo de Henri Bergson, no es un ejercicio de nostalgia: las nuevas prácticas terapéuticas que están estructuradas alrededor de los conceptos de trauma y desasociación—que argumentan que la desintegración de la conciencia puede llevar a una división incontrollable de la personalidad—hacen referencias cada vez más explícitas de su trabajo. Este es el caso de la Sociedad Europea para el Trauma y la Desasociación (ESTD), que está afiliada con Sociedad Internacional para el Trauma y la Desasociación (ISSTD).

Palabras clave: Janet, criminología, desasociación, psicología

1 <http://facedroit.univ-lyon3.fr/m-oulahbib-lucien-162322.kjsp>.

2 Bergson sponsored his appointment to the Collège de France, and was his colleague at the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques.

3 <http://www.estd.org/history.html>.

4 <http://www.isst-d.org/>.

对皮埃尔·让内进行回顾的犯罪学

摘要

回顾心理学家皮埃尔·让内（与亨利·柏格森同时代的人物，同时也是柏格森的朋友）的研究成果，并不是因为思念之情：围绕创伤与解离概念（此概念主张，意识的分离能导致性格产生不受控制的分离）的新的心理治疗实践越来越明显地参考让内的研究。隶属于国际创伤与解离研究学会（ISSTD）的欧洲创伤与解离学会（ESTD）就是一个例子。

关键词：让内，犯罪学，解离，心理

Countries such as Japan, Germany, Canada, the Netherlands, Russia, and the United States are demonstrating a clear interest in returning to the work of Pierre Janet. But, it could be said that this is happening more quickly in France, where his work seems well suited to answer the shortcomings of diagnoses in a number of recidivist murders that have recently made headlines—particularly cases of sexual assaults on female joggers and pre-adolescents (such as the case of Angélique in France).⁵ For instance, one attacker remarked that he was unable to control himself when his “urge” took hold.⁶ Something similar was true of Angélique’s murderer.

A “Janetian” diagnosis would perhaps be something like the following: *this* individual, when affected by his urges, is signifying that he has become dissociative to the final degree and, because of the rapes he has previously committed, proves to *be* dangerous, both to himself and others. This implies that it is not possible to leave him free, at least until he has been given long-term treatment. It is therefore not possible simply to order him to seek care, even as part of his sentence.

5 See http://www.lepost.fr/article/2010/09/08/2212145_recidiviste-il-tue-une-joggeuse-dans-le-nord-le-meurtre-pouvait-il-etre-empeche.html. According to Yves Thoret (associate professor, Research Unit for the Psychopathology of Identity, Thought, and Health Processes [Laboratoire de psychopathologie de l’identité, de la pensée et des processus de santé], Paris X University), we can distinguish in Janet’s work “four functions of the dissociation mechanism: disaggregation, which separates phenomena that elude consciousness from the psyche; reversible recomposition, by which the dissociated representations are grouped together once more and can form a new personality; the burying of the pathogenic, traumatic memory; and the beneficial effect of a clinical action that aims to actively modify the memory of the traumatic scene by directly modifying its content The dissociation mechanism should be distinguished from that of repression, and should be studied independently in different pathological formations, with hysteria as its foundation.” Yves Thoret, Anne-Claire Giraud, and Benjamine Ducerf, “La dissociation hystérique dans les textes de Janet et Freud avant 1911,” *L’Évolution Psychiatrique* 64 (October–December 1999): 749–64.

6 “The man gave no precise explanation for his actions: ‘Even he doesn’t know what drove him to do it’” (<http://www.au-troisieme-oeil.com/index.php?page=actu&type=skr&news=31171>). See also <http://www.clicanoo.re/11-actualites/16-faits-divers/262798-huit-ans-d-emprisonnement-pour-le.html>.

Most contemporary writers are hesitant about sending those with obsessions to prison. It is undeniable that, in most cases, actual imprisonment can and should be avoided. But it is sometimes necessary to take them out of their environment and to create an artificial environment that is simpler than the natural one, and it is often necessary, at least for a period, to resort either to total internment or, at least, to relative isolation.⁷

Urge and Impulse

Such a diagnosis requires a precise definition of the terms used. The issue is not just semantic: an impulse is controllable, as opposed to an urge, which is driven by a quasi-mechanical, *automatic* stage.⁸

The concept of imprisonment has, admittedly, gained a bad reputation since Foucault, although the unambiguous systematicity of his work has been criticized,⁹ particularly the idea that such a pathology *should* not be considered as a disease, but as the very dimension of being free.¹⁰ This gives mental illness a romantic character, whereas in fact it narrows the consciousness and prevents any imaginary projection. Contrary to what Maurice Blanchot (Foucault's master) says, Hölderlin did not write thanks to madness, but in order to dispel it, and to ease his suffering.

For Janet, impulse—i.e. tendency or desire (the disposition toward carrying out certain acts)¹¹—can either be emphasized or suspended depending on the hierarchy established in a moment T by the Synthesis or Personality. This shifting state of presence/absence, where tendencies continue to develop—these are not clothes waiting to be put on—embodies, for Janet, the subconscious:

What characterizes the subconsciousness is not that tendencies wane or remain latent, but rather that they develop and are powerfully realized, without the mind's other tendencies being warned of their realization, and without their being able to work against it.¹²

7 Pierre Janet, *Les obsessions et la psychasthénie* (1903) (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), tome 2, volume 1, 702.

8 Pierre Janet, *L'automatisme psychologique* (1889) (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1997).

9 Marcel Gauchet, preface to "De Pinel à Freud," in Gladys Swain, *Le sujet de la folie* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997).

10 Lucien Oulabbib, *Éthique et épistémologie du nihilisme, les meurtriers du sens* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002), and *La philosophie cannibale* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 2006).

11 Pierre Janet, "La tension psychologique et ses oscillations," in *Traité de Psychologie*, ed. Georges Dumas (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1923), tome 1, chapter 4, part 1, "L'automatisme des tendances," 923. See also Pierre Janet, *De l'angoisse à l'extase* (1926) (Paris: Société Pierre Janet, 1975), tome 2, 420.

12 Pierre Janet, "La psycho-analyse" (1913), in *La psychanalyse de Freud* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004), 2, "Le mécanisme pathologique du souvenir traumatique," 75–76.

Janet adds:

I believe there is a whole psychological study to be written—and a very interesting one—on this internal, continual reverie that plays a considerable part in many people's lives. We could study the content of these reveries, and would sometimes observe interesting psychological work being carried out within us without our knowledge. It is thanks to such subconscious work that we find problems resolved that, a short time ago, we did not understand. This very often happens.¹³

But we must not confuse these impulses or tendencies with urges, which express the disintegration or hysterical dimension (i.e. the narrowing) of the consciousness, leading ultimately to a splitting of the personality and those things that result from it, oscillating between apathy and active agitation (with no purpose beyond ardor and passion).¹⁴ Tendencies are manifested openly, without any further synthesis.

It is *this* stage, one of gradual implosion, that Janet calls the unconscious proper. This is to be understood literally: whereas, in the subconscious, impulses are constantly agitated insofar as they are possible (although constrained to a greater or lesser degree by the synthesis of the consciousness, which leads to slips, moments of clumsiness, increases or decreases in tension and mood), the unconscious requires precisely that the subject no longer has any awareness at all that they are speaking out loud incessantly, or that their limbs are moving, ranging from tics to constant agitation.

Janet observes, for example, an increase in silence,¹⁵ a kind of narrowing of the mind,¹⁶ coupled with a feeling of tiredness and a distrust of oneself and the world. As a condition for exerting effort, the “feeling of freedom and the very feeling of existence” cannot be “questioned at the moment of motor effort.” Janet emphasizes this point by citing these remarks made by Maine de Biran.¹⁷ This may not be self-evident, and may lead to a refusal to act, to *fatigue of being oneself*,¹⁸ to melancholy, and to their extremes—which includes *psychasthenia*, “ordinarily characterized by obsessions, phobias, and impulses that are accompanied by consciousness but which, in certain cases, lead to genuine and serious delusions.”¹⁹

13 Pierre Janet, *Névroses et idées fixes* (1898) (Paris: Société Pierre Janet, 1990), 393.

14 Janet, *De l'angoisse à l'extase*, tome 2, 92.

15 Ibid., 199.

16 Ibid., 198.

17 Ibid., 111.

18 Alain Ehrenberg, *The Weariness of the Self: Diagnosing the History of Depression in the Contemporary Age* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010). See Lucien Oulabbib, “Et si Janet était plus actuel que Freud?” *PSN: Psychiatrie-Sciences Humaines-Neurosciences* 1, no. 7 (February 2009): 1–14.

19 Janet, *De l'angoisse à l'extase*, tome 1, 277.

The Unconscious as a Pathology of the Subconscious

Chronologically, Janet suggests that it is the latent accumulation of various disorders resulting from unrealized action that renders the person, if not immediately unwell, then at least anxious, worried,²⁰ and fatigued (*épuisé*). This is no doubt because the body as a whole *does not understand* why the action has not been realized,²¹ or why its failure has not been analyzed, given that a large amount of energy was synthesized for it. If it also becomes clear that such realization is impossible, this necessarily triggers deeper and deeper doubts about the *reason* for each action. Such doubt can lead to the “narrowing of one’s mind,”²² restricted now to a few elementary behaviors that are repeated indefinitely, while the various other sensations that stem from the disorders that follow the unrealized action are to some extent neglected, or else repeated in *idées fixes* and obsessions, *dissociated*²³—as though they had been set apart from the rest of the organism:

One fine day the patient—because, of course, he has become a sick man—is examined by the doctor. He pinches him on his left arm, and asks if he felt anything. To the doctor’s surprise, the patient claims that he no longer knows how to feel consciously, and that he can no longer, so to speak, catch within his personal perception sensations that have been neglected too long. He has become anesthetic.²⁴

Such anesthesia is sometimes selective, and does not correspond to a specific lesion on any particular nerve:²⁵

I have myself seen a patient who seemed very distinctive to me. Both her hands were completely anesthetic, but she always recognized by touch two or three objects that were part of her normal outfit: her earrings and her tortoiseshell hairpins. She could feel nothing else—a piece of gold, a pencil—in her hands. Another pa-

20 Ibid., 144–45 and 423.

21 Ibid., 149. See also *Les obsessions et la psychasthénie* (1903), part 2, section 3, 2, “l’hypothèse de la dérivation psychologique,” (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2005), tome 2, 248–54.

22 Janet, *De l’angoisse à l’extase*, tome 2, 198–99.

23 Ibid., 386: “I believe that the word ‘dissociation’ should be reserved for ruptures in associations that have been created previously, for ruptures in associations between a word and its meaning, or between the various consecutive movements that make up a single action—in brief, it should be reserved for the destruction of a primary, constitutional, or acquired tendency.”

24 Pierre Janet, *Conférences à la Salpêtrière* (1892) (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2003), 37–38.

25 This is contrary to the argument of Richard Webster in *Why Freud Was Wrong* (New York: Basic, 1996), who—in his willingness to demonstrate the falsity of Freud’s theory—often reduces this sort of anesthesia either to organic causes or to pretending.

tient whose hands were also completely anesthetic always knew, simply by touch and without a mirror, whether her hair was arranged as she liked it.²⁶

It is precisely that which is absolutely not *felt* (in the complex sense of conscious intuition, the sensation being a phenomenon dominated by secondary acts, which in this case are excluded) that Janet sees as the strictly unconscious act.²⁷ He therefore sees this as the most extreme pathological point of our subconscious, rather than the subconscious itself.

Unconscious acts detach themselves, duplicate themselves, and may even oppose the present, but the conscious/subconscious pair emerges when it is a matter of reproducing an action stored earlier (putting on earrings or hairpins or checking one's hair, as in the examples from Janet cited above) that expresses behaviors that have been crystallized in mechanisms and automatisms—i.e. in solutions or syntheses of previous actions that refuse the resulting action when faced with a new situation. This new situation can be just as much a trauma, what Janet calls a shock-emotion, as a new approach.²⁸ This leads to the narrowing of what is visible (although the brain may still continuously imprint images of it, but ones that consciousness obscures),²⁹ and the subject instead returns over and over to the known, or to the most personal automatism:

Instead of being complete and governing all conscious thought, psychological automatism can be partial, governing a small group of phenomena distinct from others, isolated from the individual's total consciousness, which continues to develop on its own account in another direction.³⁰

This work by Janet, *L'automatisme psychologique*, was published in 1889.

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26 Janet, *Conférences à la Salpêtrière*, 21–22.

27 Janet, *L'automatisme psychologique*, part 2, chapter 1, “Les actes subconscients,” I, “Les catalepsies partielles,” 264–65: “By ‘unconscious act,’ we understand an act that has all the characteristics of a psychological fact with the exception of one: the person who carries it out is always unaware of it even at the very moment that they carry it out.”

28 Janet, *De l'angoisse à l'extase*, tome 2, 329.

29 “Images were projected at high speed to the students, showing faces distorted in fear. [Due to the speed,] the participants were not able to actually see the images. But the researchers—who were observing their brains at the same time using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)—saw the corresponding part of the fear center light up” (“La science rejoint Freud,” *Le Point*, April 20, 2006).

30 Janet, *L'automatisme psychologique*, 264–65.

A Chronology of Janet's Work

Janet had apparently planned this approach well before 1885. He intended, for instance, to write a thesis on hallucinations when he obtained his aggregation in 1882.³¹ He later published a number of articles (which neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot noted), followed by his thesis, *L'automatisme psychologique* (1889), and then a book, *L'état mental des hystériques* (1893), for which Charcot wrote the preface (as Serge Nicolas points out),³² and which had a decisive impact on research into neurosis.

Freud did not disagree. In *An Autobiographical Study*, he wrote:

I proposed to [Breuer] that we should issue a joint publication. At first he objected vehemently, but in the end he gave way, especially since, in the meantime, Janet's works had anticipated some of his results, such as the tracing back of hysterical symptoms to events in the patient's life, and their removal by means of hypnotic reproduction *in statu nascendi*. In 1893 we issued a preliminary communication, "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena," and in 1895 there followed our book, *Studies on Hysteria*.³³

Nor should we be surprised that, in 1913, Janet quoted something he had written in 1893, when *L'état mental des hystériques* was published:

We are pleased that Messrs. Breuer and Freud have recently verified the interpretation we offered long ago of *idées fixes* among hysterics.³⁴

Between 1885 and 1888, Janet had already published a whole series of articles that would be preparatory for these two main later works (*L'automatisme* and *L'état mental*) in Ribot's *Revue philosophique* and, notably, the journal of Charcot's Société de psychologie physiologique (1885, 1886).³⁵ These articles relate to catalepsy, somnambulism, suggestions, dreams, habits, passions, and so on. Furthermore, in 1886, he published an article titled "Les actes inconscients et le dédoublement de la personnalité pendant le somnambulisme provoqué" (Unconscious Acts and the Splitting of the Personality During Induced Sleepwalking) in the *Revue*

31 Serge Nicolas, introduction to Janet, *Conférences à la Salpêtrière*, 7.

32 Ibid., 11.

33 Sigmund Freud, *An Autobiographical Study*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1950). Published online as part of *Sigmund Freud—29 Major Books and Articles*, https://archive.org/details/SigmundFreud/page/n1_4199.

34 Janet, *La psychanalyse de Freud*, 58.

35 Nicolas in Janet, *Conférences à la Salpêtrière*, 7.

Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger.³⁶ Freud on the other hand states that, from 1886 to 1891, he himself “did little scientific work, and published scarcely anything,”³⁷ although this was clearly not the case in the period that followed.

Freud's Hostility toward Janet

Many critics continued to claim, in 1925, that Freud's theories were inspired by those of Janet, something that Freud was very unhappy with, revealing in *An Autobiographical Study* that he had, for instance, never heard of Janet while he was following Charcot's classes at La Salpêtrière in 1885.³⁸ And indeed, Janet did not have permanent direct contact with Charcot until 1890,³⁹ when Charcot entrusted him, among others,⁴⁰ with managing a psychology laboratory at the Salpêtrière clinic.⁴¹ Charcot became the supervisor of Janet's medical thesis in 1893. In 1885, Charcot tasked Freud with the translation into German of his “Nouvelles leçons.”⁴²

But that was enough for Freud to write, in *An Autobiographical Study*, that “Charcot accepted the offer, I was admitted to the circle of his personal acquaintances, and from that time forward I took a full part in all that went on at the Clinic.”⁴³ Note in passing, in connection with this “full part,” that when Freud asked Charcot to supervise his thesis, “a comparative study of hysterical and organic paralyzes,” Charcot declined.⁴⁴ Freud remarked that Charcot “agreed with [his] view, but it was easy to see that in reality he took no special interest in penetrating more deeply into the psychology of the neuroses.”⁴⁵ But Charcot *unceasingly* researched the specifically psychological foundations of hysteria—for instance, in his 1884 book, *Pour guérir les paralysies psychiques par des procédés psychologiques* (Treating Psychological Paralyzes through Psychological Procedures). However, he did not share Freud's view that sexual repression lay at the basis of *all* neurosis. Janet took the same position, without necessarily trying to start an argument with Freud, for his aim was to make scientific advances.

36 Ibid., 14.

37 Freud, *An Autobiographical Study*, 4196.

38 Ibid., 4191.

39 In his *Histoire de la médecine, Charcot, 1825–1893*, 53, Charles Drèze writes that “Pierre Janet was introduced into Charcot's service by his uncle in 1885, and worked there constantly and continuously from 1890 to 1910” (<http://www.md.ucl.ac.be/loumed/CD/DATA/120/36-69.PDF>).

40 Charcot “asked him, in 1892, to give a series of lectures at La Salpêtrière (March 11, March 17, April 1)” (Nicolas in Janet, *Conférences à la Salpêtrière*, 11).

41 Ibid., 11.

42 Freud, *An Autobiographical Study*, 4190.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 4191.

45 Ibid.

Janet could, for instance, write the following about Breuer and Freud in 1913 (I emphasize some significant words):

these authors showed using very well chosen examples that certain disorders were the consequence of “traumatic memories”; their observations, I remarked with pleasure, were entirely analogous to my own. At the very most, these authors had changed a few words in the psychological descriptions they gave: what I called “psychological analysis,” they called “psychoanalysis”; what they called “complexus,” I had called the “psychological system,” thereby referring to the set of psychological phenomena and movements—either of the members or of the viscera—that remained connected and which constituted the traumatic memory; and they gave the name “catharsis” to what I had labeled a dissociation of *idées fixes* or moral disinfection.⁴⁶

In the same account, which was widely criticized, Janet also recognized Freud’s merits on certain topics—for example, on repression,⁴⁷ or later, in 1926, on the link between anxiety and “sexual acts that are halted before consummation.”⁴⁸

Falsehoods about Janet’s Work

Janet sought “peer-to-peer” discussion rather than controversy—so why so much hatred for Janet, not just on the part of Freud but even now, several decades later, from those like Élisabeth Roudinesco (a historian, rather than a psychologist or doctor by training)?⁴⁹

In Roudinesco’s discussion of Janet, in *Histoire de la psychanalyse en France*, she is interested only in Janet’s envy and jealousy of Freud, which she sees as the main cause of his criticisms of psychoanalysis. Her view is based on work that is, if not wrong, then at least obsolete. A single example demonstrates this. Roudinesco speaks of a “misunderstanding present since Charcot” in describing correspondence between Jung and Freud, particularly regarding the general refusal in France, and by Janet in particular, to place sexual repression at the heart of analysis.⁵⁰ So, Freud apparently remarked to Jung that

46 Janet, *La psychanalyse de Freud*, 58.

47 *Ibid.*, 75.

48 Janet, *De l'angoisse à l'extase*, tome 2, 255.

49 This institutional reminder seems necessary when we read Roudinesco’s treatment of Onfray. Their disagreement did not justify such an argument from authority: <http://bibliobs.nouvelobs.com/20100416/18956/roudinesco-deboulonne-onfray>. Furthermore, while Onfray refused to debate with Roudinesco (<http://www.mediapart.fr/club/edition/les-invites-de-mediapart/article/180410/reponse-delisabeth-roudinesco-la-reponse-de-mic>). I am very happy to offer a number of clarifications on these questions.

50 Élisabeth Roudinesco, *Histoire de la psychanalyse en France* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), tome 1, 224.

Janet has a fine intellect, but he set off without sexuality and now he can't get any further—and we know that, in France, there's no turning back.

Note that the use of the term “misunderstanding” attached to Charcot's name is apparently ambiguous, since it suggests that Charcot fundamentally misunderstood Freud. But that was not the case: Charcot simply did not agree with the causal unilaterality Freud defended, as we have seen. And it is clear that Janet was not unfamiliar with questions of a sexual nature. For example:

An agitated person cannot stay put, but paces backs and forth in his room, or else goes out and walks forward indefinitely: if I hadn't gone out I would have broken everything; I had to walk a lot, or else I had to masturbate to calm myself down ...⁵¹

Freud was admittedly more successful than Janet, especially with the vogue for surrealism and automatic writing, and then for Freudo-Marxism, and then for personal improvement—although today his star has dimmed considerably, something that has resulted far more from the insights of cognitive, motivational, and differential psychology,⁵² than from the polemics fueled by *Le Livre noir de la psychanalyse*⁵³ or, more recently, by Michel Onfray's book.⁵⁴

Janet's Consideration of Powerlessness to Act as Trauma

For Janet, this unicausal system does not correspond to his own object of study, because such repression is not the *only* thing that matters. Rather, what matters is the even deeper thing it acts as a symptom of: *powerlessness to act*. This leads people, for instance, to use sex, or food (anorexia, bulimia), abulia, irascibility, and partial or hemiplegic paralysis *as* compensating solutions, as diversions. Excesses of these express a subconscious conflict. The final stage of this conflict is its consignment to the unconscious—i.e. its dissociation.

Thus, instead of acting to achieve *this* goal, which would require focusing on the feeling of effort,⁵⁵ the subject instead directs his or her excess or misused energy toward a distraction (such as food) resulting in a crisis that may turn into flight, into an *idée fixe*, into a neurosis in Janet's sense of the term. In other words, it may

51 Janet, *De l'angoisse à l'extase*, tome 2, 326.

52 For instance, the work of Joseph Nuttin and Maurice Reuchlin.

53 Catherine Meyer et al. *Le livre noir de la psychanalyse: Vivre, penser et aller mieux sans Freud* (Paris: Arènes, 2005).

54 Michel Onfray, *Le crépuscule d'une idole* (Paris: Grasset, 2010).

55 For Janet, action is regulated by four principal feelings (which are to be distinguished from the emotions, which are their scansion): effort, joy, sadness, and fatigue. See Janet, *De l'angoisse à l'extase*, tome 2, 326.

become something that regressively confines effort, which takes refuge in inability, in mania that may go as far as tics,⁵⁶ in interminable stubbornness,⁵⁷ in perpetual efforts, like compensating for the lack of adequate action through the “exaggerated need to score a victory for one’s pride,”⁵⁸ or else by refusing to relax, to rest, or to wander,⁵⁹ or, on the other hand, by halting in meticulous partial paralyses and in a lack of regard for oneself that may go as far as self-disgust.⁶⁰ When no lesion is detectable, in their extreme configuration, these behaviors are translated, according to Janet, by a narrowing of the mind (i.e. a weakening of the synthesis or consciousness) when is then reinforced by a decrease in tension, or else fatigue and torpor.

In short, there can be multiple causes of powerlessness to act—sexual disorder being, so to speak, one of its consequences, but not the sole or systematic cause.

In Search of a New Unifying Theory

Enriching Janetian psychological analysis may therefore be of value to current research that aims, as in theoretical physics, to develop a new unifying theory to explain the dynamics of the human psyche.

Janet believed he had captured it in four feelings, which are vital in the psychological sense (i.e. they involve mental rather than physical force). These accompany and feel action all the time: what must be expended as *effort*, what it brings as *joy*, what it costs as *fatigue*, and the possible *sadness* that arises if the action fails or does not emerge. If these four key feelings are excessively present or if they are absent, if they are too strong or too weak, trauma *par excellence* develops. (Janet groups all the related symptoms under the term *psychasthenia*.) It is this *multidimensional* analysis of trauma that connects Janet to Charcot. Admittedly, this close link between Charcot and Janet did not please everyone, particularly neurologist Jules Déjerine.⁶¹ Why? Because some of Charcot’s students developed explanations based on metalloscopy,⁶² and because he was working during the height of scientism, which pushed behaviorism to consider stimulus–response interactions alone. Janet shared with Charcot the idea that psychology should be distinct from physiology. But not separate from it: after all, Charcot founded the Société de psychologie physiologique,⁶³ and Janet received a doctorate in medicine.

56 Janet, *De l'angoisse à l'extase*, tome 2, 142–43.

57 Ibid., 145.

58 Ibid., 171.

59 Ibid., 153.

60 Ibid., 161.

61 Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic, 2005), 408.

62 Ibid., 400.

63 Ibid., 365.

The Distinctiveness of Psychological Analysis

Charcot sought all his life to *distinguish* human psychology from the animal physiology to which the scientism of his day wanted to reduce it, and perceived that there are different sorts of distinctively human traumas—lack of self-confidence, for instance, which Alfred Adler later named the inferiority complex. This is true, at least, if one extends its application, which overprivileges the anatomical element, in Adler’s case the size of the penis. The whole of the will cannot be reduced to such anatomy—a will which already asserts itself as a synthetic affirmation of the desire *to be*, implying that the sexual act is an expenditure of pleasure but cannot be reduced to it, especially since the desire to be “evolves”:

If, by the word “evolution,” we mean that a living being is continually changing to adapt to new circumstances, constantly developing and perfecting itself, then *neuroses are disorders or stoppages in the evolution of functions*.⁶⁴

Janetian psychology diagnoses that a neurosis designates a problem in the *constitution* of action, which leads to a loss of confidence in one’s own abilities to construct (oneself), which may lead one to take refuge in diversions whose cumulative effects may be dissociative.

Janet as a Forerunner

As we can see, Janet’s approach can explain the emergence of the act, its constitution, its regulation, and its disorders. All this explains the heuristic satisfaction we find in seeing his work being reintroduced into scientific research, which it has always informed. Janet is a *forerunner*, whereas “they” thought he had disappeared.

64 Pierre Janet, *Les névroses* (Paris: Flammarion, 1909), part 2, 4, “Les névroses, maladies et l’évolution des fonctions,” 323.