At this point, our teacher started to laugh again. According to the nomenclature of our authors, this is sound-wit and a poor kind at that, since it plays with a proper name.

But what is the technique of this wit? It is quite clear that the character which we had perhaps hoped to demonstrate universally leaves us in the lurch in the first new example. Here, there is no omission and scarcely an abbreviation. In the witticism, the lady expresses almost everything that we can ascribe to the thoughts. "You have made me look forward to meeting a relative of J. J. Rousseau. I expected that he was perhaps even mentally related to him. Imagine my surprise to find this red-haired foolish boy, a _roux et sot_." To be sure, I was able to add and insert something, but this attempt at reduction does not annul the wit. It remains fixed and attached to the sound similarity of _Rousseau_. This proves that _roux sot_ condensation with substitution plays no part in the production of this witticism.

What else must we consider here? New attempts at reduction taught me that the joke will persistently continue until the name Rousseau is replaced by another. If, e.g., I substitute the name Racine for it, I find that although the lady’s criticism is just as feasible as before, it immediately loses every trace of wit. Now I know where I can look for the technique of this joke although I still hesitate to formulate it. I shall make the following attempt: The technique of the witticism lies in the fact that one and the same word—the name—is used in a twofold application, once as a whole and once divided into its syllables like a charade.

I can mention a few examples of identical technique. A witticism of this sort was utilized by an Italian lady to avenge a tactless remark made to her by the first Napoleon. Pointing to her compatriots at a court ball, he said: "__Tutti gli Italiani dansano si male__" (All Italians dance so badly). To which she quickly replied: "__Non tutti, ma buona parte__" (Not all, but a great many)—Buona parte.\(^1\) Brill reports still another example in which _Buonaparte_.

the wit depends on the twofold application of a name: "__Hood once remarked that he had to be a lively Hood for a livelihood.__"\(^2\)

**MANIFOLD APPLICATION OF THE SAME MATERIAL**

In these examples, which will suffice for this species of wit, the technique is the same. A name is made use of twice; first, as a whole, and then divided into its syllables—and in their divided state the syllables yield a different meaning.\(^3\) The manifold application of the same word, once as

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\(^1\) Cited by Brill: *Psychoanalysis*, p. 335.

\(^2\) L. c., p. 334.

\(^3\) The excellence of these jokes depends upon the fact that they, at the same time, present another technical means of a much higher order.
a whole and then as the component syllables into which it divides itself,
was the first case that came to our attention in which technique deviated
from that of condensation. Upon brief reflection, however, we must divine
from the abundance of examples that come to us that the newly discovered
technique can hardly be limited to this single means. Obviously, there are
any number of hitherto unobserved possibilities wherein one can utilize
the same word or the same material of words in manifold application in
one sentence. May not all these possibilities furnish technical means for
wit? It would seem so, judging by the following examples.

"Two witty statesmen, X and Y, met at a dinner. X, acting as toast-
master, introduced Y as follows: 'My friend, Y, is a very wonderful man.
All you have to do is to open his mouth, put in a dinner, and a speech
appears, etc.' Responding to the speaker, Y said: 'My friend, the toast-
master, told you what a wonderful man I am, that all you have to do is to
open my mouth, put in a dinner, and a speech appears. Now let me tell
you what a wonderful man he is. All you have to do is open anybody's
mouth, put in his speech, and the dinner appears.'" ¹

In examples of this sort, one can use the same material of words and
simply change slightly their order. The slighter the change, the more one
gets the impression that different sense was expressed with the same
words, the better is the technical means of wit. And how simple are the
means of its production! "Put in a dinner and a speech appears—put in a
speech and a dinner appears." This is really nothing but a change of
places of these two phrases whereby what was said of Y becomes dif-
erentiated from what is said of X. To be sure, this is not the whole tech-
nique of the joke.²

Great latitude is afforded the technique of wit if one so extends the
"manifold application of the same material" that the word—or the words
—upon which the wit depends may be used first unchanged and then with
a slight modification. An example is another joke of Mr. N. He heard a
gentleman, who himself was born a Jew, utter a malicious statement about
Jewish character. "Mr. Councilor," said he, "I am familiar with your
antisemitism, but your antsemitism is new to me."

Here only one single letter is changed, the modification of which could
hardly be noticed in careless pronunciation. This example reminds one
of the other modification jokes of Mr. N., but it differs from them by lack
of condensation. Everything that was to be said has been told in the joke.
"I know that you yourself were formerly a Jew, therefore I am surprised
that you should rail against the Jew."

¹ This joke is attributed to the late Chauncey M. Depew. (Editor's example.)
² This resembles an excellent joke of Oliver Wendell Holmes cited by Brill: "Put not
your trust in money, but put your money in trust." A contradiction is here announced
which does not appear. At all events, it is a good example of the untranslatableness
of the witticisms of such technique.
An excellent example of such wit modification is also the familiar exclamation: “Traduttore—Traditore.”

The similarity between the two words, almost approaching identity, results in a very impressive representation of the inevitability by which a translator becomes a transgressor—in the eyes of the author.

Words are plastic and may be moulded into almost any shape. There are some words which have lost their true original meaning in certain usages which they still enjoy in other applications. In one of Lichtenberg’s jokes, precisely those conditions have been selected in which the blurred words have regained their meaning.

“How goes it?” asked the blind of the lame one. “As you see,” replied the lame one to the blind.

Language is replete with words which taken in one sense are full of meaning and in another are colorless. There may be two different derivatives from the same root, one of which may develop into a word with a full meaning while the other may become a colorless suffix or prefix, and yet both may have the same sound. The similarity of sound between a word having full meaning and one whose meaning is colorless may also be accidental. In both cases, the technique of wit can make use of such relationship of the speech material. The following examples illustrate some of these points.

“Do you call a man kind who remits nothing to his family while away?” asked an actor. “Call that kindness?” “Yes, unremitting kindness,” was the reply of Douglas Jerrold. The wit here depends on the first syllable un of the word unremitting. Un is usually a prefix denoting “not,” but by adding it to “remitting,” a new relationship is unexpectedly established which changes the meaning of the context. “An undertaker is one who always carries out what he undertakes.” The striking character upon which the wit here depends is the manifold application of the words undertaker and carry out. Undertaker commonly denotes one who manages funerals. Only when taken in this sense and using the words carry out literally is the sentence witty. The wit lies in the manifold application of the same words.

DOUBLE MEANING AND PLAY ON WORDS

If we delve more deeply into the variety of “manifold application” of the same word, we suddenly notice that we are confronted with forms of “double meaning” or “plays on words” which have been known a long time and which are universally acknowledged as belonging to the technique of wit. Then, why have we bothered our brains about discovering

1 Brill cites a very analogous modification wit: Amantes—Amentes (lovers—lunatics).
2 Translator’s examples.
something new when we could just as well have gleaned it from the most superficial treatise on wit? We can say in self-defense only that we are presenting another side of the same phenomena of verbal expressions. What the authors call the "playful" character of wit, we treat from the point of view of "manifold application."

Further examples of manifold application which may also be designated under a new and third group, the class of double meaning, may be divided into subdivisions. These, to be sure, are not essentially differentiated from one another any more than the whole third group from the second. In the first place, we have:

(a) Cases of double meaning of a name and its verbal significance: e.g., "Discharge thyself of our company, Pistol" (Henry IV, Act II). "For Suffolk's duke may he suffocate" (Henry IV, Act I). Heine says, "Here in Hamburg rules not the rascally Macbeth, but Banko (Banquo)."

(b) Cases where a double meaning is obtained by using a word which has both a verbal and metaphoric sense, furnish an abundant source for the technique of wit. A medical colleague, who was well known for his wit, once said to Arthur Schnitzler, the writer: "I am not at all surprised that you became a great poet. Your father had already held up the mirror to his contemporaries." The mirror used by the father of the writer, the famous Dr. Schnitzler, was the laryngoscope. According to the well-known quotation from Hamlet (Act III, Scene 2), the object of the play, as well as the writer who creates it, is to "hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."

(c) Cases of actual double meaning or play on words—the ideal case, as it were, of manifold application. Here, no violence is done to the word. It is not torn into syllables. It need not undergo any modifications. It need not exchange its own particular sphere, say as a proper name, for another. Thanks to certain circumstances, it can express two meanings just as it stands in the structure of the sentence. Many examples are at our disposal.

One of the first royal acts of the last Napoleon was, as is well known, the confiscation of the estates belonging to the House of Orleans. "C'est le premier vol de l'aigle" was an excellent play on words current at that time. "Vol" means both flight and theft. Louis XV, wishing to test the wit of one of his courtiers, of whose talent in that direction he had heard, seized the first opportunity to command the cavalier to concoct a joke at his (the king's) expense. He wanted to be the "subject" of the witticism. The courtier answered him with the clever bon mot, "Le roi n'est pas sujet." "Subject" also means "vassal." (Taken from K. Fischer.)

A physician, leaving the sick-bed of a wife, whose husband accompanied him, exclaimed doubtfully: "I do not like her looks." "I have not
liked her looks for a long time," was the quick rejoinder of the husband. The physician, of course, referred to the condition of the wife, but he expressed his apprehension about the patient in such words as to afford the husband the means of utilizing them to assert his conjugal aversion. Concerning a satirical comedy Heine remarked: "This satire would not have been so biting had the author of it had more to bite." This jest is a better example of metaphorical and common double meaning than of real play upon words, but at present we are not concerned about such strict lines of demarcation. Charles Matthews, the elder, one of England's greatest actors, was asked what he was going to do with his son (the young man was destined for architecture). "Why," answered the comedian, "he is going to draw houses like his father." Foote once asked a man why he forever sang one tune. "Because it haunts me," replied the man. "No wonder," said Foote, "you are continually murdering it."

A gentleman had shown much ingenuity in evading a notorious borrower whom he had sent away many times with the request to call when he was "in." One day, however, the borrower eluded the servant at the door and cornered his victim.

"Ah," said the host, seeing there was no way out of it, "at last I am in."

"No," returned the borrower in anticipation, "at last I am in and you are out."

Heine said in the Harzreise: "I cannot recall at the moment the names of all the students, and of the professors there are some who have no name as yet."

Dr. Johnson said of the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, which was poor in purse, but prolific in the distribution of its degrees: "Let it persevere in its present plan and it may become rich by degrees." Here, the wit depends more on the manifold application than on the play on words.

The keen-witted writer, Horatio Winslow, sums up the only too-familiar history of some American families as follows:

A TALE OF TWO AMERICAN GENERATIONS

Gold Mine
Gold Spoon
Gold Cure

The last couplet, gold cure, refers to the familiar cure for alcoholism. This wit is an excellent example of unification—everything is, as it were, of gold. The manifold meanings of the adjective, which do not very strikingly contrast with one another, make possible this "manifold application."
Another play on words will facilitate the transition to a new subdivision of the technique of double meaning. The witty colleague who was responsible for the joke mentioned earlier is likewise answerable for this joke, current during the trial of Dreyfus:

"This girl reminds me of Dreyfus. The army does not believe in her innocence."

The word innocence, whose double meaning furnishes the basis of the witticism, has in one connection the customary meaning which is the opposite of guilt or transgression, while in the other connection, it has a sexual sense, the opposite of which is sexual experience. There are very many such examples of double meaning and in each one, the point of the joke refers especially to a sexual sense. The group could be designated as "ambiguous." A good example to illustrate this is the story told of a wealthy but elderly gentleman who showed his devotion to a young actress by many lavish gifts. Being a respectable girl, she took the first opportunity to discourage his attentions by telling him that her heart was already given to another man. "I never aspired as high as that," was his polite answer.

If one compares this example of double-meaning-with-ambiguity with other examples, one cannot help noticing a difference which is not altogether inconsequential to the technique. In the joke about "innocence" one meaning of the word is just as good for our understanding of it as the other. One can really not decide whether the sexual or non-sexual significance of the word is more applicable and more familiar. But it is different with the other example mentioned. Here, the final sense of the words, "I never aspired as high as that," is by far more obtrusive and Covey and conceals, as it were, the sexual sense which could easily escape the unsuspecting person. In sharp contrast to this, let us examine another example of double meaning in which there is no attempt made to veil its sexual significance—e.g., Heine's characterization of a complaisant lady: "She could pass (abschlagen) nothing except her water." It sounds like an obscene joke and the wit in it is scarcely noticed.1 But the peculiarity that both senses of the double meaning are not equally manifested can occur also in witticisms without sexual reference providing that one sense is more common or that it is preferred on account of its connection with the other parts of the sentence (e.g., c'est le premier vol de l'aigle). All these examples I propose to call double meaning with allusion.

We have by this time become familiar with such a large number of

1 Compare here K. Fischer (p. 85), who applies the term "double meaning" to those witticisms in which both meanings are not equally prominent, but where one overshadows the other. I have applied this term differently. Such a nomenclature is a matter of choice. Usage of speech has rendered no definite decision about them.
different techniques of wit that I am afraid we may lose sight of them. Let us, therefore, attempt to make a summary.

I. CONDENSATION
   (a) With mixed word-formation.
   (b) With modification.

II. THE APPLICATION OF THE SAME MATERIAL
   (c) The whole and the part.
   (d) Change of order.
   (e) Slight modification.
   (f) The same words used in their full or colorless sense.

III. DOUBLE MEANING
   (g) Name and verbal significance.
   (h) Metaphorical and verbal meaning.
   (i) True double meaning (play on words).
   (j) Ambiguous meaning.
   (k) Double meaning with allusion.

This variety causes confusion. It might vex us because we have devoted so much time to the consideration of the technical means of wit, and the stress laid on the forms might possibly arouse our suspicions that we are overvaluing their importance so far as the knowledge of the nature of wit is concerned. But this conjecture is met by the one irrefutable fact: namely, that the wit invariably disappears when we remove the effect of these techniques, in the expressions. We are thus directed to search for the unity in this variety. It must be possible to bring all these techniques under one head. As we have remarked before, it is not difficult to unite the second and third groups, for the double meaning, the play on words, is nothing but the ideal case of utilizing the same material. The latter is here apparently the more comprehensive conception. The examples of dividing, changing the order of the same material, manifold application with slight modifications (c, d, e)—all these could, without difficulty, be subordinated under the conception of double meaning. But what community exists between the technique of the first group—condensation with substitutive formation—and the two other groups—manifold application of the same material?

THE TENDENCY TO ECONOMY

It seems to me that this agreement is very simple and clear. The application of the same material is only a special case of condensation and the play on words is nothing but a condensation without substitutive formation. Condensation thus remains as the chief category. A compressing or—to be more exact—an economic tendency controls all these techniques.
WIT AND ITS RELATION TO THE UNCONSCIOUS

As Prince Hamlet says: "Thrift, Horatio, thrift." It seems to be all matter of economy.

Let us examine this economy in individual cases. "C'est le premier vol de l'aigle." That is, the first flight of the eagle. Certainly, but it is a depredatious flight. Luckily, for the gist of this joke "vol" signifies flight as well as depredation. Has nothing been condensed and economized by this? Certainly, the entire second thought, and, to be sure, it was dropped without any substitution. The double sense of the word "vol" makes such substitution superfluous, or what is just as correct: the word "vol" contains the substitution for the repressed thought without the necessity of supplementing or varying the first sentence. Therein consists the benefit of the double meaning.

Another example: Gold mine—gold spoon, the enormous economy of expression the single word "gold" produces. It really tells the history of two generations in the life of some American families. The father made his fortune through hard toiling in the gold fields during the early pioneer days. The son was born with a golden spoon in his mouth; having been brought up as the son of a wealthy man, he becomes a chronic alcoholic and has to take the gold cure.

Thus, there is no doubt that the condensation in these examples produces economy and we shall demonstrate that the same is true in all cases. Where is the economy in such jokes as "Rousseau—roux et sot," in which we first failed to find the prime factors in causing us to establish the technique of the manifold application of the same material? In such cases, condensation will naturally not cover the ground, but when we exchange it for the broader conception of "economy" we find no difficulty. What we save in such examples as those just given is quite obvious. We save ourselves the trouble of making a criticism, of forming a judgment. Both are contained in the names. The same is true in the "livelihood" example and the others thus far analyzed. Where one does not save much is in the example of "I am in and you are out," at least the wording of a new answer is saved. The wording of the address, "I am in," serves also for the answer. It is little, but in this little lies the wit. The manifold application of the same words in addressing and answering surely comes under the heading of economy. Note how Hamlet sums up the quick succession of the death of his father and the marriage of his mother:

"the funeral baked meats
   Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables."

But before we accept the "tendency to economize" as the universal character of wit and ask whence it originates, what it signifies, and how it gives origin to the resultant pleasure, we shall concede a doubt which may justly be considered. It may be true that every technique
of wit shows the tendency to economize in expression, but the relationship is not reversible. Not every economy in expression or every brevity is witty on that account. We once raised the question when we still hoped to demonstrate the condensation process in every witticism, and at that we justly objected by remarking that a laconism is not necessarily wit. Hence, it must be a peculiar form of brevity and economy upon which the character of the wit depends, and just as long as we are ignorant of this peculiarity, the discovery of the common element in the technique of wit will bring us nearer a solution. Besides, we have the courage to acknowledge that the economies caused by the technique of wit do not impress us as very much. They remind one of the manner in which many a housewife economizes when she spends time and money to reach a distant market because the vegetables can there be had a cent cheaper. What does wit save by means of its technique? Instead of putting together a few new words, which, for the most part, could have been accomplished without any effort, it goes to the trouble of searching for the word which comprises both ideas. Indeed, it must often at first transform the expression of one of the ideas into an unusual form until it furnishes an associative connection with the second thought. Would it not have been simpler, easier, and really more economical to express both thoughts as they happen to come even if no agreement in expression results? Is not the economy in verbal expression more than abrogated through the expenditure of intellectual work? And who economized through it, whom does it benefit? We can temporarily circumvent these doubts by leaving them unsolved until later on. Are we really familiar enough with all the forms of techniques of wit? It will surely be safer to gather new examples and submit them to analysis.

PUNS

Indeed, we have not yet given consideration to one of the largest groups into which the techniques of wit may be divided. In this we have perhaps been influenced by the low estimate in which this form of wit is held. It embraces those jokes which are commonly called "puns." These are generally counted as the lowest form of wit, perhaps because they are "cheapest" and can be formed with the least effort. They really make the least demands on the technique of expression just as the actual play on words makes the most. Whereas in the latter, both meanings find expression in the identical word, and hence usually in a word used only once, in the pun it is enough if two words for both meanings resemble each other through some slight similarity in structure, in rhythmic consonance, in the community of several vowels, or in some other similar manner. The following examples illustrate these points:
"We are now fallen into that critical age wherein censores liberorum are become censores librorum: Lectores, Lictores."

Professor Cromwell says that Rome in exchanging her religion changed Jupiter to Jew Peter.

It is related that some students, wishing to play a trick on Agassiz, the great naturalist, constructed an insect made up of parts taken from different bugs and sent it to him with the question, "What kind of a bug is this?" His answer was "Humbug."

K. Fischer has given much attention to this form of wit and insists upon making a sharp distinction between it and the "play on words" (p. 78). "A pun," he says, "is a bad play on words, for it does not play with the word as a word, but merely as a sound." The play on words, however, "transfers itself from the sound of the word into the word itself." On the other hand, he also classifies such jokes as "famillionaire," etc., with sound-wit. I see no necessity to follow him in this. In the plays on words also, the word serves us only as a sound to which this or that meaning attaches itself. Here, also, usage of language makes no distinction, and when it treats "puns" with disdain but play on words with a certain respect, it seems that these estimations are determined by others as technical viewpoints. One should bear in mind the forms of wit which are referred to as puns. There are persons who have the ability, when they are in a high-spirited mood, to reply with a pun for a long time to every sentence addressed to them. Brill relates that at a gathering, someone spoke disparagingly of a certain drama and wound up by saying, "It was so poor that the first act had to be rewritten." "And now it is rotten," added the punster of the gathering.

At all events, we can already infer from the controversies about the line of demarcation between puns and play on words that the former cannot aid us in finding an entirely new technique of wit. Even if no claims are made for the pun that it utilizes the manifold application of the same material, the accent, nevertheless, falls upon the rediscovering of the familiar and upon the agreement between both words forming the pun. Thus, the latter is only a sub-species of the group which reaches its height in the real play on words.

DISPLACEMENTS

There are some witticisms, however, whose techniques baffle almost every attempt to classify them under any of the groups so far investigated. It is related that while Heine and the poet Soulié were once chatting together in a Parisian drawing-room, there entered one of those Parisians whom one usually compared to Midas, but not alone on account of their money. He was soon surrounded by a crowd which treated him with the greatest

1 L. c., p. 339.
deference. "Look over there," said Soulié to Heine, "and see how the nineteenth century is worshipping the Golden Calf." Heine cast one glance upon the object of adoration and replied, as if correcting his friend: "Oh, he must be older than that" (K. Fischer, p. 82).

Wherein lies the technique of this excellent witticism? According to K. Fischer, it lies in the play on words. Thus, for example, he says, "the words 'Golden Calf' may signify Mammon as well as idol-worship—in the first case, the gold is paramount; in the second case, it is the animal picture. It may likewise serve to designate in a rather uncomplimentary way one who has very much money and very little brains." If we apply the test and take away the expression "Golden Calf," we naturally also abrogate the wit. We then cause Soulié to say, "Just see how the people are thronging about that blockhead only because he is rich." To be sure, this is no longer witty. Nor would Heine's answer be possible under these circumstances. But let us remember that it is not at all a matter of Soulié's witty comparison, but of Heine's retort, which is surely much more witty. We have then no right to disturb the phrase "the golden calf" which remains as a basis for Heine's words and the reduction can only be applied to the latter. If we dilate upon the words, "Oh, he must be older than that," we can only proceed as follows:

"Oh, he is no longer a calf; he is already a full-grown ox." Heine's wit is, therefore, based on the fact that he no longer took the "golden calf" metaphorically, but personally by referring it to the moneyed individual himself. If this double meaning is not already contained in the opinion of Soulié!

Let us see. We believe that we can state that this reduction has not altogether destroyed Heine's joke, but, on the contrary, it has left its essential element untouched. It reads as if Soulié were now saying, "Just see how the nineteenth century is worshipping the golden calf," and as if Heine were retorting, "Oh, he is no longer a calf. He is already an ox." And even in this reduced form, it is still a witticism. However, another reduction of Heine's words is not possible.

It is a pity that this excellent example contains such complicated technical conditions. And as it cannot aid us toward enlightenment, we shall leave it to search for another in which we imagine we can perceive a relationship with the former one.

It is a "bath" joke treating of the dread which some Jews are said to have for bathing. We demand no patent of nobility for our examples, nor do we make inquiries about their origin. The only qualifications we require are that they should make us laugh and serve our theoretical interest. It is to be remarked that both these demands are satisfied best by Jewish jokes.

Two Jews meet near a bathing establishment. "Have you taken a
bath?” asked one. “How is that?” replies the other. “Is one missing?”

When one laughs very heartily about a joke, he is not in the best mood to investigate its technique. It is for this reason that some difficulties are experienced in delving into their analyses. “That is a comic misunderstanding” is the thought that comes to us. Yes, but how about the technique of this joke? Obviously, the technique lies in the double meaning of the word take. In the first case, the word is used in a colorless idiomatic sense, while in the second, it is the verb in its full meaning. It is, therefore, a case where the same word is taken now in the “full” and now in the “empty” sense (Group II, f). And if we replace the expression “take a bath” by the simpler equivalent “bathed,” the wit disappears. The answer is no longer fitting. The joke, therefore, lies in the expression “take a bath.”

This is quite correct, yet it seems that in this case, also, the reduction was applied in the wrong place, for the joke does not lie in the question, but in the answer, or rather in the counter-question: “How is that? Is there one missing?” Provided the same is not destroyed, the answer cannot be robbed of its wit by any dilation or variation. We also get the impression that in the answer of the second Jew, the overlooking of the bath is more significant than the misconception of the word “take.” However, here, too, things do not look quite clear and we will, therefore, look for a third example.

Once more, we shall resort to a Jewish joke in which, however, the Jewish element is incidental only. Its essence is universally human. It is true that this example, too, contains undesirable complications, but luckily they are not of the kind so far which have kept us from seeing clearly.

In his distress, a needy man borrowed twenty-five dollars from a wealthy acquaintance. The same day, he was discovered by his creditor in a restaurant eating a dish of salmon with mayonnaise. The creditor reproached him in these words: “You borrow money from me and then order salmon with mayonnaise. Is that what you needed the money for?” “I don’t understand you,” responded the debtor, “when I have no money I can’t eat salmon with mayonnaise. When I have money, I mustn’t eat it. Well then, when shall I ever eat salmon with mayonnaise?”

Here, we no longer discover any double meaning. Even the repetition of the words “salmon with mayonnaise” cannot contain the technique of the witticism, as it is not the “manifold application of the same material,” but an actual, identical repetition required by the context. We may be temporarily nonplussed in this analysis, and, as a pretext, we may wish to dispute the character of the wit in the anecdote which causes us to laugh. What else worthy of notice can be said about the answer of the poor man? It may be supposed that the striking thing about it is its
logical character, but, as a matter of fact, the answer is illogical. The debtor endeavors to justify himself for spending the borrowed money on luxuries and asks, with some semblance of right, when he is to be allowed to eat salmon. But this is not at all the correct answer. The creditor does not blame him for eating salmon on the day that he borrowed the money, but reminds him that in his condition, he has no right to think of such luxuries at all. The poor bon vivant disregards this only possible meaning of the reproach, centers his answer on another point and acts as if he did not understand the reproach.

Is it possible that the technique of this joke lies in this deviation of the answer from the sense of reproach? A similar changing of the viewpoint—displacement of the psychic accent—may perhaps also be demonstrated in the two previous examples which we felt were related to this one. This can be successfully shown and solves the technique of these examples. Soulié calls Heine’s attention to the fact that society worships the “golden calf” in the nineteenth century just as the Jewish nation once did in the desert. To this, an answer from Heine like the following would seem fit: “Yes, that is human nature. Centuries have changed nothing in it,” or he might have remarked something equally apposite. But Heine deviates in his manner from the instigated thought. Indeed, he does not answer at all. He makes use of the double meaning found in the phrase “golden calf” to go off on a tangent. He seizes upon one of the components of the phrase, namely, “the calf,” and answers as if Soulié’s speech placed the emphasis on it—“Oh, he is no longer a calf, etc.”

The deviation is much more evident in the bath joke. This example requires a graphic representation. The first Jew asks, “Have you taken a bath?” The emphasis lies upon the bath element. The second answers as if the query were: “Have you taken a bath?” The displacement would have been impossible if the question had been: “Bathed?” “What do you mean? I don’t know what that means.” However, the technique of the wit lies in the displacement of the emphasis from “to bathe” to “to take.”

Let us return to the example “salmon with mayonnaise,” which is the purest of its kind. What is new in it will direct us into various paths. In the first place, we have to give a name to the mechanism of this newly discovered technique. I propose to designate it as displacement, for its most essential element, the deviation of the trend of thought, consists in

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1 Heine’s answer is a combination of two wit-techniques—a displacement and an allusion—for he does not say directly: “He is an ox.”

2 The word “take,” owing to its meanings, lends itself very well towards the formation of plays upon words, a pure example of which I wish to cite as a contrast to the displacement mentioned above. While walking with his friend, in front of a café, a well-known stock-plunger and bank director made this proposal: “Let us go in and take something.” His friend held him back and said: “My dear sir, remember there are people in there.”
displacing the psychic accent to another than the original theme. It is then incumbent upon us to find out the relationship of the technique of displacement to the expression of the witticism. Our example (salmon with mayonnaise) shows us that the displacement technique is absolutely independent of the verbal expression. It does not depend upon words, but upon the mental trend, and to abrogate it we are not helped by substitution so long as the sense of the answer is adhered to. The reduction is possible only when we change the mental trend and permit the gastronomist to answer directly to the reproach which he eluded in the conception of the joke. The reduced conception would then be: "What I like I cannot deny myself, and it is all the same to me where I get the money for it. Here you have my explanation as to why I happen to be eating salmon with mayonnaise today just after you have loaned me some money." But that would not be a witticism but a **cynicism**. It will be instructive to compare this joke with one which is closely allied to it in meaning.

A man who was addicted to drink supported himself in a small city by private teaching. His vice gradually became known and he lost most of his pupils in consequence. A friend of his took it upon himself to admonish him to reform. "Look here," he said, "you could have the best pupils in town if you would give up drinking. Why not do it?" "What are you talking about?" was the indignant reply. "I am teaching in order to be able to drink. Shall I give up drinking in order to get pupils?"

This joke, too, carries the stamp of logic which we have noted in the case of "salmon with mayonnaise," but it is no longer displacement-wit. The answer is a direct one. The cynicism, which is veiled there, is openly admitted here, "For me drink is the most important thing." The technique of this witticism is really very poor and cannot explain its effect. It lies merely in the change in order of the same material, or to be more exact, in the reversal of the means-and-end relationship between drink and teaching or getting pupils. As I gave no greater emphasis in the reduction to this factor of the expression, the witticism is somewhat blurred; it may be expressed as follows: "What a senseless demand to make. For me, drink is the most important thing and not the pupils. Private teaching is only a means to more drink." The wit is really dependent upon the expression.

In the bath wit, the dependence of the witticism upon the wording "have you taken a bath" is unmistakable and a change in the wording nullifies the joke. The technique in this case is quite complicated. It is a combination of double meaning (sub-group f) and displacement. The wording of the question admits a double meaning. The joke arises from the fact that the answer is given not in the sense expected by the questioner, but has a different subordinate sense. By making the displacement retrogressive, we are accordingly in position to find a reduction
which leaves the double meaning in the expression and still does away with the wit.

"Have you taken a bath?" "Taken what? A bath? What is that?"

But that is no longer a witticism. It is simply either a spiteful or playful exaggeration.

In Heine's joke about the "golden calf" the double meaning plays a quite similar part. It makes it possible for the answer to deviate from the instigated stream of thought—a thing which happens in the joke about "salmon and mayonnaise"—without any such dependence upon the wording. In the reduction, Soulé's speech and Heine's answer would be as follows: "It reminds one very much of the worship of the golden calf when one sees the people throng around that man simply because he is rich." Heine's answer would be: "That he is made so much of on account of his wealth is not the worst part. You do not emphasize enough the fact that his ignorance is forgiven on account of his wealth." Thus, while the double meaning would be retained, the displacement-wit would be eliminated.

Here, we may be prepared for the objection which might be raised, namely, that we are seeking to tear asunder these delicate differentiations which really belong together. Does not every double meaning furnish occasion for displacement and for a deviation of the stream of thought from one sense to another? And shall we agree that a "double meaning" and "displacement" should be designated as representatives of two entirely different types of wit? It is true that a relation between double meaning and displacement actually exists, but it has nothing to do with our differentiation of the techniques of wit. In cases of double meaning the wit contains nothing but a word capable of several interpretations which allows thearer to find the transition from one thought to another, and which, with a little forcing, may be compared to a displacement. In the cases of displacement-wit, however, the witticism itself contains a stream of thought in which the displacement is brought about. Here the displacement belongs to the work which is necessary for its understanding. Should this differentiation not be clear to us, we can make use of the reduction method, which is an unfailing way for tangible demonstration. We do not deny, however, that there is something in this objection. It calls our attention to the fact that we cannot confuse the psychic processes in the formation of wit (the wit-work) with the psychic processes in the conception of the wit (the understanding-work). The object of our present investigation will be confined only to the former.¹

¹ For the latter, see a later chapter. It will perhaps not be superfluous to add here a few words for a better understanding. The displacement regularly occurs between a statement and an answer, and turns the stream of thought to a direction different from the one started in the statement. The justification for separating the displacement from the double meaning is best seen in the examples where both are com-
Are there still other examples of the technique of displacement? They are not easily found, but the following witticism is a very good specimen. It also shows a lack of over-emphasized logic found in our former examples.

_A horse-dealer, in recommending a saddle horse to his client, said: “If you mount this horse at four o’clock in the morning, you will be in Monticello at six-thirty in the morning.” “What will I do in Monticello at six-thirty in the morning?” asked the client._

Here, the displacement is very striking. The horse-dealer mentions the early arrival in the small city only with the obvious intention of proving the efficiency of the horse. The client disregards the capacity of the animal, about which he evidently has no more doubts, and takes up only the data of the example selected for the test. The reduction of this joke is comparatively simple.

More difficulties are encountered by another example, the technique of which is very obscure. It can be solved, however, through the application of double meaning with displacement. The joke relates the subterfuge employed by a “schadchen” (Jewish marriage broker). It belongs to a class which will claim more of our attention later.

_The “schadchen” had assured the suitor that the father of the girl was no longer living. After the engagement had been announced, the news leaked out that the father was still living and serving a sentence in prison. The suitor reproached the agent for deceiving him. “Well,” said the latter, “what did I tell you? Do you call that living?”_

The double meaning lies in the word “living,” and the displacement consists in the fact that the “schadchen” avoids the common meaning of the word, which is a contrast to “death,” and uses it in the colloquial sense: “You don’t call that living.” In doing this, he explains his former utterance as a double meaning, although this manifold application is here quite out of place. Thus far the technique resembles that of the “golden calf” and the “bath” jokes. Here, however, another factor comes into consideration which disturbs the understanding of the technique through its obtrusiveness. One might say that this joke is a “characterization-wit.” It endeavors to illustrate by example the marriage agent’s characteristic admixture of mendacious impudence and repartee. We shall learn that this is only the “show-side” of the façade of the witticism, that is, its sense. Its object serves a different purpose. We shall also defer our attempt at reduction.\(^1\)

After these complicated examples, which are not at all easy to analyze,
THE TECHNIQUE OF WIT

it will be gratifying to find a perfectly pure and transparent example of "displacement-wit." A beggar implored the help of a wealthy baron for a trip to Ostend, where he asserted the physicians had ordered him to take sea baths for his health. "Very well, I shall assist you," said the rich baron, "but is it absolutely necessary for you to go to Ostend, which is the most expensive of all watering-places?" "Sir," was the reproving reply, "nothing is too expensive for my health." Certainly that is a proper attitude, but hardly proper for the supplicant. The answer is given from the viewpoint of a rich man. The beggar acts as if it were his own money that he was willing to sacrifice for his health, as if money and health concerned the same person.

NONSENSE AS A TECHNICAL MEANS

Let us take up again in this connection the instructive example of "salmon with mayonnaise." It also presents to us a side in which we noticed a striking display of logical work and we have learned from analyzing it that this logic concealed an error of thought, namely, a displacement of the stream of thought. Henceforth, even if only by way of contrast association, we shall be reminded of other jokes which, on the contrary, present clearly something contradictory, something nonsensical, or foolish. We shall be curious to discover wherein the technique of the witticism lies. I shall first present the strongest and at the same time the purest example of the entire group. Once more, it is a Jewish joke.

Ike was serving in the artillery corps. He was seemingly an intelligent lad, but he was unwieldy and had no interest in the service. One of his superiors, who was kindly disposed toward him, drew him aside and said to him: "Ike, you are out of place among us. I would advise you to buy a cannon and make yourself independent."

The advice, which makes us laugh heartily, is obvious nonsense. There are no cannons to be bought and an individual cannot possibly make himself independent, or establish himself as a fighting force, as it were. One cannot remain one minute in doubt but this advice is not just nonsense; it is witty nonsense and an excellent joke. By what means does the nonsense become a witticism?

We need not meditate very long. From the discussions of the authors in the Introduction, we can guess that sense lurks in such witty nonsense, and that this sense in nonsense transforms nonsense into wit. In our example, the sense is easily found. The officer who gives the artilleryman, Ike, the nonsensical advice pretends to be stupid in order to show Ike how stupidly he is acting. He imitates Ike as if to say, "I will now give you some advice which is exactly as stupid as you are." He enters into Ike's stupidity and makes him conscious of it by making it the basis of a proposition which must meet with Ike's wishes, for if Ike owned a cannon
and took up the art of warfare on his own account, of what advantage would his intelligence and ambition be to him? How would he take care of the cannon and acquaint himself with its mechanism in order to meet the competition of other possessors of cannon?

I am breaking off the analysis of this example to show the same sense in nonsense in a shorter and simpler, though less glaring case of nonsense-wit.

"Never to be born would be best for mortal man." "But," added the sages of the Fliegende Blätter, "hardly one man in a hundred thousand has this luck."

The modern appendix to the ancient philosophical saying is pure nonsense, and becomes still more stupid through the addition of the seemingly careful "hardly." But this appendix, in attaching itself to the first sentence, incontestably and correctly limits it. It can thus open our eyes to the fact that that piece of wisdom so reverently scanned, is neither more nor less than sheer nonsense. He who is not born of woman is not mortal; for him there exists no "good" and no "best." The nonsense of the joke, therefore, serves here to expose and present another bit of nonsense as in the case of the artilleryman. Here, I can add a third example which, owing to its context, scarcely deserves a detailed description. It serves, however, to illustrate the use of nonsense in wit in order to represent another element of nonsense.

A man about to go upon a journey intrusted his daughter to his friend, begging him to watch over her chastity during his absence. When he returned some months later, he found that she was pregnant. Naturally, he reproached his friend. The latter alleged that he could not explain this unfortunate occurrence. "Where has she been sleeping?" the father finally asked. "In the same room with my son," replied the friend. "How is it that you allowed her to sleep in the same room with your son after I had begged you so earnestly to take good care of her?" remonstrated the father. "Well," explained the friend, "there was a screen between them. There was your daughter's bed, and over there was my son's bed and between them stood the screen." "And suppose he went behind the screen? What then?" asked the parent. "Well, in that case," rejoined the friend thoughtfully, "it might be possible."

In this joke—aside from the other qualities of this poor witticism—we can easily get the reduction. Obviously, it would read like this: "You have no right to reproach me. How could you be so foolish as to leave your daughter in a house where she must live in the constant companionship of a young man? As if it were possible for a stranger to be responsible for the chastity of a maiden under such circumstances!" The seeming stupidity of the friend here also serves as a reflection of the stupidity of the father. By means of the reduction, we have eliminated the nonsense con-
tained in the witticism as well as the witticism itself. We have not gotten
rid of the "nonsense" element itself, as it finds another place in the con-
text of the sentence after it has been reduced to its true meaning.

We can now also attempt the reduction of the joke about the cannon. The officer might have said: "I know, Ike, that you are an intelligent
business man, but I must tell you that you are very stupid if you do not
realize that one cannot act in the army as one does in business, where each
one is out for himself and competes with the other. Military service de-
mands' subordination and co-operation."

The technique of the nonsense witticisms hitherto discussed really con-
sists in advancing something apparently absurd or nonsensical which,
however, discloses sense that serves to illustrate and represent some
other actual absurdity and nonsense.

Has the employment of contradiction in the technique of wit always
this meaning? Here is another example which answers this affirmatively.
On an occasion when Phocion's speech was applauded, he turned to his
friends and asked: "Did I say something foolish?"

This question seems paradoxical, but we immediately comprehend its
meaning. "What have I said that has pleased this stupid crowd? I ought
really to be ashamed of the applause, for if it appealed to these fools, it
could not have been very clever after all."

Other examples teach us that absurdity is used very often in the tech-
nique of wit without serving at all the purpose of uncovering another
piece of nonsense.

A well-known university teacher who was wont to spice richly with
jokes his rather dry specialty, was once congratulated upon the birth of
his youngest son, who was bestowed upon him at a rather advanced age.
"Yes," said he to the well-wishers, "it is remarkable what mortal hands
can accomplish." This reply seems especially senseless and out of place,
for children are called the blessings of God in contrast to creations of
mortal hands. But it soon dawns upon us that this answer has a sense and
an obscene one at that. The point in question is not that the happy father
wishes to appear stupid in order to make something else or some other
persons appear stupid. The seemingly senseless answer causes us astonish-
ment. It puzzles us, as the authors would have it. We have seen that the
authors deduce the entire mechanism of such jokes from the change of
the succession of "clearness and confusion." We shall try to form an
opinion about this later. Here we content ourselves by remarking that
the technique of this witticism consists in advancing such confusing and
senseless elements.

The following joke of Lichtenberg's has an especially peculiar place in
nonsense jokes.

"He was surprised that the two holes were cut in the pelts of cats just
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where their eyes were located." It is certainly foolish to be surprised about something that is obvious in itself, something which is really the explanation of an identity. It reminds one of a seriously intended utterance of Michelet (The Woman) which, as I remember it, runs as follows: "How beautifully everything is arranged by nature. As soon as the child comes into the world, it finds a mother who is ready to care for it." This utterance of Michelet's is really silly, but the one of Lichtenberg is a witticism, which makes use of the absurdity for some purpose. There is something behind it. What? At present, that is something we cannot discuss.

SOPHISTIC FAULTY THINKING

We have learned from two groups of examples that the wit-work makes use of deviations from normal thought, namely, displacement and absurdity, as technical means of presenting witty expressions. It is only just to expect that other faulty thinking may find a similar application. Indeed, a few examples of this sort can be cited.

A gentleman entered a shop and ordered a fancy cake, which, however, he soon returned, asking for some liqueur in its stead. He drank the liqueur, and was about to leave without paying for it. The shopkeeper held him back. "What do you want of me?" he asked. "Please pay for the liqueur," said the shopkeeper. "But I have given you the fancy cake for it." "Yes, but you have not paid for that either." "Well, neither have I eaten it."

This little story also bears the semblance of logic which we already know as the suitable façade for faulty thinking. The error, obviously, lies in the fact that the cunning customer establishes a connection between the return of the fancy cake and its exchange for the liqueur, a connection which really does not exist. The state of affairs may be divided into two processes which, as far as the shopkeeper is concerned, are independent of each other. He first took the fancy cake and returned it, so that he owes nothing for it. He then took the liqueur, for which he owes money. One might say that the customer uses the relation "for it" in a double sense, or, to speak more correctly, by means of a double sense, he forms a relation which does not hold in reality.¹

The opportunity now presents itself for making a not unimportant confession. We are here busying ourselves with an investigation of technique of wit by means of examples, and we ought to be sure that the examples which we have selected are really true witticisms. The facts are, however, that in a series of cases, we fall into doubt as to whether or not the example in question may be called a joke. We have no criterion at our

¹ A similar nonsense technique results when the joke aims to maintain a connection which seems to be removed through the special conditions of its content. A joke of this sort is related by J. Falke (l. c.): "Is this the place where the Duke of Wellington spoke these words?" "Yes, this is the place; but he never spoke these words."
disposal before investigation itself furnishes one. Usage of language is unreliable and is itself in need of examination for its authority. To decide the question, we can rely on nothing else but a certain "feeling," which we may interpret by saying that in our judgment, the decision follows certain criteria which are not yet accessible to our knowledge. We shall naturally not appeal to this "feeling" for substantial proof. In the case of the last-mentioned example, we cannot help doubting whether we may present it as a witticism, as a sophistical witticism, or merely as a sophism. The fact is that we do not yet know wherein the character of wit lies.

On the other hand, the following example, which evinces, as it were, the complementary faulty thinking, is a witticism without any doubt. Again, it is a story of a marriage agent. The agent is defending the girl he has proposed against the attacks of her prospective fiancé. "The mother-in-law does not suit me," the latter remarks. "She is a crabbed, foolish person." "That's true," replies the agent, "but you are not going to marry the mother-in-law, but the daughter." "Yes, but she is no longer young, and she is not pretty, either." "That's nothing: if she is not young or pretty, you can trust her all the more." "But she hasn't much money." "Why talk of money? Are you going to marry money? You want a wife, don't you?" "But she is a hunchback." "Well, what of that? Do you expect her to have no blemishes at all?"

It is really a question of an ugly girl who is no longer young, who has a paltry dowry and a repulsive mother, and who is besides equipped with a pretty bad deformity, qualities which are not at all inviting to matrimony. The marriage agent knows how to present each individual fault in a manner to cause one to become reconciled to it, and then takes up the unpardonable hunchback as the one fault which can be excused in anyone. Here again, there is the semblance of logic which is characteristic of sophisms, and which serves to conceal the faulty thinking. It is apparent that the girl possesses nothing but faults, many of which can be overlooked, but one that cannot be passed by. The chances for the marriage become very slim. The agent acts as if he removed each individual fault by his evasions, forgetting that each leaves behind some depreciation which is added to the next one. He insists upon dealing with each factor individually, and refuses to combine them into a sum-total.

A similar omission forms the nucleus of another sophism which causes much laughter, though one can well question its right to be called a joke.

A had borrowed a copper kettle from B., and upon returning it, was sued by B. because it had a large hole which rendered it unserviceable. His defense was this: "In the first place, I never borrowed any kettle from B., secondly, the kettle had a hole in it when I received it from B., thirdly, the kettle was in perfect condition when I returned it." Each separate
protest is good by itself, but taken together, they exclude each other. A. treats individually what must be taken as a whole, just as the marriage agent when he deals with the imperfections of the bride. One can also say that A. uses "and" where only an "either—or" is possible.

Another sophism greets us in the following marriage agent story. The suitors objects because the bride has a short leg and therefore limps. The agent contradicts him. "You are wrong," he says. "Suppose you marry a woman whose legs are sound and straight. What do you gain by it? You are not sure from day to day that she will not fall down, break a leg, and then be lame for the rest of her life. Just consider the pain, the excitement, and the doctor's bill. But if you marry this one, nothing can happen. Here you have a finished job."

Here the semblance of logic is very shallow, for no one will admit that a "finished misfortune" is to be preferred to a mere possibility of such. The error in the stream of thought will be seen more easily in a second example.

In the temple of Cracow, sat the great Rabbi N. praying with his disciples. Suddenly, he emitted a cry, and in response to his troubled disciples said: "The great Rabbi L. died just now in Lemberg." The congregation thereupon went into mourning for the deceased. In the course of the next day, travellers from Lemberg were asked how the rabbi had died, and what had caused his death. They knew nothing about the event, however, as, they said, they had left him in the best of health. Finally, it was definitely ascertained that the Rabbi of Lemberg had not died at the hour on which Rabbi N. had felt his death telepathically, and that he was still living. A stranger seized the opportunity to banter a pupil of the Cracow rabbi about the episode. "That was a glorious exhibition that your rabbi made of himself when he saw the Rabbi of Lemberg die," he said. "Why, the man is still living!" "No matter," replied the pupil. "To look from Cracow to Lemberg was wonderful anyhow."

Here the faulty thinking common to both of the last examples is openly shown. The value of fanciful ideas is unfairly matched against reality; possibility is made equivalent to actuality. To look from Cracow to Lemberg despite the miles between would have been an imposing telepathic feat, had it resulted in some truth, but the disciple gives no heed to that. It might have been possible that the Rabbi of Lemberg had died at the moment when the Rabbi of Cracow had proclaimed his death, but the pupil displaces the accent from the condition under which the teacher's act would be remarkable to the unconditional admiration of this act. "In magnis rebus voluisse sat est" is a similar point of view. Just as in this example, reality is sacrificed in favor of possibility, so in the foregoing example, the marriage agent suggests to the suitors that the possibility of the woman's becoming lame through an accident is a far more important
consideration to be taken into account; whereas the question as to whether or not she is lame is put altogether into the background.

AUTOMATIC ERRORS OF THOUGHT

Another interesting group falls in with this one of sophistical faulty thinking, in which the faulty thinking may be designated as automatic. It is perhaps only a stroke of fate that all the examples which I shall cite for this new group are again stories referring to marriage agents.

The agent brought along an assistant to a conference about a bride. This assistant was to confirm his assertions. "She is as well built as a pine tree," said the agent. "Like a pine tree," repeated the echo. "She has eyes which one must appreciate." "Wonderful eyes," confirmed the echo. "She is cultured beyond words. She possesses extraordinary culture." "Wonderfully cultured," repeated the assistant. "However, one thing is true," confessed the agent. "She has a slight hunch on her back." "And what a hunch!" confirmed the echo.

The other stories are quite analogous to this one, but they are cleverer.

On being introduced to his prospective bride, the suitor was rather unpleasantly surprised, and drawing aside the marriage agent, he reproachfully whispered to him: "Why have you brought me here? She is ugly and old. She squints, has bad teeth and bleary eyes." "You can talk louder," interrupted the agent. "She is deaf, too."

A prospective bridegroom made his first call on his future bride in company with the agent, and while in the parlor waiting for the appearance of the family, the agent drew the young man's attention to a glass closet containing a handsome silver set. "Just look at these things," he said. "You can see how wealthy these people are." "But is it not possible that these articles were just borrowed for the occasion," inquired the suspicious young man, "so as to give the appearance of wealth?" "What an idea," answered the agent protestingly. "Who in the world would lend them anything?"

In all three cases, one finds the same thing. A person who reacts several times in succession in the same manner, continues in the same manner on the next occasion where it is inappropriate, and runs contrary to his intentions. Falling into the automatism of habit, he fails to adapt himself to the demands of the situation. Thus, in the first story, the assistant forgot that he was taken along in order to influence the suitor in favor of the proposed bride, and as he had thus far accomplished his task by emphasizing through repetition the excellencies attributed to the lady, he now emphasizes also her timidly conceded hunchback which he should have belittled.

The marriage agent in the second story is so fascinated by the failings and infirmities of the bride that he completes the list from his own knowl-
edge, which it was certainly neither his business nor his intention to do. Finally, in the third story, he is so carried away by his zeal to convince the young man of the family's wealth, that in order to corroborate his proofs, he blurts out something which must upset all his efforts. Everywhere, the automatism triumphs over the appropriate variation of thought and expression.

That is all quite easy to understand, although it must cause confusion when it is called to our attention that these three stories could just as well be termed "comical" as "witty." Like every act of unmasking and self-betrayal, the discovery of the psychic automatism also belongs to technique of the comic. We suddenly see ourselves here confronted with the problem of the relationship of wit to the comic element—a subject which we endeavored to avoid (see the Introduction). Are these stories only "comical" and not "witty" also? Does the comic element employ here the same technical means as wit? And again, of what does the peculiar character of wit consist?

We must bear in mind that the technique of the group of witticisms examined last consists of nothing else but illustrations of "faulty thinking." We are forced to admit, however, that so far, the investigation has led us into more obscurity than enlightenment. Nevertheless, we do not abandon the hope of arriving at a result by means of a more thorough knowledge of the technique of wit, which may become the starting-point for further understanding.

UNIFICATION

The next examples of wit with which we wish to continue our investigation do not give us as much work. Their technique reminds us very much of what we already know. Here is one of Lichtenberg's jokes. "January," he says, "is the month in which one extends good wishes to his friends, and the rest are months in which the good wishes are not fulfilled."

As these witticisms may be called clever rather than strong, and are effected by less forceful means, we shall reinforce the impression gained from them by further study.

"Human life is divided into two halves; during the first, one looks forward to the second, and during the second, one looks backward to the first."

"Experience consists in experiencing what one does not care to experience." (The last two examples were cited by K. Fischer.)

One cannot help being reminded by these examples of a group, treated of before, which is characterized by the "manifold application of the same material." The last example especially will cause us to ask why we have not inserted it there instead of presenting it here in a new connection.
"Experience" is described through its own terms, just as in some of the examples cited above. Neither would I be against this correction. However, I am of the opinion that the other two cases, which are surely similar in character, contain a different factor which is more striking and more important than the manifold application of the same words, which shows nothing here verging on double meaning. And what is more, I wish to emphasize that new and unexpected identities are here formed which show themselves in relations of ideas to one another, in relations of definitions to each other, or to a common third. I would call this process *unification*. Obviously, it is analogous to condensation by compression into similar words. Thus, the two halves of human life are described by the inter-relationship discovered between them: during the first part, one longs for the second, and in the second, one longs for the first. To speak more precisely, there were two relationships very similar to each other which were selected for description. This similarity of the relationship which corresponds to the similarity of the words that, just for this reason, might recall the manifold application of the same material—(looks forward) (looks backward).

In Lichtenberg's joke, January and the months contrasted with it are characterized again by a modified relationship to a third factor: these are good wishes which one receives in the first month, but are not fulfilled during the other months. The differentiation from the manifold application of the same material which is really related to double meaning is here quite clear.

A good example of unification-wit needing no explanation is the following:

*J. B. Rousseau, the French poet, wrote an ode to posterity (à la postérité). Voltaire, thinking that the poor quality of the poem in no way justified its reaching posterity, wittily remarked, "This poem will not reach its destination." (K. Fischer).*

The last example may remind us of the fact that it is essentially unification which forms the basis of the so-called repartee in wit. For ready repartee consists in using the defense for aggression and in "turning the tables" or in "paying with the same coin." That is, repartee consists in establishing an unexpected identity between attack and counter-attack.

For example, a baker said to a tavern keeper, one of whose fingers was festering: "I guess your finger got into your beer." The tavern keeper replied: "You are wrong. One of your rolls got under my finger nail" (Ueberhorst: Das Komische, II, 1900).

While Augustus was travelling through his domains, he noticed a man in the crowds who bore a striking resemblance to himself. He beckoned to him to come over and asked: "Was your mother ever employed in my home?" "No, sire," replied the man, "but my father was."
While Duke Karl of Württemberg was riding horseback, he met a dyer working at his trade. "Can you color my white horse blue?" "Yes, sire," was the rejoinder, "if the animal can stand the boiling."

In this excellent repartee, which answers a foolish question with a condition that is equally impossible, there occurs another technical factor which would have been omitted if the dyer's reply had been: "No, sire, I am afraid that the horse could not stand being boiled."

Another peculiarly interesting technical means at the disposal of unification, is the addition of the conjunction "and." Such correlation signifies a connection which could not be understood otherwise. When Heine (Harsreise) says of the city of Göttingen, "In general, the inhabitants of Göttingen are divided into students, professors, Philistines and cattle," we understand this combination exactly in the sense which he furthermore emphasized by adding: "These four social groups are distinguished little less than sharply." Again, when he speaks about the school where he had to submit "to so much Latin, drubbing and geography," he wants to convey by this combination, which is made very conspicuous by placing the drubbing between the two studies, that the schoolboy's conception unmistakably described by the drubbing should be extended also to Latin and geography.

In Lipps's book, we find, among the examples of "witty enumeration" (Koordination) the following verse, which stands nearest to Heine's "students, professors, Philistines and cattle,"

"With a fork and with much effort, his mother pulled him from a mess."

"As if effort were an instrument like the fork," adds Lipps by way of explanation. But we get the impression that there is nothing witty in this sentence. To be sure, it is very comical, whereas Heine's co-ordination is undoubtedly witty. We shall, perhaps, recall these examples later when we shall no longer be forced to evade the problem of the relationship between wit and the comic.

**REPRESENTATION THROUGH THE OPPOSITE**

We have remarked in the example of the Duke and the dyer that it would still have been a joke by means of unification had the dyer replied, "No, I fear that the horse could not stand being boiled." But his answer read: "Yes, if the horse could stand boiling." In substituting a "yes" for the "no" which rightly belonged there, we meet a new technical means of wit, the application of which we shall study in other examples.

This joke, which resembles the one we have just cited from K. Fischer, is somewhat simpler. "Frederick the Great heard of a Silesian clergyman who had the reputation of communicating with spirits. He sent for him
and received him with the following question: 'Can you call up ghosts?' 'At your pleasure, Your Majesty,' replied the clergyman, 'but they won't come.'" Here, it is perfectly obvious that the wit lies in the substitution of its opposite for the only possible answer, "No." To complete this substitution "but" had to be added to "yes," so that "yes" plus "but" gives the equivalent for "no."

This "representation through the opposite," as we choose to call it, serves the mechanism of wit in several ways. In the following cases, it appears almost in its pure form:

"This woman resembles the Venus de Milo in many points. Like her, she is extraordinarily old, has no teeth, and has white spots on the yellow surface of her body" (Heine).

Here, ugliness is depicted by making it agree with the most beautiful. Of course, these agreements consist of attributes expressed in double meaning or of matters of slight importance. The latter applies to the second example.

"The attributes of the greatest men were all united in himself. Like Alexander, his head was tilted to one side; like Caesar, he always had something in his hair. He could drink coffee like Leibnitz, and once settled in his armchair, he forgot eating and drinking like Newton, and like him, had to be awakened. He wore a wig like Dr. Johnson, and like Cervantes, the fly of his trousers was always open" (Lichtenberg: The Great Mind).

J. V. Falke's Lebenserinnerungen an eine Reise nach Irland (page 271) furnishes an exceptionally good example of "representation through the opposite" in which the use of words of a double meaning plays absolutely no part. The scene is laid in a wax figure museum, like Mme. Tus-saud's. A lecturer discourses on one figure after another to his audience, which is composed of old and young people. "This is the Duke of Wellington and his horse," he says. Whereupon a young girl remarks, "Which is the duke and which is the horse?" "Just as you like, my pretty child," is the reply. "You pay your money and you take your choice."

The reduction of this Irish joke would be: "It is gross impudence on the part of the museum's management to offer such an exhibition to the public. It is impossible to distinguish between the horse and the rider (playful exaggeration), and it is for this exhibit that one pays one's hard-earned money!" The indignant expression is now dramatized and applied to a trivial occurrence. In the place of the entire audience, there appears one woman and the riding figure becomes individually determined. It is necessarily the Duke of Wellington, who is so very popular in Ireland. But the insolence of the museum proprietor or lecturer who takes money from the public and offers nothing in return, is represented by the opposite, through a speech, in which he extols himself as a conscientious business man, whose fondest desire is to respect the rights to which the public
WIT AND ITS RELATION TO THE UNCONSCIOUS

is entitled through the admission fee. One then realizes that the technique of this joke is not very simple. In so far as a way is found to allow the swindler to assert his scrupulousity, it may be said that the joke is a case of "representation through the opposite." The fact, however, that he does it on an occasion where something different is demanded of him, and the fact that he replies in terms of commercial integrity when he is expected to discuss the similarity of the figures, shows that it is a case of displacement. The technique of the joke lies in the combination of both technical means.

OUTDOING-WIT

This example is closely allied to another small group which might be called "outdoing-wit." Here, "yes," which would be proper in the reduction, is replaced by "no," which, owing to its context, is equivalent to a still stronger "yes." The same mechanism holds true when the case is reversed. The contradiction takes the place of an exaggerated confirmation. An example of this nature is seen in the following epigram from Lessing:

"The good Galatea! 'Tis said that she dyes her hair black, yet it was black when she bought it."

Lichtenberg's make-believe mocking defense of philosophy is another example.

"There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy," Prince Hamlet had disdainfully declared. Lichtenberg well knew that this condemnation was by no means severe enough, in that it does not take into account all that can be said against philosophy. He therefore added the following: "But there is also much in philosophy which is found neither in heaven nor on earth." To be sure, his assertion supplements what was lacking in Hamlet's philosophical utterance, but in doing this, he adds another and still greater reproach.

More transparent still, because they show no trace of displacement, are two Jewish jokes, which are, however, of the coarse kind.

Two Jews were conversing about bathing. "I take a bath once a year," said one, "whether I need one or not."

It is clear that this boastful assurance of his cleanliness only betrays his state of uncleanliness.

A Jew noticed remnants of food on the beard of another. "I can tell you what you ate yesterday," he remarked. "Well, let's hear it," said the other. "Beans," said the first one. "You are wrong," responded the other. "I had beans the day before yesterday."

The following example is an excellent "outdoing" witticism which can be traced easily to representation through the opposite.

1 Following an example of the Greek Anthology.
The king condescended to pay a visit at a surgical clinic, and found the professor of surgery engaged in amputating a leg. He watched the various steps of the operation with interest and expressed his royal approval with these loud utterances: "Bravo, bravo, Professor." When the operation was over, the professor approached the king, bowed low and asked: "Does your majesty also command the amputation of the other leg?"

Whatever the professor may have thought during this royal applause surely could not have been expressed unchanged. His real thoughts were: "Judging by this applause, he must be under the impression that I am amputating the poor devil's diseased leg by order of the king and for his pleasure. To be sure, I have other reasons for performing this operation." But instead of expressing these thoughts, he goes to the king and says: "I have no other reasons but your majesty's order for performing this operation. The applause you accorded me has inspired me so much that I am only awaiting your majesty's command to amputate the other leg also." He thus succeeded in making himself understood by expressing the opposite of what he really thought but which he had to keep to himself. Such an expression of the opposite represents an incredible exaggeration or outdoing.

As we gather from these examples, representation through the opposite is a means frequently and effectively used in the technique of wit. We need not overlook, however, something else, namely, that this technique is by no means confined only to wit. When Marc Antony, after his long speech in the Forum had changed the mood of the mob listening to Caesar's obsequies, at last repeats the words,

"For Brutus was an honorable man,"
he well knows that the mob will scream the true meaning of his words at him, namely,

"They are traitors: nice honorable men!"

Or when someone transcribes a collection of unheard-of brutalities and cynicisms as expressions of "people with temperaments," this, too, is a representation through the opposite. However, this is no longer designated as wit, but as "irony." Indeed, the only technique that is characteristic of irony is representation through the opposite. Besides, one reads and hears about "ironical wit." Hence, there is no longer any doubt that technique alone is not capable of characterizing wit. There must be something else which we have not yet discovered. On the other hand, the fact that the reduction of the technique destroys the wit still remains uncontradicted. For the present, it may be difficult for us to unite for the explanation of wit the two strong points which we have already gained.
INDIRECT EXPRESSION

Since representation through the opposite belongs to the technical means of wit, we may also expect that wit could make use of its reverse, namely, the representation through the similar and cognate. Indeed, when we continue our investigation, we find that this forms the technique of a new and especially extensive group of thought-witticisms. We can describe the peculiarity of this technique much better if, instead of representation through the "cognate," we use the expression representation through "relationships and associations." We shall start with the last characteristic and illustrate it by an example.

INDIRECT EXPRESSION WITH ALLUSION

It is an American anecdote and runs as follows: By undertaking a series of risky schemes, two not very scrupulous business men had succeeded in amassing an enormous fortune and were now intent on forcing their way into good society. Among other things, they thought it advisable to have their portraits painted by the most prominent and most expensive painters in the city, men whose works were considered masterpieces. The costly pictures were exhibited for the first time at a great evening gathering, and the hosts themselves led the most prominent connoisseur and art critic to the wall of the salon on which both portraits were hanging side by side, in order to elicit from him a favorable criticism. He examined the portraits for a long time, then shook his head as if he were missing something. At length, he pointed to the bare space between the pictures, and asked: "And where is the Savior?"

The meaning of this expression is clear. It is again the expression of something which cannot be represented directly. In what way does this "indirect expression" come about? By a series of very obvious associations and conclusions, let us work backwards from the verbal setting.

The query, "where is the Savior?" or "where is the picture of the Savior?" arouses the conjecture that the two pictures have reminded the speaker of a similar arrangement familiar to him as it is familiar to us. This arrangement, of which one element is here missing, shows the figure of the Savior between two other figures. There is only one such case: Christ hanging between the two thieves. The missing element is emphasized by the witticism, and the similarity rests in the figures at the right and left of the Savior, which are not mentioned in the jest. It can only mean that the pictures hanging in the drawing-room are likewise those of thieves. This is what the critic wished to, but could not say, "You are a pair of scoundrels," or more in detail, "What do I care about your portraits? You are a pair of scoundrels, that I know." And by means of a few
associations and conclusive inferences, he has said it in a manner which we designate as "allusion."

We are immediately reminded that we have encountered the process of allusion before. Namely, in double meaning, when one of the two meanings expressed by the same word stands out very prominently because being used much oftener and more commonly, our attention is directed to it first, whereas the other meaning remains in the background because it is more remote—such cases we wished to describe as double meaning with allusion. In an entire series of examples which we have hitherto examined, we have remarked that their technique is not simple and we realized that the process of allusion was the factor that complicated it. For example, see the contradiction-witticism in which the congratulations on the birth of the youngest child are acknowledged by the remark that it is remarkable what human hands can accomplish.

In the American anecdote, we have the process of allusion without the double meaning, and we find that the character of this process consists in completing the picture through mental association. It is not difficult to guess that the utilized association can be of more than one kind. So as not to be confused by large numbers, we shall discuss only the most pronounced variations, and shall give only a few examples.

For example, Lichtenberg coined the saying: "New baths heal well," which immediately reminds one of the proverb, "New brooms clean well," whose first and last words, as well as whose whole sentence structure, is the same as in the first saying. It has undoubtedly arisen in the witty thinker's mind as an imitation of the familiar proverb. Thus Lichtenberg's saying is an allusion to the latter. By means of this allusion, something is suggested that cannot be frankly said, namely, that the efficacy of the baths taken as cures is due to other things beside the thermal springs whose attributes are the same everywhere.

The solution of the technique of another one of Lichtenberg's jokes is similar: "The girl barely twelve months old." That sounds something like the chronological term "twelve moons" (i.e., months), and may originally have been a mistake in writing, a permissible poetical expression. But there is a good deal of sense in designating the age of a feminine creature by the changing modes instead of by the changing of moons.

The connection of similarity may even consist of a single slight modification. This technique again runs parallel with a word-technique. Both kinds of witticisms create almost the identical impression, but they are more easily distinguishable by the processes of the wit-work.

The following is an example of such a word-witticism or pun. The great singer, Mary Wilt, who was famous not merely on account of the magnitude of her voice, suffered the mortification of having a title of a play, dramatized from the well-known novel of Jules Verne, serve as an
allusion to her corpulence. "Around the Wilt (world) in Eighty Days."

Or: "Every fathom a queen," which is a modification of the familiar
Shakespearian quotation, "Every inch a king," and served as an allusion
to a prominent woman who was unusually big physically. There would
really be no serious objection if one should prefer to classify this witticism
as a substitution for condensation with modification (cf. tête-à-bête).

Discussing the hardships of the medical profession, namely, that phy-
sicians are obliged to read and study constantly because remedies and
drugs once considered efficacious are later rejected as useless, and that
despite the physician's best efforts, the patient often refuses to pay for
the treatment, one of the doctors present remarked: "Yes, every drug has
its day," to which another added, "But not every Doc gets his pay." These
two witty remarks are both modifications with allusion of the well-known
saying, "Every dog has his day." But here, too, the technique could be
described as fusion with modification.

If the modification contents itself with a change in letters, allusions
through modifications are barely distinguishable from condensation with
substitutive formation, as shown in this example: "Mellingitis," the allu-
sion to the dangerous disease meningitis, refers to the danger which the
conservative members of a provincial borough in England thought im-
pended if the socialist candidate Mellon were elected.

The negative particles make very good allusions at the cost of very
little changing. Heine referred to Spinoza as:
"My fellow unbeliever Spinoza."

"We, by the Ungrace of God, Laborers, Bondsmen, Negroes, Serfs," etc., is a manifesto (which Lichtenberg quotes no further) of these un-
fortunates who probably have more right to that title than kings and
dukes have to the unmodified "by the Grace of God."

OMISSION

Finally omission, which is comparable to condensation without substitu-
tive formation, is also a form of allusion. For in every allusion there is
really something omitted, namely, the trend of thought that leads to the
allusion. It is only a question of whether the gap, or the substitute in
the wording of the allusion, which partly fills in the gap, is the more
obvious element. Thus we come back through a series of examples from
the very clear cases of omission to those of actual allusion.

Omission without substitution is found in the following example. There
lived in Vienna a clever and bellicose writer whose sharp invec-
tives had repeatedly brought him bodily assault from the hands of the
persons he assailed. During a conversation about a new misdeed by one
of his habitual opponents, someone said, "When X. hears this, he will re-
ceive another box on the ear." The technique of this wit shows in the first
place the confusion about the apparent contradiction, for it is by no means clear to us why a box on one's ear should be the direct result of having heard something. The contradiction disappears if one fills in the gap by adding to the remark: "then he will write such a caustic article against that person that, etc." Allusions through omission and contradiction are thus the technical means of this witticism.

Heine remarked about someone: "He praises himself so much that pastils for fumigation are advancing in price." The omission can easily be filled in. What has been omitted is replaced by an inference which then strikes back as an allusion to the same. For self-praise has always carried an evil odor with it.

Once more we encounter the two Jews in front of the bathing establishment. "Another year has passed by already," says one with a sigh.

These examples leave no doubt that the omission is meant as an allusion.

A still more obvious omission is contained in the next example, which is really a genuine and correct allusion-witticism. Subsequent to an artists' banquet, a joke book was given out in which, among others, the following most remarkable proverb could be read:

"A wife is like an umbrella, at worst one may also take a cab."

An umbrella does not afford enough protection from rain. The words "at worst" can mean only: when it is raining hard. A cab is a public conveyance. As we have to deal here with the figure of comparison, we shall put off the detailed investigation of this witticism until later on.

Heine's "Bäder von Lucca" contains a veritable wasps' nest of stinging allusions which make the most artistic use of this form of wit as polemics against the Count of Platen. Long before the reader can suspect this application, a certain theme, which hardly lends itself to direct representation, is preluded by allusions of the most varied material possible; e.g., in Hirsch-Hyacinth's twisting of words: "You are too corpulent and I am too lean; you have too much imagination and I as much more business acumen; I am a practicus and you are a diarrheticus, in fine, 'You are altogether my Antipodex'—'Venus Urinia,' etc." Then the occurrences of which the poet speaks take a turn in which it first merely seems to show the impolite sportiveness of the poet, but soon it discloses the symbolic relation to the polemical intention, and in this way it also reveals itself as allusion. At last, the attack against Platen bursts forth, and now the allusions to the subject of the Count's love for men seethe and gush from each one of the sentences which Heine directs against the talent and the character of his opponent, e.g.:

"Even the Muses are not well disposed to him, he has at least the genius of speech in his power, or rather he knows how to violate him; for he lacks the free love of this genius, besides he must perseveringly run
after this youth, and he knows only how to grasp the outer forms which, in spite of their beautiful rotundity, never express themselves nobly."

"He has the same experience as the ostrich, which considers itself sufficiently hidden when it sticks its head into the sand so that only its backside is visible. Our illustrious bird would have done better if he had stuck his backside into the sand, and had shown us his head."

Allusion is perhaps the commonest and most easily employed means of wit, and is at the basis of most of the short-lived witty productions which we are wont to weave into our conversation. They cannot bear being separated from their native soil nor can they exist independently. Once more, we are reminded by the process of allusion of that relationship which has already begun to confuse our estimation of the technique of wit. The process of allusion is not witty in itself; there are perfectly formed allusions which have no claims to this character. Only those allusions which show a "witty" element are witty, hence the characteristics of wit, which we have followed even into its technique, again escape us.

I have sometimes designated allusion as "indirect expression," and now recognize that the different kinds of allusion with representation through the opposite, as well as the techniques still to be mentioned, can be united into a single large group for which "indirect expression" would be the comprehensive name. *Errors of thought—unification—indirect representation*—are therefore designations for those viewpoints under which we can group the techniques of thought-wit with which we became familiar.

**REPRESENTATION THROUGH THE MINUTE OR THE MINUTEST ELEMENT**

On continuing the investigation of our material, we think that we recognize a new sub-group of indirect representation, which though sharply defined, can be illustrated only by few examples. It is that of representation through a minute or minutest element, and solves the problem by bringing the entire character to full expression through a minute detail. Correlation of this group with the mechanism of allusion is made possible when we consider that this triviality is connected with the thing to be presented and is really derived from it. For example:

*A Jew who was riding in a train had made himself very comfortable; he had unbuttoned his coat, and had put his feet on the seat, when a fashionably dressed gentleman came in. The Jew immediately put on his best behavior and assumed a modest position. The stranger turned over the pages of a book, did some calculation, and pondered a moment and suddenly addressed the Jew: "I beg your pardon, how soon will we have Yom Kippur?" (Day of Atonement). "Oh, oh!" said the Jew, and put his feet back on the seat before he answered.*

It cannot be denied that this representation through something minute
is allied to the tendency of economy which we found to be the final common element in the investigation of the technique of word-wit.

The following example is much similar.

The doctor who had been summoned to help the baroness in her confinement declared that the critical moment had not yet arrived, and proposed to the baron that they play a game of cards in the adjoining room in the meantime. After a while, the doleful cry of the baroness reached the ears of the men. "Ah, mon Dieu, que je souffre!" The husband jumped up, but the physician stopped him saying, "That's nothing; let us play on." A little while later, the woman in labor was heard again: "My God, my God, what pains!" "Don't you want to go in, Doctor?" asked the baron. "By no means, it is not yet time," answered the doctor. At last, there rang from the adjacent room the unmistakable cry, "A-a-a-ai-e-e-e-e-e-E-E-E!" The physician quickly threw down the cards and said, "Now it's time."

How the pain causes the original nature to break through all the strata of education, and how an important decision is rightly made dependent upon a seemingly inconsequential utterance—both are shown in this good joke by the successive changes in the cries of this child-bearing lady of quality.

COMPARISON

Another kind of indirect expression of which wit makes use is comparison, which we have not discussed so far because an examination of comparison touches upon new difficulties, or rather it reveals difficulties which have made their appearance on other occasions. We have already admitted that in many of the examples examined, we could not banish all doubts as to whether they should really be counted as witty, and have recognized in this uncertainty a serious shock to the principles of our investigation. But in no other material do I feel this uncertainty greater and nowhere does it occur more frequently than in the case of comparison-wit. The feeling which usually tells me—and I dare say a great many others under the same conditions—this is a joke, this may be written down as witty before even the hidden and essential character of the wit has been uncovered—this feeling I lack most in witty comparisons. If I first have no hesitation in declaring the comparison as witty, then the next instant I seem to think that the pleasure I thus found was of a different quality than that which I am accustomed to ascribe to a joke. Moreover, the fact that witty comparisons but seldom evoke the explosive variety of laughter by which a good joke proves itself, makes it impossible for me to cast aside the existing doubts, even when I limit myself to the best and most effective examples.

That there are some especially good and effective examples of com-
parison, which in no way give the impression of wit, can be easily shown. A beautiful example of this kind which I have not yet tired of admiring, and the impression of which still clings to me, I shall not deny myself the pleasure of citing. It is a comparison with which Ferd. Lassalle concluded one of his famous pleas (Die Wissenschaft und die Arbeiter): "A man like myself who, as I explained to you, had devoted his whole life to the motto 'Die Wissenschaft und die Arbeiter' (Science and the Workingman), would receive the same impression from a condemnation which in the course of events confronts him as would the chemist, absorbed in his scientific experiments, from the cracking of a retort. With a slight knitting of his brow at the resistance of the material, he would, as soon as the disturbance was quieted, calmly continue his labor and investigations."

One finds a rich assortment of pertinent and witty comparisons in the writings of Lichtenberg (Vol. II of the Göttingen edition, 1853). I shall take the material for our investigation from that source.

"It is almost impossible to carry the torch of truth through a crowd without singeing somebody's beard." This may seem witty, but on closer examination, one notices that the witty effect does not come from the comparison itself but from a secondary attribute of the same. For the expression "the torch of truth" is no new comparison, but one which has been used for a long time and which has degenerated into a fixed phrase, as always happens when a comparison has the luck to be absorbed into the common usage of speech. But whereas we hardly notice the comparison in the saying, "the torch of truth," its original full force is restored to it by Lichtenberg, since by building further on the comparison it results in a deduction. But the taking of blurred expressions in their full sense is already known to us as a technique of wit; it finds a place in the Manifold Applications of the Same Material. It may well be that the witty impression created by Lichtenberg's sentence is due only to its relation to this technique of wit.

The same explanation will undoubtedly hold good for another witty comparison by the same author.

"The man was not exactly a shining light, but a great illuminator. . . . He was a professor of philosophy."

To call a scholar a shining light, a "lumen mundi," has long ceased to be an effective comparison, whether it be originally qualified as a witicism or not. But here the comparison was freshened up and its full force was restored to it by deducting a modification from it, and in this way setting up a second, new comparison. The way in which the second comparison came into existence seems to contain the condition of the witicism, and not the two comparisons themselves. This is a case of the same technique of wit as in the example of the torch.
The following comparison seems witty for another, though similarly classified reason: "I look upon reviews as a kind of children's disease which more or less attacks new-born books. There are cases on record where the healthiest succumbed to them, and the puniest have often survived them. Many never get this disease. Attempts have frequently been made to prevent the disease by means of amulets of prefaces and dedications, or by coloring them up with pronunciation; but it does not always help."

The comparison of reviews with children's diseases is based in the first place upon their susceptibility to attack shortly after they have seen the light of the world. Whether this makes it witty I do not trust myself to decide. But when the comparison is continued, it is found that the later fates of the new books may be represented within the scope of the same or by means of similar comparisons. Such a continuation of a comparison is undoubtedly witty, but we know already to what technique it owes its witty flavor; it is a case of unification or the establishment of an unexpected association. The character of the unification, however, is not changed by the fact that it consists here in a relationship with the first comparison.

Doubt in Witty Comparisons

In a series of other comparisons, one is tempted to ascribe an indisputably existing witty impression to another factor which again in itself has nothing to do with the nature of the comparison. These are comparisons which are strikingly grouped, often contain a combination that sounds absurd, or comes into being as a result of such combinations. Most of Lichtenberg's examples belong to this group.

"It is a pity that one cannot see the learned bowels of the writers, in order to find out what they have eaten." "The learned bowels" is a confusing, really absurd attribute which is made clear only by the comparison. How would it be if the witty impression of this comparison should be referred entirely and fully to the puzzling character of their composition? This would correspond to one of the means of wit well known to us, namely, representation through absurdity.

Lichtenberg has produced another witticism by comparing imbibing of reading and educational material with imbibing of physical nourishment.

"He thought highly of studying in his room and was heartily in favor of learned stable fodder."

The same absurd or at least conspicuous attributes, which, as we are beginning to notice, are the real carriers of the wit, mark other comparisons of the same author.

"This is the weather-side of my moral constitution, here I can stand almost anything."
“Every person has also his moral backside which he does not show except under the stress of necessity and which he covers as long as possible with the pants of good breeding.”

The “moral backside” is the striking attribute which exists here as a result of a comparison. But this is followed by a continuation of the comparison with a regular play on words (“necessity”) and a second, still more unusual combination (“the pants of good breeding”), which is possibly witty in itself; for the pants become witty, as it were, because they are the pants of good breeding. We may, therefore, be surprised if the whole thing gives us the impression of a very witty comparison and we are beginning to notice that we are generally inclined in our estimation to extend a quality to the whole thing when it clings only to one part of it. Besides, the “pants of good breeding” remind us of a similar confusing verse of Heine:

“Until, at last, the buttons tore from the pants of my patience.”

It is obvious that both of the last comparisons possess a character which one cannot find in all good, i.e., fitting comparisons. One might say that they are in a large manner “debasing,” for they place a thing of high category, an abstraction (good breeding, patience), side by side with a thing of a very concrete nature of a very low kind (pants). Whether this peculiarity has something to do with wit we shall have to consider in another connection. Let us attempt to analyze another example in which the degrading character is exceptionally well defined. In Nestroy’s farce “Einen Jux will er sich machen,” the clerk, Weinberl, who resolves in his imagination how he will ponder over his youth when he has some day become a well-established merchant, says: “When in the course of confidential conversation, the ice is chopped up before the warehouse of memory, when the portal of the storehouse of antiquity is unlocked again, and when the matings of phantasy are stocked full with wares of yore.” These are certainly comparisons of abstractions with very common, concrete things, but the witticism depends—exclusively or only partially—upon the circumstance that a clerk makes use of these comparisons which are taken from the sphere of his daily occupation. But to bring the abstract in relation to the commonplace with which he is otherwise filled, is an act of unification. Let us revert to Lichtenberg’s comparisons.

PECULIAR ATTRIBUTIONS

“The motives for our actions may be arranged like the thirty-two winds, and their names may be classified in a similar way, e.g., Bread-bread-glory or Glory-glory-bread.”

As so often happens in Lichtenberg’s witticisms, in this case, too, the Impression of appropriateness, cleverness and ingenuity is so marked that our judgment of the character of the witty element is thereby misled. If
something witty is intermingled in such an utterance with excellent sense, we probably are deluded into declaring the whole thing as an exceptional joke. Moreover, I dare say that everything that is really witty about it results from the strangeness of the peculiar combination bread-bread-glory. Thus, as far as wit is concerned, it is representation through absurdity.

The peculiar combination or absurd attribution can alone be represented as a product of a comparison.

Lichtenberg says: “A twice-sleepy woman—a once-sleepy church pew.” Behind each one there is a comparison with a bed; in both cases, there is besides the comparison also the technical factor of allusion. Once it is an allusion to the soporific effect of sermons, and the second time to the inexhaustible theme of sex.

Having found hitherto that a comparison as often as it appears witty owes this impression to its connection with one of the techniques of wit known to us, there are nevertheless some other examples which seem to point to the fact that a comparison as such can also be witty.

This is Lichtenberg’s characteristic remark about certain odes. “They are in poetry what Jacob Böhms immortal writings are in prose—they are a kind of picnic in which the author supplies the words and the readers the meaning.”

“When he philosophizes, he generally sheds an agreeable moonlight over his topics, which is in the main quite pleasant, but which does not show any one subject clearly.”

Again, Heine’s description: “Her face resembled a kodex palimpsestus, where under the new block-lettered text of a church father peek forth the half-obiterated verses of an ancient Hellenic erotic poet.”

Or, the continued comparison with a very depreciating tendency, from the “Bäder von Lucca:”

“The Catholic priest is more like a clerk who is employed in a big business; the church, the big house at the head of which is the Pope, gives him a set salary. He works lazily like one who is not working for himself; he has many colleagues, and thus easily remains unnoticed in this big business enterprise. He is concerned only in the credit of the house and still more in its preservation, since he would be deprived of his livelihood if it went into bankruptcy. The Protestant clergyman, on the other hand, is his own boss and carries on the religious businesses on his own responsibility. He has no wholesale trade like his Catholic brother-tradesman, but deals merely at retail; and since he himself must understand it, he cannot afford to be lazy. He must praise his articles of faith to the people and must disparage the articles of his competitors. Like a true small tradesman, he stands in his retail store, full of envy of the industry of all large houses, particularly the large house in Rome which has so many
thousand bookkeepers and packers on its payroll, and which owns factories in all four corners of the world.”

In the face of this, as in many other examples, we can no longer dispute the fact that a comparison may in itself be witty, and that the witty impression need not necessarily depend on one of the known techniques of wit. But we are entirely in the dark as to what determines the witty character of the comparison, since it certainly does not cling to the similarity as a form of expression of the thought, or to the operation of the comparison. We can do no better than include comparison among the different forms of “indirect representation” which are at the disposal of the technique of wit, but the problem, which confronted us more distinctly in the mechanism of comparison, than in the means of wit hitherto treated, must remain unsolved. There must surely be a special reason why the decision as to whether something is a witticism or not, presents more difficulties in cases of comparison than in other forms of expression.

This gap in our understanding, however, offers no ground for complaint that our first investigation has been unsuccessful. Considering the intimate connection which we had to be prepared to ascribe to the different qualities of wit, it would have been imprudent to expect, that we could fully explain one aspect of the problem before we had cast a glance over the others. We shall have to take up this problem at another place.

**Review of the Techniques of Wit**

Are we sure that none of the possible techniques of wit has escaped our investigation? Not exactly; but by a continued examination of new material, we can convince ourselves that we have become acquainted with the most numerous and most important technical means of wit-work—at least with as much as is necessary for formulating a judgment about the nature of this psychic process. At present no such judgment exists; on the other hand, we have come into possession of important indications, from the direction of which we may expect a further explanation of the problem. The interesting processes of condensation with substitutive formation, which we have recognized as the nucleus of the technique of word-wit, directed our attention to the dream-formation in whose mechanism the identical psychic processes were discovered. Thither also we are directed by the technique of the thought-wit, namely displacement, faulty thinking, absurdity, indirect expression and representation through the opposite—each and all are also found in the technique of dreams. The dream is indebted to displacement for its strange appearance, which hinders us from recognizing in it the continuation of our waking thoughts; the dream’s use of absurdity and contradiction has cost it the dignity of a psychic product, and has misled the authors to assume that the determinants of dream-formation are: collapse of mental activity, cessation of
criticism, morality and logic. Representation through the opposite is so common in dreams that even the popular, but entirely misleading, books on dream interpretation usually put it to good account. Indirect expression, the substitution for the dream-thought by an allusion, by a trifle or by a symbolism analogous to comparison, is just exactly what distinguishes the manner of expression of the dream from our waking thoughts.\textsuperscript{1} Such a far-reaching agreement as found between the means of wit-work and those of dream-work can scarcely be accidental. To show those agreements in detail and to trace their motivations will be one of our future tasks.

\textsuperscript{1} Cf. my \textit{Interpretation of Dreams}, Chap. VI, \textit{The Dream-Work}. 
III

THE TENDENCIES OF WIT

Near the end of the preceding chapter as I was writing down Heine's comparison of the Catholic priest to an employee of a large business house, and the Protestant divine to an independent retail dealer, I felt an inhibition which nearly prevented me from using this comparison. I said to myself that among my readers probably there would be some who hold in veneration not only religion, but also its administration and personnel. These readers might take offense at the comparison and get into such an emotional state about it that it would take away all interest from the question whether the comparison seemed witty in itself or was witty only through its garnishings. In other examples, e.g., the one mentioned above concerning the agreeable moonlight shed by a certain philosophy, there would be no worry that for some readers it might be a disturbing influence in our investigation. Even the most religious person would remain in the right mood to form a judgment about our problem.

It is easy to guess the character of the witticism by the kind of reaction that wit exerts on the hearer. Sometimes wit is wit for its own sake and serves no other particular purpose; then, again, it places itself at the service of such a tendency; i.e., it becomes tendentious. Only that form of wit which has such a tendency runs the risk of ruffling people who do not wish to hear it.

Theo Vischer called wit without a tendency "abstract" wit; I prefer to call it "harmless" wit.

As we have already classified wit according to the material touched by its technique into word- and thought-wit, it is incumbent upon us to investigate the relation of this classification to the one just put forward. Word- and thought-wit on the one hand, and abstract- and tendency-wit on the other hand, bear no relation of dependence to each other; they are two entirely independent classifications of witty productions. Perhaps some one may have gotten the impression that harmless witticisms are preponderately word-witticisms, whereas the complicated techniques of
thought-witticisms are mostly made to serve strong tendencies. There are harmless witticisms that operate through play on words and sound similarity, and just as harmless ones which make use of all means of thought-wit. Nor is it less easy to prove that tendency-wit as far as technique is concerned may be merely the wit of words. Thus, for example, witticisms that "play" with proper names often show an insulting and offending tendency, and yet they, too, belong to word-wit. Again, the most harmless of all jests are word-witticisms. Examples of this nature are the popular "shake-up" rhymes (Schüttelreime) in which the technique is represented through the manifold application of the same material with a very peculiar modification:

"Having been forsaken by Dame Luck, he degenerated into a Lame Duck."

Let us hope that no one will deny that the pleasure experienced in this kind of otherwise unpretentious rhyming is of the same nature as the one by which we recognize wit.

Good examples of abstract or harmless thought-witticisms abound in Lichtenberg's comparisons with which we have already become acquainted. I add a few more. "They sent a small octavo to the University of Göttingen; and received back in body and soul a quarto" (a fourth-form boy).

"In order to erect this building well, one must above all things lay a good foundation, and I know of no firmer than by laying immediately over every pro-layer a contra-layer."

"One man begets the thought, the second acts as its godfather, the third begets children by it, the fourth visits it on its death-bed, and the fifth buries it" (comparison with unification).

"Not only did he not believe in ghosts, but not once was he ever afraid of them." The witticism in this case lies exclusively in the absurd representation which puts what is usually considered less important in the comparative and what is considered more important in the positive degree. Divested of its dress it says: it is much easier to use our reason and make light of the fear of ghosts than to defend ourselves against this fear when the occasion presents itself. But this rendering is no longer witty; it is merely a correct and still too little respected psychological fact suggesting what Lessing expresses in his well-known words:

"Not all are free who mock their chains."

HARMLESS AND TENDENCY WIT

I shall take the opportunity presented here of clearing up what may still lead to a possible misunderstanding. "Harmless" or "abstract" wit should in no way convey the same meaning as "shallow" or "poor" wit. It is
meant only to designate the opposite of the "tendency" wit to be described later. As shown in the aforementioned examples, a harmless jest, i.e., a witticism without a tendency, can also be very rich in content and express something worth while. The quality of a witticism, however, is independent of the wit and represents the quality of the thought which is here expressed wittily by means of a special contrivance. To be sure, just as watch-makers are wont to enclose very good works in valuable cases, so it may likewise happen with wit that the best wit-contrivances are used to invest the richest thoughts.

Now, if we pay strict attention to the distinction between thought-content and the witty wording of thought-wit, we arrive at an insight which may clear up much uncertainty in our judgment of wit. For it turns out—astonishing as it may seem—that our enjoyment of a witticism is supplied by the combined impression of content and wit-activity, and that one of the factors is likely to deceive us about the extent of the other. It is only the reduction of the witticism that lays bare to us our mistaken judgment.

The same thing applies to word-wit. When we hear that "experience consists simply of experiencing what one wishes he had not experienced," we are puzzled, and believe that we have learnt a new truth; it takes some time before we recognize in this disguise the platitude, "adversity is the school of wisdom." The excellent witticism which seeks to define "experience" by the almost exclusive use of the word "experience" deceives us so completely that we overestimate the content of the sentence. The same thing happens in many similar cases and also in Lichtenberg's unification-witticism about January, which expresses nothing but what we already know, namely, that New Year's wishes are as seldom realized as other wishes.

We find the contrary true of other witticisms, in which obviously what is striking and correct in the thought captivates us, so that we call the saying an excellent witticism, whereas it is only the thought that is brilliant while the wit-function is often weak. It is especially true of Lichtenberg's wit that the path of the thought is often of more value than its witty expression, though we unjustly extend the value of the former to the latter. Thus the remark about the "torch of truth" is hardly a witty comparison, but it is so striking that we are inclined to lay stress on the sentence as exceptionally witty.

Lichtenberg's witticisms are above all remarkable for their thought-content and their certainty of hitting the mark. Goethe has rightly remarked about this author that his witty and jocose thoughts positively conceal problems. Or perhaps it may be more correct to say that they touch upon the solutions of problems. When, for example, he presents as a witty thought:
"He always read Agamemnon instead of the German word angenommen (accepted), so thoroughly had he read Homer" (technically this is absurdity plus sound similarity of words). Thus he discovered nothing less than the secret of mistakes in reading. The following joke, whose technique seemed to us quite unsatisfactory, is of a similar nature.

"He was surprised that there were two holes cut in the pelts of cats just where the eyes were located." The stupidity here exhibited is only seemingly so; in reality this ingenuous remark conceals the great problem of teleology in the structure of animals; it is not at all so self-evident that the eyelid cleft opens just where the cornea is exposed, until the science of evolution explains to us this coincidence.

Let us bear in mind that a witty sentence gave us a general impression in which we were unable to distinguish the amount of thought-content from the amount of wit-work; perhaps even a more significant parallel to it will be found later.

PLEASURE RESULTS FROM THE TECHNIQUE

For our theoretical explanation of the nature of wit, harmless wit must be of greater value to us than tendency-wit and shallow wit more than profound wit. Harmless and shallow plays on words present to us the problem of wit in its purest form, because of the good sense therein and because it has no tendency nor underlying philosophy to confuse the judgment. With such material our understanding can make further progress.

At the end of a dinner to which I had been invited, a pastry called Roulard was served; it was a culinary accomplishment which presupposed a good deal of skill on the part of the cook. "Is it home-made?" asked one of the guests. "Oh, yes," replied the host, "it is a Home-Roulard" (Home Rule).

This time we shall not investigate the technique of this witticism, but shall center our attention upon another, and most important factor. As I remember, this improvised joke delighted all the guests and made us laugh. In this case, as in countless others, the feeling of pleasure of the hearer cannot have originated from the tendency or the thought-content of the wit; so we are forced to connect the feeling of pleasure with the technique of wit. The technical means of wit which we have described, such as condensation, displacement, indirect expression, etc., have therefore the faculty to produce a feeling of pleasure in the hearer, although we cannot as yet see how they acquired that faculty. By such easy stages we get the second axiom for the explanation of wit; the first one states that the character of wit depends upon the mode of expression. Let us remember also that the second axiom has really taught us nothing new: It merely isolates a fact that was already contained in a discovery which

1 Cf. my Psychopathology of Everyday Life.
we made before. For we recall that whenever it was possible to reduce the wit by substituting for its verbal expression another set of words, at the same time carefully retaining the sense, it not only eliminated the witty character but also the laughableness that constitutes the pleasure of wit.

At present we cannot go further without first coming to an understanding with our philosophical authorities.

The philosophers who consider wit as a part of the comic and deal with the latter itself in the field of æsthetics, characterize the æsthetic, feeling through the following condition: that we are not thereby interested in or about the objects, that we do not need these objects to satisfy our great wants in life, but that we are satisfied with the mere contemplation of the same, and with the pleasure of the idea itself. "This pleasure, this mode of conception is purely æsthetical, it depends entirely on itself, its end is only itself and it fulfills no other end in life" (K. Fischer, p. 68).

We scarcely venture a contradiction to K. Fischer's words—perhaps we merely translate his thoughts into our own mode of expression—when we insist that the witty activity is, after all, not to be designated as aimless or purposeless, since it has for its aim the evocation of pleasure in the hearer. I doubt whether we are able to undertake anything which has no object in view. When we do not use our psychic apparatus for the fulfillment of one of our indispensable gratifications, we let it work for pleasure, and we seek to derive pleasure from its own activity. I suspect that this is really the condition which underlies all æsthetic thinking, but I know too little about æsthetics to be willing to support this theory. About wit, however, I can assert, on the strength of the two impressions gained before, that it is an activity whose purpose is to derive pleasure—be it intellectual or otherwise—from the psychic processes. To be sure, there are other activities which accomplish the same thing. They may be differentiated from each by the sphere of psychic activity from which they wish to derive pleasure, or perhaps by the methods which they use in accomplishing this. At present we cannot decide this, but we firmly maintain that at last we have established a connection between the technique of wit which is partly controlled by the tendency to economize, and the production of pleasure.

But before we proceed to solve the riddle of how the technical means of wit-work can produce pleasure in the hearer, we wish to mention that, for the sake of simplicity and more lucidity, we have altogether put aside all tendency wit, which we wish to derive pleasure, or perhaps by the methods which they use. Still we must attempt to explain what the tendencies of wit are and in what manner wit makes use of these tendencies.

*HOSTILE AND OBScene WIT*

We are taught above all by an observation not to put aside tendency-wit when we are investigating the origin of the pleasure in wit. The pleas-
urable effect of harmless wit is usually of a moderate nature; all that it can be expected to produce in the hearer is a distinct feeling of satisfaction and a slight ripple of laughter; and as we have shown by fitting examples at least a part of this effect is due to the thought-content. The sudden irresistible outburst of laughter evoked by tendency-wit rarely follows wit without a tendency. As the technique may be identical in both, it is fair to assume that by virtue of its purpose, tendency-wit has at its disposal sources of pleasure to which harmless wit has no access.

It is now easy to survey wit-tendencies. Wherever wit is not a means to its end, i.e., harmless, it puts itself in the service of but two tendencies which may themselves be united under one viewpoint; it is either hostile wit serving as an aggression, satire, or defense, or it is obscene wit serving as a sexual exhibition. Again, it is to be observed that the technical form of wit—be it a word- or thought-witticism—bears no relation to these two tendencies.

It is a much more complicated matter to show in what way wit serves these tendencies. In this investigation I wish to present first not the hostile but the exhibition wit. The latter has indeed very seldom been deemed worthy of an investigation, as if an aversion had transferred itself here from the material to the subject. However, we shall not allow ourselves to be misled thereby, for we shall soon touch upon a detail in wit which promises to throw light on more than one obscure point.

We all know what is meant by a “smutty” joke. It is the intentional bringing into prominence of sexual facts or relations through speech. However, this definition is no sounder than other definitions. A lecture on the anatomy of the sexual organs or on the physiology of reproduction need not, in spite of this definition, have anything in common with obscenity. It must be added that the smutty joke is directed toward a certain person who excites one sexually, and who becomes cognizant of the speaker's excitement by listening to the smutty joke, and thereby in turn becomes sexually excited. Instead of becoming sexually excited the listener may react with shame and embarrassment, which merely signifies a reaction against the excitement and indirectly an admission of the same. The smutty joke was originally directed against the woman and may be comparable to an attempt at seduction. If a man tells or listens to obscene jokes in male society, the original situation, which cannot be realized on account of social inhibitions, is thereby also represented. Whoever laughs at a smutty joke does the same as the spectator who laughs at a sexual aggression.

The sexual element which is at the basis of the obscene joke comprises more than that which is peculiar to both sexes, and goes beyond that which is common to both sexes, it is connected with all these things that cause shame, and includes the whole domain of the excrementitious. However,
this was the sexual domain of childhood, where the imagination fancied a cloaca, so to speak, within which the sexual elements were either badly or not at all differentiated from the excrementitious. In the whole mental domain of the psychology of the neuroses, the sexual still includes the excrementitious, and it is understood in the old, infantile sense.

The smutty joke is like a denudation of a person of the opposite sex toward whom the joke is directed. Through the utterance of obscene words the person attacked is forced to picture the parts of the body in question, or the sexual act, and is shown that the aggressor himself pictures the same thing. There is no doubt that the original motive of the smutty joke was the pleasure of seeing the sexual displayed.

It will only help to clarify the subject if here we go back to the fundamentals. One of the primitive components of our libido is the desire to see the sexual exposed. Perhaps this libido is in itself already a substitution for the desire to touch which is assumed to be the primary pleasure. As it often happens, the desire to see has here also replaced the desire to touch. The libido for looking and touching is found in every person in two forms, active and passive, or masculine and feminine; and in accordance with the preponderance of sex characteristics it develops preponderately in one or the other direction. In young children one can readily observe the desire to exhibit themselves nude. If the germ of this desire does not experience the usual fate of stratification and repression, it develops into a mania for exhibitionism, a familiar perversion among grown-up men. In women the passive desire to exhibit is almost regularly covered by the masked reaction of sexual modesty; despite this, however, remnants of this desire may always be seen in women's dress. How flexible and variable convention and circumstances make that remaining portion of exhibitionism still allowed to women needs hardly be mentioned.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SMUTTY JOKE INTO OBSCENE WIT

In the case of men a great part of this striving to exhibit remains as a part of his libido and serves to initiate the sexual act. If this striving asserts itself on first meeting the woman, it must make use of speech for two motives. First, in order to make itself known to the woman; and secondly, because the awakening of the imagination through speech puts the woman herself in a corresponding excitement and awakens in her the desire to passive exhibitionism. This speech of courtship is not yet smutty, but may pass over into the same. Wherever the yieldingness of the woman manifests itself quickly, smutty speech is short-lived, for it gives way to the sexual act. It is different if the rapid yielding of the woman cannot be

1 Cf. Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex.
2 Moll's Kontrektionstrieb (Untersuchungen über die Libido sexualis, 1898).
counted upon, but instead there appears the defense reaction. In that case the sexually exciting speech changes into obscene wit as its own end; as the sexual aggression is inhibited in its progress towards the act, it lingers at the evocation of the excitement and derives pleasure from the indications of the same in the woman. In this process the aggression changes its character in the same way as any libidinal impulse confronted by a hindrance; it becomes distinctly hostile and cruel, and utilizes the sadistical components of the sexual instinct against the hindrance.

Thus, the unyieldingness of the woman is, therefore, the next condition for the development of smutty wit; to be sure, this resistance must be of the kind to indicate merely a deferment and make it appear that further efforts will not be in vain. The ideal case of such resistance on the part of the woman usually results from the simultaneous presence of another man, a third person, whose presence almost excludes the immediate yielding of the woman. This third person soon becomes of the greatest importance for the development of the smutty wit, but above all the presence of the woman is almost indispensable. Among rural people or in the ordinary hostelry one can observe that not till the waitress or the hostess approaches the guests does the obscene wit come out; in a higher order of society just the opposite happens, here the presence of a woman puts an end to smutty talk. The men reserve this kind of conversation, which originally presupposed the presence of bashful women, until they are alone, "by themselves." Thus gradually the spectator, now turned the listener, takes the place of the woman as the object of the smutty joke, and through such a change the smutty joke already resembles the character of wit.

Henceforth, our attention may be centered upon two factors, first upon the rôle that the third person—the listener—plays, and secondly, upon the intrinsic conditions of the smutty joke itself.

Tendency-wit usually requires three persons. Besides the one who makes the wit there is a second person, who is taken as the object of the hostile or sexual aggression, and a third person in whom the purpose of the wit to produce pleasure is fulfilled. We shall later on inquire into the deeper motive of this relationship, for the present we shall adhere to the fact which states that it is not the maker of the wit who laughs about it and enjoys its pleasurable effect, but the idle listener. The same relationship exists among the three persons connected with the smutty joke. The process may be described as follows: As soon as the libidinal impulse of the first person, to gratify himself through the woman, is blocked, he immediately develops a hostile attitude towards this second person and takes the originally intruding third person as his confederate. Through the obscene speech of the first person the woman is exposed before the
third person, who now as a listener is bribed by the easy gratification of his own libido.

It is curious that common people so thoroughly enjoy such smutty talk, and that it is a never-lacking activity of cheerful humor. It is also worthy of notice that in this complicated process which shows so many characteristics of tendency-wit, no formal demands, such as characterize wit, are made upon "smutty wit." To express the unveiled nudity affords pleasure to the first, and makes the third person laugh.

Not until we come to the refined and cultured social stratum does the formal determination of wit arise. The obscenity becomes witty and is tolerated only if it is witty. The technical means of which it mostly makes use is allusion, i.e., substitution through a trifle, something which is only remotely related, which the listener reconstructs in his imagination as a full-fledged and direct obscenity. The greater the disproportion between what is directly offered in the obscenity and what is necessarily aroused by it in the mind of the listener, the finer is the witticism and the higher it may venture in good society. Besides the coarse and delicate allusions, the witty obscenity also utilizes all other means of word- and thought-wit, as can be easily demonstrated by examples.

THE FUNCTION OF WIT IN THE SERVICE OF THE TENDENCY

It now becomes comprehensible what wit accomplishes through this service of its tendency. It makes possible the gratification of a craving (lewd or hostile) despite a hindrance which stands in the way; it eludes the hindrance and so derives pleasure from a source that has been inaccessible on account of the hindrance. The hindrance in the way is really nothing more than the higher degree of culture and education which correspondingly increases the inability of the woman to tolerate stark sex matters. The woman thought of as present in the final situation, is still considered present, or her influence acts as a deterrent to the men even in her absence. One often notices how cultured men are influenced by the company of girls of a lower station in life to change witty obscenities to broad smut.

The power which makes it difficult or impossible for the woman, and in a lesser degree for the man, to enjoy unveiled obscenities we call "repression," and we recognize in it the same psychic process which keeps from consciousness in severe nervous attacks, whole complexes of emotions with their resultant affects, and which has shown itself to be the principal factor in the causation of the so-called psychoneuroses. We acknowledge to culture and higher civilization an important influence in the development of repressions, and assume that under these conditions there has come about a change in our psychic organization which may also have been brought along as an inherited disposition. In consequence of it,
what was once accepted as pleasureful is now counted unacceptable and is rejected by means of all the psychic forces. Owing to the repression brought about by civilization many primary pleasures are now disapproved by the censorship and lost. But the human psyche finds renunciation very difficult; hence we discover that tendency-wit furnishes us with a means to make the renunciation regressive and thus to regain what has been lost. When we laugh over a delicately obscene witticism, we laugh at the identical thing which causes laughter in the ill-bred man when he hears a coarse, obscene joke; in both cases the pleasure comes from the same source. The coarse, obscene joke, however, could not incite us to laughter, because it would cause us shame or would seem to us disgusting; we can laugh only when wit comes to our aid.

What we had presumed in the beginning seems to have been confirmed, namely, that tendency-wit has access to other sources of pleasure than harmless wit, in which all the pleasure is somehow dependent upon the technique. We can also reiterate that owing to our feelings we are in no position to distinguish in tendency-wit what part of the pleasure originates from the technique and what part from the tendency. Strictly speaking, we do not know what we are laughing about. In all obscene jokes we succumb to striking mistakes of judgment about the "goodness" of the joke as far as it depends upon formal conditions; the technique of these jokes is often very poor while their laughing effect is enormous.

**INVENTIVES MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH WIT**

We next wish to determine whether the rôle of wit in the service of the hostile tendency is the same.

Right from the start we meet with similar conditions. Since our individual childhood and the childhood of human civilization, our hostile impulses towards our fellow-beings have been subjected to the same restrictions and the same progressive repressions as our sexual strivings. We have not yet progressed so far as to love our enemies, or to extend to them our left cheek after we are smitten on the right. Furthermore, all moral codes about the subjection of active hatred bear even today the clearest indications that they were originally meant for a small community of clansmen. As we all may consider ourselves members of some nation, we permit ourselves for the most part to forget these restrictions in matters touching a foreign people. But within our own circles we have nevertheless made progress in the mastery of hostile emotions. Lichtenberg drastically puts it when he says: "Where nowadays one says, 'I beg your pardon,' formerly one had recourse to a cuff on the ear." Violent hostility, no longer tolerated by law, has been replaced by verbal inventives, and the better understanding of the concatenation of human emotions robs us, through its consequential "Tout comprendre, c'est tout par-
more and more of the capacity to become angry at our fellow-
man who is in our way. Having been endowed with a strong hostile dispo-
sition in our childhood, higher personal civilization teaches us later that
it is undignified to use abusive language; even where combat is still per-
mitted, the number of things which may be used as means of combat has
been markedly restricted. Society, as the third and dispassionate party in
the combat, to whose interest it is to safeguard personal safety, prevents
us from expressing our hostile feelings in action; and hence, as in sexual
aggression, there has developed a new technique of invectives, the aim of
which is to enlist this third person against our enemy. By belittling and
humbling our enemy, by scorning and ridiculing him, we directly obtain
the pleasure of his defeat by the laughter of the third person, the inactive
spectator.

We are now prepared for the rôle that wit plays in hostile aggression.
Wit permits us to make our enemy ridiculous through that which we could
not utter loudly or consciously on account of existing hindrances; in other
words, wit affords us the means of surmounting restrictions and of open-
ing up otherwise inaccessible pleasure sources. Moreover, the listener will
be induced by the gain in pleasure to take our part, even if he is not alto-
gether convinced—just as we on other occasions, when fascinated by
harmless witticism, were wont to overestimate the substance of the sen-
tence wittily expressed. "To prejudice the laughter in one's own favor"
is a completely pertinent saying in the German language.

One may recall the Cincinnatus witticism given above. It is of an ins-
ulting nature, as if the author wished to shout loudly: "But the minister
of agriculture is himself an ox!" But he, as a man of culture, could not
put his opinion in this form. He therefore appealed to wit which assured
his opinion a reception at the hands of the listeners which, in spite of its
amount of truth, never would have been received if in an unwitty form.
Brill cites an excellent example of a similar kind: Wendell Phillips, ac-
cording to a recent biography by Dr. Lorenzo Sears, was on one occasion
lecturing in Ohio, and while on a railroad journey going to keep one of his
appointments met in the car a number of clergymen returning from some
sort of convention. One of the ministers, feeling called upon to approach
Mr. Phillips, asked him, "Are you Mr. Phillips?" "I am, sir." "Are you
trying to free the niggers?" "Yes, sir; I am an abolitionist." "Well, why
do you preach your doctrines up here? Why don't you go over into Ken-
tucky?" "Excuse me, are you a preacher?" "I am, sir." "Are you trying
to save souls from hell?" "Yes, sir, that's my business." "Well, why don't
you go there?" The assailant hurried into the smoker amid a roar of un-
sanctified laughter. This anecdote nicely illustrates the tendency-wit in
the service of hostile aggression. The minister's behavior was offensive
and irritating, yet Wendell Phillips as a man of culture could not defend
himself in the same manner as a common, ill-bred person would have done, and as his inner feelings must have prompted him to do. The only alternative under the circumstances would have been to take the affront in silence, had not wit showed him the way, and enabled him by the technical means of unification to turn the tables on his assailant. He not only belittled him and turned him into ridicule, but by his clever retort, "Well, why don't you go there?" fascinated the other clergymen, and thus brought them to his side.

Although the hindrance to the aggression which the wit helped to elude was in these cases of an inner nature—the aesthetic resistance against insulting—it may at other times be of a purely outer nature. So it was in the case when Augustus asked the stranger who had a striking resemblance to himself: "Was your mother ever in my home?" and he received the ready reply, "No, but my father was." The stranger would certainly have felled the imprudent inquirer who dared to make an ignominious allusion to the memory of his mother; but this imprudent person was Augustus, who may not he felled and not even insulted unless one wishes to pay for this revenge with his life. The only thing left was to swallow the insult in silence; but luckily wit pointed out the way of requiting the insult without personally imperiling one's self. It was accomplished simply by treating the allusion with the technical means of unification and employing it against the aggressor. The impression of wit is here so thoroughly determined by the tendency that in view of the witty rejoinder we are inclined to forget that the aggressor's question is itself made witty by allusion.

REBELLION AGAINST AUTHORITY THROUGH WIT

The prevention of abuse or insulting retorts through outer circumstances is so often the case, that tendency-wit is used with special preference as a weapon of attack or criticism of superiors who claim to be in authority. Wit then serves as a resistance against such authority and as an escape from its pressure. In this factor, too, lies the charm of caricature, at which we laugh even if it is badly done simply because we consider resistance to authority a great merit.

If we keep in mind that tendency-wit is so well adapted as a weapon of attack upon what is great, dignified, and mighty, that which is shielded by internal hindrances or external circumstance against direct disparagement, we are forced to a special conception of certain groups of witticisms which seem to occupy themselves with inferior and powerless persons. I am referring to the marriage-agent stories—with a few of which we have become familiar in the investigation of the manifold techniques of thought-wit. In some of these examples, "But she is deaf, too!" and "Who in the world would ever lend these people anything!" the agent was de-
ridged as a careless and thoughtless person who becomes comical because
the truth escapes his lips automatically, as it were. But does on the one
hand, what we have learned about the nature of tendency-wit, and on the
other hand the amount of satisfaction in these stories, harmonize with
the misery of the persons at whom the joke seems to be pointed? Are these
worthy opponents of the wit? Or, is it not more plausible to suppose that
the wit puts the agent in the foreground only in order to strike at some-
thing more important; does it, as the saying goes, strike the saddle pack,
when it is meant for the mule? This conception can really not be rejected.

The above-mentioned interpretation of the marriage-agent stories ad-
mits of a continuation. It is true that I need not enter into them, that I
can content myself with seeing the farcical in these stories, and can dis-
pute their witty character. However, such subjective determination of
wit actually exists. We have now become cognizant of it and shall later on
have to investigate it. It means that only that is a witticism which I wish
to consider as such. What may be wit to me, may be only an amusing
story to another. But if a witticism admits of doubt, that can be due only
to the fact that it possesses an obverse side, or another side which in our
examples happens to be a façade of the comic, upon which one may be
satisfied to bestow a single glance while another may attempt to peep be-
hind. We also suspect that this façade is intended to dazzle the prying
glance which is to say, that such stories have something to conceal.

At all events, if our marriage-agent stories are witticisms at all, they
are all the better witticisms because, thanks to their façade, they are in a
position to conceal not only what they have to say but also that they have
something—forbidden—to say. But the continuation of the interpreta-
tion, which reveals this hidden part and shows that these stories which
have a comical façade, are tendency-witticisms, would be as follows: Every
one who allows the truth to escape his lips in an unguarded mo-
ment is really pleased to have rid himself of this thought. This is a cor-
rect and far-reaching psychological insight. Without the inner assent no
one would allow himself to be overpowered by the automatism which
here brings the truth to light. The marriage agent is thus transformed
from a ludicrous personage into an object deserving of pity and sympathy.
How blest must be the man, able at last to unburden himself of the weight
of dissimulation, if he immediately seizes the first opportunity to shout
out the last fragment of truth! As soon as he sees that his case is lost, that
the prospective bride does not suit the young man, he gladly betrays the
secret that the girl has still another blemish which the young man had
overlooked, or he makes use of the chance to present a conclusive argu-
ment in detail in order to express his contempt for the people who employ

1 It is the same mechanism that controls “slips of the tongue” and other phenomena
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him: "Who in the world would ever lend these people anything!" The ludicrousness of the whole thing now reverts upon the parents—hardly mentioned in the story—who consider such deceptions justified to clutch a man for their daughter; it also reflects upon the wretched state of the girls who get married through such contrivances, and upon the want of dignity of the marriage contracted after such preliminaries. The agent is the right person to express such criticisms, for he is best acquainted with these abuses; but he may not raise his voice, because he is a poor man whose livelihood depends altogether on turning these abuses to his advantage. But the same conflict is found in the national spirit which has given rise to these and similar stories; for he is aware that the holiness of wedlock suffers severely by reference to some of the methods of marriage-making.

We recall also the observation made during the investigation of wit-technique, namely, that absurdity in wit frequently stands for derision and criticism in the thought behind the witticism, wherein the wit-work follows the dream-work. This state of affairs, we find, is here once more confirmed. That the derision and criticism are not aimed at the agent, who appears in the former examples only as the whipping boy of the joke, is shown by another series in which the agent, on the contrary, is pictured as a superior person whose dialectics are a match for any difficulty. They are stories whose façades are logical instead of comical—they are sophistic thought-witticisms. In one of them the agent knows how to circumvent the limping of the bride by stating that in her case it is at least "a finished job"; another woman with straight limbs would be in constant danger of falling and breaking a leg, which would be followed by sickness, pains, and doctor's fees—all of which can be avoided by marrying the one already limping. Again in another example the agent is clever enough to refute by good arguments each of the whole series of the suitor's objections against the bride; only to the last, the hunchback, which cannot be glossed over, he rejoins, "Do you expect her to have no blemishes at all?" as if the other objections had not left behind an important remnant. It is not difficult to pick out the weak points of the arguments in both examples, a thing which we have done during the investigation of the technique. But now something else interests us. If the agent's speech is endowed with such a strong resemblance of logic, which on more careful examination proves to be merely a semblance, then the truth must be lurking in the fact that the witticism adjudges the agent to be right. The thought does not dare to admit that he is right in all seriousness, and replaces it by the semblance which the wit brings forth; but here, as it often happens, the jest betrays the seriousness of it. We shall not err if we assume that all stories with logical façades really mean what they assert even if these assertions are deliberately falsely motivated. Only this use
of sophism for the veiled presentation of the truth, endows it with the character of wit, which is mainly dependent upon the tendency. What these two stories wish to indicate is that the suitor really makes himself ridiculous when he collects together so sedulously the individual charms of the bride which are transient after all, and when he forgets at the same time that he must be prepared to take as his wife a human being with inevitable faults; whereas, the only virtue which might make tolerable marriage with the more or less imperfect personality of the woman—mutual attachment and willingness for affectionate adaptation—is not once mentioned in the whole affair.

Ridicule of the suitor as seen in these examples in which the agent quite correctly assumes the rôle of superiority, is much more clearly depicted in other examples. The more pointed the stories, the less wit-technique they contain; they are, as it were, merely borderline cases of wit with whose technique they have only the façade-formation in common. However, in view of the same tendency and the concealment of the same behind the façade, they obtain the full effect of wit. The poverty of technical means makes it clear also that many witticisms of that kind cannot dispense with the comic element of jargon which acts similarly to wit-technique, without great sacrifices.

The following is such a story, which with all the force of tendency-wit obviates all traces of that technique. The agent asks: "What are you looking for in your bride?" The reply is: "She must be pretty, she must be rich, and she must be cultured." "Very well," was the agent's rejoinder. "But what you want will make three matches." Here the reproach is no longer embodied in wit, but is made directly to the man.

In all the preceding examples the veiled aggression was still directed against persons; in the marriage-agent jokes it is directed against all the parties involved in the betrothal—the bridegroom, bride, and her parents. The object of attack by wit may equally well be institutions, persons, in so far as they may act as agents of these, moral or religious precepts, or even philosophies of life which enjoy so much respect that they can be challenged in no other way than under the guise of a witticism, and one that is veiled by a façade at that. No matter how few the themes upon which tendency-wit may play, its forms and investments are manifold. I believe that we shall do well to designate this species of tendency-wit by a special name. To decide what name will be appropriate is possible only after analyzing a few examples of this kind.

THE WITTY CYNICISM

I recall the two little stories about the impecunious gourmet who was caught eating "salmon with mayonnaise," and about the tippling tutor; these witty stories, which we have learned to regard as sophistical dis-
placement-wit, I shall continue to analyze. We have learned since then that when the semblance of logic is attached to the façade of a story, the actual thought is as follows: The man is right; but on account of the opposing contradiction, I did not dare to admit the fact except for one point in which his error is easily demonstrable. The "point" chosen is the correct compromise between his right and his wrong; this is really no decision, but bespeaks the conflict within ourselves. Both stories are simply epicurean. They say, Yes, the man is right; nothing is greater than pleasure, and it is fairly immaterial in what manner one procures it. This sounds frightfully immoral, and perhaps it is, but fundamentally it is nothing more than the "Carpe diem" of the poet who refers to the uncertainty of life and the bareness of virtuous renunciation. If we are repelled by the idea that the man in the joke about "salmon with mayonnaise" is in the right, then it is merely due to the fact that it illustrates the sound sense of the man in indulging himself—an indulgence which seems to us wholly unnecessary. In reality each one of us has experienced hours and times during which he has admitted the justice of this philosophy of life and has reproached our system of morality for knowing only how to make claims upon us without reimbursing us. Since we no longer lend credence to the idea of a hereafter in which all former renunciations are supposed to be rewarded by gratification—(there are very few pious persons if one makes renunciation the password of faith)—"Carpe diem" becomes the first admonition. I am quite ready to postpone the gratification, but how do I know whether I shall still be alive tomorrow?

"Di doman' non c'è certezza." ¹

I am quite willing to give up all the paths to gratification interdicted by society, but am I sure that society will reward me for this renunciation by opening for me—even after a certain delay—one of the permitted paths? One can plainly tell what these witticisms whisper, namely, that the wishes and desires of man have a right to make themselves perceptible next to our pretentious and inconsiderate morality. And in our times it has been said in emphatic and striking terms that this morality is merely the selfish precept of the few rich and mighty who can gratify their desires at any time without deferment. As long as the art of healing has not succeeded in safeguarding our lives, and as long as the social organizations do not do more towards making conditions more agreeable, just so long cannot the voice within us which is striving against the demands of morality, be stifled. Every honest person finally makes this admission—at least to himself. The decision in this conflict is possible only through the roundabout way of a new understanding. One must be able to knit one's life so closely to that of others, and to form such an intimate iden-

¹ "There is nothing certain about tomorrow," Lorenzo de' Medici.
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tification with others, that the shortening of one's own term of life be-
comes surmountable; one should not unlawfully fulfill the demands of
one's own needs, but should leave them unfulfilled, because only the
continuance of so many unfulfilled demands can develop the power to
recast the social order. But not all personal needs allow themselves to be
displaced in such a manner and transferred to others, nor is there a uni-
versal and definite solution of the conflict.

We now know how to designate the witticisms just discussed; they are
cynical witticisms, and what they conceal are cynicisms.

Among the institutions which cynical wit is wont to attack there is
none more important and more completely protected by moral precepts,
yet more inviting of attack, than the institution of marriage. Most
of the cynical jokes are directed against it. For no demand is more per-
sonal than that made upon sexual freedom, and nowhere has civilization
attempted to exert a more stringent suppression than in the realm of
sexuality. For our purposes a single example suffices: the "Entries in the
Album of Prince Carnival" mentioned above.

"A wife is like an umbrella, at worst one may also take a cab."

We have already elucidated the complicated technique of this example;
it is a puzzling and seemingly impossible comparison which, however, as
we now see, is not in itself witty. It shows besides an allusion (cab = pub-
lic conveyance), and as the strongest technical means it also shows an
omission which serves to make it still more unintelligible. The comparison
may be worked out in the following manner. A man marries in order to
guard himself against the temptations of sensuality, but it then turns out
that after all marriage does not afford sufficient gratification for one of
stronger needs, just as one takes along an umbrella for protection against
rain only to get wet in spite of it. In both cases one must search for better
protection; in one case one must take a public cab, in the other, women
 procurable for money. Now the wit has almost entirely been replaced by
cynicism. That marriage is not the organization which can satisfy a man's
sexuality, one does not dare say loudly and frankly unless indeed he be
a Christian v. Ehrenfels,1 or a Judge Lindsey, who is forced to it by the
love of truth and the zeal of reform. The strength of this witticism lies in
the fact that it has expressed the thought even though it had to be done
through all sorts of roundabout ways.

CYNICAL WITTICISMS AND SELF-CRITICISM

A particularly favorable case for tendency-wit results if the intended
criticism of the inner resistance is directed against one's own person, or,
more carefully expressed, against a person in whom one takes interest,
that is, a composite personality such as one's own people. This determina-

1 See his essays in the Politisch-anthropologische Revue, II, 1903.
tion of self-criticism may make clear why it is that a number of the most excellent jokes of which we have shown here many specimens should have sprung into existence from the soil of Jewish national life. They are stories which were invented by Jews themselves and which are directed against Jewish peculiarities. The Jewish jokes made up by non-Jews are nearly all brutal buffooneries in which the wit is spared by the fact that the Jew appears as a comic figure to a stranger. The Jewish jokes which originate with Jews admit this, but they know their real shortcomings as well as their merits, and the interest of the person himself in the thing to be criticised produces the subjective determination of the wit-work which would otherwise be difficult to bring about. Incidentally I do not know whether one often finds a people that makes merry so unreservedly over its own shortcomings.

As an illustration I can point to the story cited above in which the Jew in the train immediately abandons all sense of decency of deportment as soon as he recognizes the new arrival in his coupé as his co-religionist. We have come to know this joke as an illustration by means of a detail—representation through a trifle; it is supposed to represent the democratic mode of thought of the Jew who recognizes no difference between master and servant, but unfortunately this also disturbs discipline and co-operation. Another especially interesting series of jokes presents the relationship between the poor and the rich Jews: their heroes are the “shnorrer,” and the charitable Jewish philanthropists. The shnorrer, who was a regular Sunday-dinner guest at a certain house, appeared one day accompanied by a young stranger, who prepared to seat himself at the table. “Who is that?” demanded the host. “He became my son-in-law last week,” was the reply, “and I have agreed to supply his board for the first year.” The tendency of these stories is always the same, and is most distinctly shown in the following story. The shnorrer supplicates the Jewish philanthropic baron for money to take the “cure” at Ostend, as the physician has ordered him to take sea-baths for his ailment. The baron remarks that Ostend is an especially expensive resort, and that a less fashionable place would do just as well. But the shnorrer rejects that proposition by saying, “Herr Baron, nothing is too expensive for my health.” That is an excellent displacement-witticism which we could have taken as a model of its kind. The baron is evidently anxious to save his money, but the shnorrer replies as if the baron’s money were his own, which he may then consider secondary to his health. One is forced to laugh at the insolence of the demand, but these jokes are exceptionally unequipped with a façade to cloud the understanding. The truth is that the shnorrer who mentally treats the rich man’s money as his own, really possesses almost the right to this mistake, according to the sacred codes of the Jews. Naturally the resistance which

1 An habitual beggar.
is responsible for this joke is directed against the sacred law which even
the pious find very oppressive.

Another story relates how on the steps of a rich man's house a shnorrer
met one of his own kind. The latter counseled him to depart, saying, "Do
not go up today, the Baron is out of sorts and refuses to give any one
more than a dollar." "I will go up anyway," replied the first. "Why in the
world should I make him a present of a dollar? Is he making me any
presents?"

This witticism makes use of the technique of absurdity by permitting
the shnorrer to declare that the baron gives him nothing at the same
moment in which he is preparing to beg him for the donation. But the
absurdity is only apparent, for it is almost true that the rich man gives
him nothing, since he is obligated by the mandate to give alms, and
strictly speaking must be thankful that the shnorrer gives him an oppor-
tunity to be charitable. The ordinary, bourgeois conception of alms is at
cross-purposes with the religious one; it openly revolts against the religious
conception in the story about the baron who, having been deeply touched
by the shnorrer's tale of woe, rang for his servants and said: "Throw him
out of the house; he is breaking my heart." This obvious exposition of
the tendency again creates a case of border-line wit. From the no longer
witty complaint: "It is really no advantage to be a rich man among Jews.
The wretched foreigners do not grant one the pleasure of one's own
fortune," these last stories deviate only by the illustration of a single
situation.

Other stories as the following, which, technically again present border-
lines of wit, have their origin in a deeply pessimistic cynicism. A patient
whose hearing was defective consulted a physician who made the correct
diagnosis, namely, that the patient probably drank too much whiskey
and consequently was becoming deaf. He advised him to desist from
drinking and the patient promised to follow his advice. Some time there-
after the doctor met him on the street and inquired in a loud voice about
his condition. "Thank you, Doctor," was the reply, "there is no necessity
for speaking so loudly, I have given up drinking whiskey and consequently
I hear perfectly." Some time afterwards they met again. The doctor again
inquired into his condition in the usual voice, but noticed that he did not
make himself audible. "It seems to me that you are deaf again because
you have returned to drinking whiskey," shouted the doctor in the pa-
tient's ear. "Perhaps you are right," answered the latter, "I have taken to
drinking again, and I shall tell you why. As long as I did not drink I could
hear, but all that I heard was not as good as the whiskey." Technically
this joke is nothing more than an illustration. The jargon and the ability
of the raconteur must aid in the production of laughter. But behind it
there lies the sad question, "Is not the man right in his choice?"
THE TENDENCIES OF WIT

It is the manifold hopeless misery of the Jews to which these pessimistic tales allude, which prompted me to add them to tendency-wit.

CRITICAL AND BLASPHEMOUS WITTICISMS

Other jokes, cynical in a similar sense, and not only stories about Jews, attack religious dogmas and the belief in God Himself. The story about the "telepathic look of the rabbi," whose technique consisted in faulty thinking which made phantasy equal to reality (the conception of displacement is also tenable), is such a cynical or critical witticism directed against miracle-workers and also, surely, against belief in miracles. Heine is reported to have made a directly blasphemous joke as he lay dying. When the kindly priest commended him to God's mercy and inspired him with the hope that God would forgive him his sins, he replied: "Bien sûr qu'il me pardonnera; c'est son métier." That is a derogatory comparison; technically its value lies only in the allusion, for a métier—business or vocation—is plied either by a craftsman or a physician, and what is more he has only a single métier. The strength of the wit, however, lies in its tendency. The joke is intended to mean nothing else, but: "Certainly he will forgive me; that is what he is here for, and for no other purpose have I engaged him" (just as one retains one's doctor or one's lawyer). Thus, the helpless dying man is still conscious of the fact that he has created God for himself and has clothed Him with power in order to make use of Him as occasion arises. The so-called creature makes himself known as the Creator only a short time before his extinction.

SKEPTICAL WIT

To the three kinds of tendency-wit discussed so far—exhibitionistic or obscene wit, aggressive or hostile wit, and cynical wit (critical, blasphemous)—I desire to add a fourth and the most uncommon of all, whose character can be elucidated by a good example.

Two Jews met in a train at a Galician railway station. "Where are you traveling?" asked one. "To Cracow," was the reply. "Now see here, what a liar you are!" said the first one, bristling. "When you say that you are traveling to Cracow, you really wish me to believe that you are traveling to Lemberg. Well, but I am sure that you are really traveling to Cracow, so why lie about it?"

This precious story, which creates an impression of exaggerated subtlety, evidently operates by means of the technique of absurdity. The second Jew has put himself in the way of being called a liar because he has said that he is traveling to Cracow, which is his real goal! However, this strong technical means—absurdity—is paired here with another technique—representation through the opposite, for, according to the uncontradicted assertion of the first, the second one is lying when he
speaks the truth, and speaks the truth by means of a lie. However, the more earnest content of this joke is the question of the conditions of truth; again the joke points to a problem and makes use of the uncertainty of one of our commonest notions. Does it constitute truth if one describes things as they are and does not concern himself with the way the hearers will interpret what one has said? Or is this merely Jesuitical truth, and does not the real truthfulness consist much more in having a regard for the hearer and of furnishing him an exact picture of his own mind? I consider jokes of this type sufficiently different from the others to assign them a special place. What they attack is not a person nor an institution, but the certainty of our very knowledge—one of our speculative gifts. Hence, the name “skeptical” witticism will be the most expressive for them.

In the course of our discussion of the tendencies of wit we have gotten perhaps many an elucidation and certainly found numerous incentives for further investigations. But the results of this chapter combine with those of the preceding chapter to form a difficult problem. If it be true that the pleasure created by wit is dependent upon the technique on one hand and upon the tendency on the other hand, under what common point of view can these two utterly different pleasure-sources of wit be united?
B. SYNTHESIS
IV

THE PLEASURE MECHANISM AND THE PSYCHOGENESIS OF WIT

We can now definitely assert that we know from what sources the peculiar pleasure arises furnished us by wit. We know that we can be easily misled to mistake our sense of satisfaction experienced through the thought-content of the sentence for the actual pleasure derived from the wit, on the other hand, the latter itself has two intrinsic sources, namely, the wit-technique and the wit-tendency. What we now desire to ascertain is by what manner pleasure originates from these sources, and the mechanism of this resultant pleasure.

It seems to us that the desired explanation can be more easily ascertained in tendency-wit than in harmless wit. We shall therefore commence with the former.

The pleasure in tendency-wit results from the fact that a tendency, whose gratification would otherwise remain unfulfilled, is actually gratified. That such gratification is a source of pleasure is self-evident without further discussion. But the manner in which wit brings about gratification is connected with special conditions from which we may perhaps gain further information. Here two cases must be differentiated. The simpler case is the one in which the gratification of the tendency is opposed by an external hindrance which is eluded by the wit. This process we found, for example, in the reply which Augustus received to his query whether the mother of the stranger he addressed had ever sojourned in his home, and likewise in the question of the art critic who asked: "And where is the Savior?" when the two rich rogues showed him their portraits. In one case the tendency serves to answer one insult with another; in the other case it offers an affront instead of the demanded expert opinion; in both cases the tendency was opposed by purely external factors, namely, the powerful position of the persons who are the targets of the insult. Nevertheless it may seem strange to us that these and
analogous tendency-witticisms have not the power to produce a strong effect of laughter no matter how much they may gratify us.

It is different, however, if no external factors but internal hindrances stand in the way of the direct realization of the tendency, that is, if an inner feeling opposes the tendency. This condition, according to our assumption, was present in the aggressive joke of Mr. N. and in the one of Wendell Phillips, in whom a strong inclination to use invectives was stifled by a highly developed aesthetic sense. With the aid of wit the inner resistances in these special cases were overcome and the inhibition removed. As in the case of external hindrances, the gratification of the tendency is made possible, and a suppression with its concomitant "psychic damming" is thus obviated. So far, the mechanism of the development of pleasure would seem to be identical in both cases.

At this place, however, we are inclined to feel that, we should enter more deeply into the differentiation of the psychological situation between the cases of external and internal hindrance, as we have a faint notion that the removal of the inner hindrance might possibly result in a disproportionately higher contribution to pleasure. But I propose that we rest content here, that we be satisfied for the present with this one collection of evidence which adheres to what is essential to us. The only difference between the cases of outer and inner hindrances consists in the fact that here an already existing inhibition is removed, while there the formation of a new inhibition is avoided. We hardly resort to speculation when we assert that a "psychic expenditure" is required for the formation as well as for the retention of a psychic inhibition. Now if we find that in both cases the use of the tendency-wit produces pleasure, then it may be assumed that such resultant pleasure corresponds to the economy of psychic expenditure.

Thus we are once more confronted with the principle of economy which we noticed first in the study of the technique of word-wit. But whereas the economy we believed to have found at first was in the use of few or possibly the same words, we can here foresee an economy of psychic expenditure in general in a far more comprehensive sense, and we think it possible to come nearer to the nature of wit through a better determination of the as yet very obscure idea of "psychic expenditure."

A certain amount of haziness which we could not dissipate during the study of the pleasure mechanism in tendency-wit we accept as a slight punishment for attempting to elucidate the more complicated problem before the simpler one, or the tendency-wit before the harmless wit. We observe that "economy in the expenditure of inhibitions or suppressions" seems to be the secret of the pleasurable effect of tendency-wit, and we now turn to the mechanism of the pleasure in harmless wit.

While examining appropriate examples of harmless witticisms, in which
we had no fear of false judgment through content or tendency, we were forced to the conclusion that the techniques of wit themselves are pleasure-sources; now we wish to ascertain whether the pleasure may be traced to the economy in psychic expenditure. In a group of these witticisms (plays on words) the technique consisted in directing the psychic focus upon the sound instead of upon the sense of the word, and in allowing the (acoustic) word-disguise to take the place of the meaning accorded to it by its relations to reality. We are really justified in assuming that great relief is thereby afforded to the psychic work, and that in the serious use of words we refrain from this convenient procedure only at the expense of a certain amount of exertion. We can observe that abnormal mental states, in which the possibility of concentrating psychic expenditure on one place is probably restricted, actually allow to come to the foreground word-sound associations of this kind rather than the significance of the words, and that such patients react in their speech with "outer" instead of "inner" associations. Also, in children who are still accustomed to treat the word as an object, we notice the inclination to look for the same meaning in words of the same or of similar sounds, which is a source of great amusement to adults. If we experience in wit an unmistakable pleasure, because through the use of the same or similar words we reach from one set of ideas to a distant other one (as in "Home-Roulard" from the kitchen to politics), we can justify refer this pleasure to the economy of psychic expenditure. The pleasure of the wit resulting from such a "short-circuit" appears greater the more remote and foreign the two series of ideas which become related through the same word are to each other, or the greater the economy in thought brought about by the technical means of wit. We may add that in this case wit makes use of a means of connection which is rejected by, and carefully avoided in serious thinking.1

1 If I may be permitted to anticipate what later is discussed in the text, I can here throw some light upon the condition which seems to be authoritative in the usage of language when it is a question of calling a joke "good" or "poor." If by means of a double meaning or slightly modified word I have gotten from one idea to another by a short route, and if this does not also simultaneously result in senseful association between the two ideas, then I have made a "poor" joke. In this poor joke one word or the "point" forms the only existing association between the two widely separated ideas. The joke "Home-Roulard" used above is such an example. But a "good" joke results if the infantile expectation is right in the end and if with the similarity of the word another essential similarity in meaning is really simultaneously produced—as in the examples Traduttore—Traditore (translator—traitor), and Amantes—Amentes (lovers—lunatics). The two disparate ideas which are here linked by an outer association are held together besides by a senseful connection which expresses an important relationship between them. The outer association only replaces the inner connection; it serves to indicate the latter or to clarify it. Not only does "translator" sound somewhat similar to "traitor," but he is a sort of a traitor whose claims to that name are good. The same may be said of Amantes—Amentes. Not only do the words bear a resemblance, but the similarity between "love" and "lunacy" has been noted from time immemorial.

The distinction made here agrees with the differentiation, to be made later, be-
A second group of technical means of wit—unification, similar sounding words, manifold application, modification of familiar idioms, allusions to quotations—all evince one common character, namely, that one always discovers something familiar where one expects to find something new instead. To discover the familiar is pleasurable and it is not difficult to recognize such pleasure as economy-pleasure and to refer it to the economy of psychic expenditure.

That the discovery of the familiar—“recognition”—causes pleasure seems to be universally admitted. Groos says: 1 “Recognition is everywhere bound up with feelings of pleasure where it has not been made too mechanical (as perhaps in dressing . . .). Even the mere quality of acquaintanceship is easily accompanied by that gentle delight which Faust experiences when, after an uncanny experience, he steps into his study.” If the act of recognition is so pleasureful, we may expect that man merges into the habit of practicing this activity for its own sake, that is, he experiments playfully with it. In fact, Aristotle recognized in the joy of rediscovery the basis of artistic pleasure, and it cannot be denied that this principle must not be overlooked even if it has not such a far-reaching significance as Aristotle assumes.

Groos then discusses the games, whose character consists of heightening the pleasure of rediscovery by putting hindrances in its path, or in other words by raising a “psychic dam” which is removed by the act of recognition. However, his attempted explanation leaves the assumption that recognition as such is pleasurable, in that he attributes the pleasure of recognition connected with these games to the pleasure in power, or to the surmounting of a difficulty. I consider this latter factor as secondary, and I find no occasion for abandoning the simpler explanation, that the recognition *per se*, i.e., through the alleviation of the psychic expenditure, is pleasurable, and that the games founded upon this pleasure make use of the damming-mechanism merely in order to intensify their effect.

We know also that the source of pleasure in rhyme, alliteration, refrain, and other forms of repetition of similar sounding words in poetry, is due merely to the discovery of the familiar. A “sense of power” plays no perceptible rôle in these techniques, which show so marked an agreement with the “manifold application” in wit.

Considering the close connection between recognition and remembering, the assumption is no longer daring that there exists also a pleasure

tween a “witticism” and a “jest.” However, it would not be correct to exclude examples like Home-Roulard from the discussion of the nature of wit. As soon as we take into consideration the peculiar pleasure of wit, we discover that the “poor” witticisms are by no means poor as witticisms, *i.e.*, they are by no means unsuited for the production of pleasure.

in remembering, _i.e._, that the act of remembering in itself is accompanied by a feeling of pleasure of a similar origin. Groos seems to have no objection to such an assumption, but he again deducts the pleasure of remembering from the "sense of power" in which he seeks—as I believe unjustly—the principal basis of pleasure in almost all games.

**THE FACTOR OF ACTUALITY**

The use of another technical expedient of wit, which has not yet been mentioned, is also dependent upon "the rediscovery of the familiar." I refer to the factor of _actuality_ (dealing with actual persons, things, or events), which in many witticisms provides a prolific source of pleasure and explains several peculiarities in the life history of wit. There are witticisms which are entirely free from this condition, and in a treatise on wit it is incumbent upon us to make use of such examples almost exclusively. But we must not forget that we laughed perhaps more heartily over such perennial witticisms than over others; witticisms whose application now would be difficult, because they would require long commentaries, and even with that aid the former effect could not be attained. These latter witticisms contained allusions to persons and occurrences which were "actual" at the time, which had stimulated general interest and were endowed with tension. After the cessation of this interest, after the settlement of these particular affairs, the witticisms lost a part of their pleasurable effect, and a very considerable part at that. Thus, for example, the joke which my friendly host made when he called the dish that was being served a "Home-Roulard," seems to me by no means as good now as when the question of Home Rule was a continuous headline in the political columns of our newspaper. If I now attempt to express my appreciation of this joke by stating that this one word led us from the idea of the kitchen to the distant field of politics, and saved us a long mental detour, I should have been forced at that time to change this description as follows: "That this word led us from the idea of the kitchen to the very distant field of politics; but that our lively interest was all the keener because this question was constantly absorbing us." The same thing is true of another joke: "This girl reminds me of Dreyfus; the army does not believe in her innocence," which has become blurred in spite of the fact that its technical means has remained unchanged. The confusion arising from the comparison with, and the double meaning of, the word "innocence" cannot do away with the fact that the allusion, which at that time touched upon a matter pregnant with excitement, now recalls an interest set at rest. The many irresistible jokes about the world war have sunk in our estimation in a very short time. "Gone with the Windsor," a condensation of the popular book, "Gone with the Wind," and the abdi-
cation of Edward VIII, now the Duke of Windsor, no longer evokes the mirth that it did a year ago.¹

A great many witticisms in circulation reach a certain age or rather go through a course composed of a flourishing season and a mature season, and then sink into complete oblivion. The need that people feel to draw pleasure from their mental processes continually creates new witticisms which are supported by current interests of the day. The vitality of actual witticisms is not their own, it is borrowed by way of allusion from those other interests, the expiration of which determines the fate of the witticism. The factor of actuality which may be added as a transitory pleasure-source of wit, although it is productive in itself, cannot be simply put on the same basis as the rediscovery of the familiar. It is much more a question of a special qualification of the familiar which must be aided by the quality of freshness and recency and which has not been affected by forgetfulness. In the formation of the dream one also finds that there is a special preference for what is recent, and one cannot refrain from inferring that the association with what is recent is rewarded or facilitated by a special pleasure premium.

Unification, which is really nothing more than repetition in the sphere of mental association instead of in material, has been accorded an especial recognition as a pleasure-source of wit by G Th. Fechner.² He says: "In my opinion the principle of uniform connection of the manifold, plays the most important rôle in the field under discussion; it needs, however, the support of subsidiary determinations in order to drive across the threshold the pleasure with its peculiar character which the cases here belonging can furnish."³

In all of these cases of repetition of the same association or of the same word-material, of refining the familiar and recent, we surely cannot be prevented from referring the pleasure thereby experienced to the economy in psychic expenditure; providing that this viewpoint proves fertile for the explanation of single facts as well as for bringing to light new generalities. We are fully conscious of the fact that we have yet to make clear the manner in which this economy results and also the meaning of the expression "psychic expenditure."

The third group of the technique of wit, mostly thought-wit, which includes false logic, displacement, absurdity, representation through the opposite, and other varieties, may seem at first sight to present special features and to be unrelated to the techniques of the discovery of the familiar, or the replacing of object-associations by word-associations. But

¹ Translator's example.
² Vorschule der Aesthetik, I, XVII.
³ Chapter XVII has for its title: "Concerning senseful and witty comparisons, play on words, and similar cases, which have the character of enjoyment, merriment and laughter."
it will not be difficult to demonstrate that this group, too, shows an economy or facilitation of psychic expenditure.

It is quite obvious that it is easier and more convenient to turn away from a definite trend of thought than to stick to it; it is easier to mix up different things than to distinguish them; and it is particularly easier to travel over modes of reasoning unsanctioned by logic; finally in connecting words or thoughts it is especially easy to overlook the fact that such connections should result in sense. All this is indubitable and this is exactly what is done by the techniques of the wit in question. It will sound strange, however, to assert that such processes in the wit-work may produce pleasure, since outside of wit we can experience only unpleasant feelings of defense against all these kinds of inferior achievement of our mental activity.

WORD-PLEASURE AND PLEASURE IN NONSENSE

The "pleasure in nonsense," as we may call it for short, is, in the seriousness of our life, crowded back almost to the vanishing point. To demonstrate it we must enter into the study of two cases in one of which it is still visible and in the other becomes visible for the second time. I refer to the behavior of the learning child and to the behavior of the adult under unstable toxic influences. When the child learns to control the vocabulary of its mother tongue it apparently takes great pleasure in "experimenting playfully" with that material (Groos); it connects words without regard for their meaning in order to obtain pleasure from the rhyme and rhythm. Gradually the child is deprived of this pleasure until only the senseful connection of words is allowed him. But even in later life there is still a tendency to overstep the acquired restrictions in the use of words, a tendency which manifests itself in disfiguring the same by definite appendages, and in changing their forms by means of certain contrivances (reduplication, trembling speech), or even by developing an individual language for use in playing—efforts which reappear also among the insane of a certain category.¹

I believe that whatever the motive which actuated the child when it began such playings, in his further development the child indulges in them fully conscious that they are nonsensical and derives pleasure from this stimulus which is interdicted by reason. He now makes use of play in order to withdraw from the pressure of critical reason. More powerful, however, are the restrictions which must develop in education along the lines of right thinking, and in the separation of reality from fiction, and it is for this reason that the resistance against the pressures of thinking and reality is far-reaching and persistent; even the phenomena of pha-

tasy formation come under this point of view. The power of reason usually grows so strong during the later part of childhood and during that period of education which extends over the age of puberty, that the pleasure in "freed nonsense" rarely dares manifest itself. One fears to utter nonsense; but it seems to me that the inclination characteristic of boys to act in a contradictory and inexpedient manner is a direct outcome of this pleasure in nonsense. In pathological cases one often sees this tendency so accentuated that it again controls the speeches and answers of the pupils. In the case of some college students who merged into neuroses I could convince myself that the unconscious pleasure derived from the nonsense produced by them is just as much responsible for their mistakes as their actual ignorance.

REPRODUCTION OF OLD LIBERTIES

The student does not give up his demonstrations against the pressures of thinking and reality whose domination becomes unceasingly intolerant and unrestricted. A good part of the tendency of students to skylarking is responsible for this reaction. Man is an "untiring pleasure seeker"—I can no longer recall which author coined this happy expression—and finds it extremely difficult to renounce pleasure once experienced. With the hilarious nonsense of "sprees," college cheers and songs, the student attempts to preserve that pleasure which results from freedom of thought, a freedom of which he is more and more deprived through scholastic discipline. Even much later, when as a mature alumnus he meets with others at scientific congresses and class reunions and feels himself a student again, he then reads again the comic college paper, which distorts the newly gained knowledge into the nonsensical, and thus, compensates him for the newly added mental inhibitions.

Reason, which has stifled the pleasure in nonsense, has become so powerful that not even temporarily can it be abandoned without a toxic agency. The change in the state of mind is the most valuable thing that alcohol offers man, and that is the reason why this "poison" is not equally indispensable for all people. The hilarious humor, whether due to endogenous origin or whether produced toxically, weakens the inhibiting forces, among which is reason, and thus, again makes accessible pleasure-sources, which are burdened by suppression. It is very instructive to see how the demand made upon wit sinks with the rise in spirits. The latter actually replace wit, just as wit must make an effort to replace the mental state in which the otherwise inhibited pleasure possibilities (pleasure in nonsense among the rest) assert themselves.

"With little wit and much comfort."

Under the influence of alcohol the adult again becomes a child who
derives pleasure from the free disposal of his mental stream without being restricted by the pressure of logic.

We hope we have shown that the technique of absurdity in wit corresponds to a source of pleasure. We need hardly repeat that this pleasure results from the economy of psychic expenditure or alleviation from the pressure of reason.

On reviewing again the wit-technique classified under three headings, we notice that the first and last of these groups—the replacement of object-association by word-association, and the use of absurdity as a restorer of old liberties and as a relief from the pressure of intellectual upbringing—can be taken collectively. Psychic relief may in a way be compared to economy, which constitutes the technique of the second group. Alleviation of the already existing psychic expenditure, and economy in the yet to be offered psychic expenditure, are two principles from which all techniques of wit and with them all pleasure in these techniques can be deduced. The two forms of the technique and the resultant pleasures, correspond more or less in general to the division of wit into word- and thought-witticisms.

PLAY AND JEST

The preceding discussions have led us unexpectedly to an understanding of the history of the development of psychogenesis of wit which we shall now examine still further. We have become acquainted with the successive steps in wit, the development of which up to tendency-wit, will undoubtedly reveal new relationships between the different characters of wit. Antedating wit there exists something which we may designate as “play” or “jest.” Play—we shall retain this name—appears in children while they are learning how to use words and connect thoughts; this playing is probably the result of an impulse which urges the child to exercise his capacities (Groos). During this process he experiences pleasurable effects which originate from the repetition of similarities, the rediscovery of the familiar, sound-associations, etc., which may be explained as an unexpected economy of psychic expenditure. Therefore it surprises no one that these resulting pleasures urge the child to practice playing and impel him to continue without regard for the meaning of words or the connections between sentences. Playing with words and thoughts, motivated by certain pleasures in economy, would thus be the first step of wit.

This playing is stopped by the growing strength of a factor which may well be called criticism or reason. The play is then rejected as senseless or as directly absurd, and by virtue of reason it becomes impossible. Only accidentally is it now possible to derive pleasure from those sources of rediscovery of the familiar, etc., which is explained by the fact that the
maturing person has then merged into a playful mood which, as in the case of merriment in the child, removes inhibitions. In this way only is the old pleasure-giving playing made possible, but as men do not wish to wait for these propitious occasions and also hate to forego this pleasure, they seek means to make themselves independent of these pleasant states. The further development of wit is directed by these two impulses; the one striving to elude reason, and the other to substitute for the adult an infantile state of mind.

This gives rise to the second stage of wit, the jest. The object of the jest is to bring about the resultant pleasure of playing and at the same time appease the protesting reason which strives to suppress the pleasant feeling. There is but one way to accomplish this. The senseless combination of words or the absurd linking of thoughts must make sense after all. The whole process of wit production is therefore directed towards the discovery of words and thought constructions which fulfill these conditions. The jest makes use of almost all the technical means of wit. What distinguishes the jest from wit is the fact that the pith of the sentence withdrawn from criticism does not need to be valuable, new, or even good; it matters only that it can be expressed, even though what it may say is obsolete, superfluous, and useless. The most conspicuous factor of the jest is the gratification it affords by making possible that which reason forbids.

A mere jest is the following of Professor Kästner, who taught physics at Göttingen in the 16th century, and who was fond of making jokes. Wishing to enroll a student named Warr in his class, he asked him his age, and upon receiving the reply that he was thirty years of age he exclaimed: "Aha, so I have the honor of seeing the thirty years' War." When asked what vocations his sons followed, Rokitansky jestingly answered: "Two are healing and two are howling," (two physicians and two singers). The reply was correct and therefore unimpeachable, but it added nothing to what is contained in the parenthetical expression. There is no doubt that the answer assumed another form only because of the pleasure which arises from the unification and assonance of both words.

I believe that we now see our way clear. In estimating the techniques of wit we were constantly disturbed by the fact that these are not peculiar to wit alone, and yet the nature of wit seemed to depend upon them, since their removal by means of reduction nullified the character as well as the pleasure of wit. Now we become aware that what we have described as techniques of wit—and which in a certain sense we shall have to continue to call so—are really the sources from which wit derives pleasure; nor does it strike us as strange that other processes draw from the same sources with the same object in view. The technique, however, which is
peculiar to, and belongs to wit alone, consists in a process of safeguarding the use of this pleasure-forming means against the protest of reason which would obviate the pleasure. We can make few generalizations about this process. The wit-work, as we have already remarked, expresses itself in the selection of such word-material and such thought-situations as to permit the old play with words and thoughts to stand the test of reason; but to accomplish this end the cleverest use must be made of all the peculiarities of the stock of words and of all constellations of mental combinations. Later on perhaps we shall be in a position to characterize the wit-work by a definite attribute; for the present it must remain unexplained how our wit makes its advantageous selections. The tendency and capacity of wit to guard the pleasure-forming word and thought combinations against reason, already makes itself visible as an essential criterion in jests. From the beginning its object is to remove inner inhibitions and thereby, render productive those pleasure-sources which have become inaccessible, and we shall find that it remains true to this characteristic throughout the course of its entire development.

We are now in a position to prescribe a correct place for the factor "sense in nonsense," to which the authors ascribe so much significance in respect to the recognition of wit and the explanation of the pleasurable effect. The two firmly established points in the determination of wit—its tendency to carry through the pleasureful play, and its effort to guard it against the criticism of reason—make it perfectly clear why the individual witticism, even though it appear nonsensical from one point of view, must appear full of meaning or at least acceptable from another. How it accomplishes this is the business of the wit-work; if it is not successful it is relegated to the category of "nonsense." Nor do we find it necessary to deduce the resultant pleasure of wit from the conflict of feelings which emerge either directly or by way of "confusion and clearness," from the simultaneous sense and nonsense of the wit. There is just as little necessity for our delving deeper into the question how pleasure can come from the succession of that part of the wit considered senseless and from that part recognized as senseful. The psychogenesis of wit has taught us that the pleasure of wit arises from word-play or from the liberation of nonsense, and that the sense of wit is meant only to guard this pleasure against suppression through reason.

JEST AND WIT

Thus, the problem of the essential character of wit could almost be explained by means of the jest. We may follow the development of the jest until it reaches its height in the tendency-wit. The jest puts the tendency ahead when it is a question of supplying us with pleasure, and it is content when its utterance does not appear utterly senseless or insipid. But
if this utterance is substantial and valuable, the jest changes into wit. A thought, which would have been worthy of our interest even when expressed in the most unpretentious form, is now invested in a form which must in itself excite our sense of satisfaction. Such an association we cannot help thinking has surely not come into existence unintentionally; we must make an effort to divine the intention at the bottom of the formation of wit. An incidental observation, made once before, will put us on the right track. We have already remarked that a good witticism gives us, so to speak, a general feeling of satisfaction without our being able to decide offhand which part of the pleasure comes from the witty form and which part from the excellent thought contained in the context. We are deceiving ourselves constantly about this division; sometimes we overvalue the quality of the wit on account of our admiration for the thought contained therein, and then again we overestimate the value of the thought on account of the pleasure afforded us by the witty investment. We know not what gives us pleasure, nor at what we are laughing. This uncertainty of our judgment, assuming it to be a fact, may have given the motive for the formation of wit in the literal sense. The thought seeks the witty disguise because it thereby recommends itself to our attention and can thus appear to us more important and valuable than it really is; but above all because this disguise fascinates and confuses our reason. We are apt to attribute to the thought the pleasure derived from the witty form, and we are not inclined to consider improper what has given us pleasure, and in this way deprive ourselves of a source of pleasure. For if wit makes us laugh, it has also established in us a mood most unfavorable to reason, and then that mood is forced upon us from one point which already suffices for play and which wit strives to displace by all means. Although we have maintained before that such wit is harmless, and is not yet to be designated as tendentious, we may not deny that, strictly speaking, it is the jest alone which shows no tendency; that is, it serves to produce pleasure only. For wit is really never purposeless even if the thought contained therein has no tendency and merely serves a theoretical, intellectual interest. Wit carries out its purpose in advancing the thought by magnifying it and by guarding it against reason. Here again it reveals its original nature in that it sets itself up against an inhibiting and restrictive power, or against the critical judgment.

The first use of wit, which goes beyond the mere production of pleasure, points to the road ahead of us. Wit is now recognized as a powerful psychic factor whose weight can decide the issue if it falls into this or that side of the scale. The great tendencies and impulses of our psychic life enlist its service for their own purposes. The original purposeless wit, which began as play, becomes related in a secondary manner to tendencies from which nothing that is formed in psychic life can escape for any length of time.
We already know what it can achieve in the service of the exhibitionistic, aggressive, cynical, and skeptical tendencies. In the case of obscene wit, which originated in the smutty joke, it makes a confederate of the third person who originally disturbed the sexual situation, by giving him pleasure through the utterance which causes the woman to be ashamed in his presence. In the case of the aggressive tendency, wit by the same means changes the original indifferent hearers into active haters and scorners, and in this way confronts the enemy with a host of opponents where formerly there was but one. In the first case it overcomes the inhibitions of shame and decorum by the pleasure premium which it offers. In the second case it overthrows the critical judgment which would otherwise have examined the dispute in question. In the third and fourth cases where wit is in the service of the cynical and skeptical tendency, it shatters the respect for institutions and truths in which the hearer had believed, first by strengthening the argument, and secondly by resorting to a new method of attack. Where the argument seeks to draw the hearer's reason to its side, wit strives to push aside this reason. There is no doubt that wit has chosen the way which is psychologically more efficacious.

THE DEVELOPMENT INTO TENDENCY-WIT

What impressed us in reviewing the achievements of tendency-wit was the effect it produced on the hearer. It is more important, however, to understand the effect produced by wit on the psychic life of the person who makes it, or more precisely expressed, on the psychic life of the person who conceives it. Once before we have expressed the intention, which we find occasion to repeat here, that we wish to study the psychic processes of wit in regard to its apportionment between two persons. We can assume for the present that the psychic process aroused by wit in the hearer is usually an imitation of the psychic processes of the wit producer. The outer inhibitions which are to be overcome in the hearer correspond to the inner inhibitions of the wit producer. In the latter the expectation of the outer hindrance exists, at least as an inhibiting idea. The inner hindrance, which is overcome in tendency-wit, is evident in some single cases; for example, in the Cincinnatus joke we can assume that it not only enables the hearer to enjoy the pleasure of the aggression through injuries, but it also makes it possible for him to produce the wit in the first place. Of the different kinds of inner inhibitions or suppressions one is especially worthy of our interest because it is the most far-reaching. We designate that form by the term "repression." It is characterized by the fact that it excludes from consciousness certain buried emotions and their products. We shall learn that tendency-wit itself is capable of liberating pleasure from sources that have undergone repression. If the overcoming of outer hindrances can be traced in the manner indicated above to inner
inhibitions and repressions, we may say that tendency-wit proves more clearly than any other developmental stage of wit that the main character of wit-making is to set free pleasure by removing inhibitions. It reinforces the tendencies which it serves by bringing them assistance from repressed emotions; or it puts itself at the disposal of the repressed tendencies directly.

We may readily concede that these are the functions of tendency-wit, but we must nevertheless admit that we do not understand in what manner these functions can succeed in accomplishing their end. The power of tendency-wit consists in the pleasure derived from the sources of word-plays and liberated nonsense, and if one can judge from the impressions received from purposeless jests, one cannot possibly consider the amount of the pleasure so great as to attribute to it the power to annul deep-rooted inhibitions and repressions. As a matter of fact, we do not deal here with a simple propelling power, but rather with a more complicated mechanism. Instead of covering the long circuitous route through which I arrived at an understanding of this relationship, I shall endeavor to demonstrate it by a short synthetic route.

G. Th. Fechner has established the principle of aesthetic assistance or enhancement which he explains in the following words: "From the un-opposed concurrence of pleasurable states which individually accomplish little, there results a greater, often much greater resultant pleasure than corresponds to the sum of the pleasure values of the separate states, or a greater result than could be explained by the sum of the individual effects; in fact, the mere concurrence of this kind can result in a positive pleasure product, which overflows the threshold of pleasure where the individual factors are too weak to accomplish this. The only condition is that in comparison to others they must produce a greater sense of satisfaction."

I am of the opinion that the theme of wit does not give us the opportunity to test the correctness of this principle which is demonstrable in many other artistic fields. But from wit we have learned something, which at least comes near this principle, namely that in a cooperation of many pleasure-producing factors we are in no position to assign to each one the resultant part which really belongs to it. But the situation assumed in the principle of assistance can be varied, and for these new conditions we can formulate the following combination of questions which are worthy of a reply. What usually happens if in one constellation there is a meeting of pleasurable and painful conditions? Upon what depends the result and the previous intimations of the result? Tendency-wit particularly shows these possibilities. There is one feeling or impulse which strives to liberate pleasure from a certain source and under unrestricted conditions certainly would liberate it, but there is another im-

pulse which works against this development of pleasure, that is, which inhibits or suppresses it. The suppressing stream, as the result shows, must be somewhat stronger than the one suppressed, which however is by no means destroyed.

THE FORE-PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

But now there appears another impulse which strives to set free pleasure by this identical process, albeit from different sources, which acts like the suppressed stream. What can be the result in such a case? An example can make this clearer than this schematization. There is an impulse to insult a certain person, but this is so strongly opposed by a feeling of decorum and aesthetic culture that the impulse to insult must be crushed. If, for example, by virtue of some changed emotional state the insult should happen to break through, this insulting tendency would subsequently be painfully perceived. Therefore, the insult is omitted. There is a possibility, however, of making good wit from the words or thoughts which would have served in the insult; that is, pleasure can be set free from other sources without being hindered by the same suppression. But the second development of pleasure would have to be foregone if the insulting quality of the wit were not allowed to come out, and as the latter is allowed to come to the surface, it is connected with the new release of pleasure. Experience with tendency-wit shows that under such circumstances the suppressed tendency can become so strengthened by the aid of wit-pleasure as to overcome the otherwise stronger inhibition. One resorts to insults because wit is thereby made possible. But the satisfaction thus obtained is not produced by wit alone; it is incomparably greater, in fact it is by so much greater than the pleasure of the wit, that we must assume that the former suppressed tendency has succeeded in breaking through, perhaps without any discharge. Under these circumstances tendency-wit causes the most prolific laughter.

The investigation of the conditions of laughter will perhaps aid us in forming a clearer picture of the process of the help which wit gets against suppression. But we see even now that the case of tendency-wit is a special case of the principle of help. A possibility of the development of pleasure enters into a situation in which another pleasure possibility is so hindered that individually it would not result in pleasure. The result is a development of pleasure which is greater by far than the added possibility. The latter has acted, as it were, as an alluring premium; with the aid of a small sum of pleasure a very large and almost inaccessible amount is obtained. I have good grounds for thinking that this principle corresponds to an arrangement which holds true in many widely separated spheres of the psychic life, and I consider it appropriate to designate the
THE MOTIVES OF WIT AND WIT AS A SOCIAL PROCESS

It seems superfluous to speak of the motives of wit, since the purpose of obtaining pleasure must be recognized as a sufficient motive of the work. But on the one hand it is not impossible that still other motives participate in the production of wit, and on the other hand, in view of certain well-known experiences, the theme of the subjective determination of wit must be discussed.

Two things above all urge us to it. Though wit-making is an excellent means of obtaining pleasure from the psychic processes, we know that not all persons are equally able to make use of it. Wit-making is not at the disposal of all, in general there are but a few persons to whom one can point and say that they are witty. Here wit seems to be a special ability somewhere within the region of the old "psychic faculties," and this shows itself in its appearance as fairly independent of the other faculties such as intelligence, phantasy, memory, etc. A special talent or psychic determination permitting or favoring wit-making must be presupposed in all wit-makers.

I am afraid that we shall not get very far in the exploration of this theme. Only now and then do we succeed in proceeding from the understanding of a single witticism to the knowledge of the subjective determinations in the mind of the wit-maker. It is quite accidental that the example of wit with which we began our investigation of the wit-technique permits us also to gain some insight into the subjective determination of the witticism. I am referring to Heine's witticism, to which also Heymans and Lipps have paid attention.

"I was sitting next to Solomon Rothschild and he treated me just as an equal, quite famillionaire."