PSYCHOPATHOLOGY


The author gives illustrative cases supporting his contention that "unpleasant emotional reactions to personal names may result from an unconscious feeling on the part of the individual bearing that name; that it in some way revealed an inherent weakness in personality which the individual wished to conceal". Where a new name is adopted, an unconscious outlet is secured for the wish to rectify these deficiencies which the individual had in some way come to identify with his name. The new name chosen, where the unconscious motive is not identical with the conscious, is apt to reflect a compromise reaction, so that it rarely differs completely from the former one.

C. W. Forsyth.

[92] The reversal of the libido-sign in delusions of persecution.

In delusions of persecution the figure of the loved one, more or less disguised, reappears as the persecutor. Freud terms this the return of the repressed libido with the reversal of the sign; that is to say, what was repressed in the shape of love returns as hatred. This hatred is projected, and represents the content of the delusion. An attitude of ambivalency is essential before this reversal can take place. The writer has found in his patients that the content of the persecutory delusion is frequently anal persecution. The core of the delusion which is kept so secret is as a rule concerned with anal acts of lust and violence. The results of investigation make it probable that an unconscious identification of the loved object with the skybalum (faeces) was present in the first instance, and that this identification provides the basis for the special ambivalency of the paranoid constitution. The skybalum is the primary (real) persecutor; it commits anal acts of violence which are often at the same time acts of pleasure. It is responsible for one of the most primitive attitudes of ambivalency, for in regard to it pain and pleasure often make their appearance in rapid succession. This primary ambivalency is later strengthened (secondary ambivalency) by the people in charge of the child in connection with the process of cleaning, since punishment for dirtiness and praise for orderliness in evacuation result automatically in hatred or love as the case may be. The later effects in memory of the events connected with defecation in earliest childhood result in a predisposition to a subsequent identification with the skybalum of (1) the child's own body and (2) the person in charge of it.

Freud holds that delusions of grandeur are the regression of sublimated homosexuality to narcissism. The writer would add that this narcissism should have an anal-erotic origin. Delusions of persecution are as often accompanied by delusions of inferiority as by delusions of grandeur, and even by mixtures of the two; this would be explicable by the inherent ambivalency of anal-erotic narcissism.

C. W. Forsyth.

The author includes in the feeling of being persecuted the neurotic's ideas of reference, his common fear of being attacked from behind, and the uncanny feeling of which the paranoic also complains. He finds that it can be traced back to the anal complex. Analysis of dreams of three patients are given. In the first case the analysis suggested that the persecution may be an assault from behind (directed at the anus) on the part of a person (the father) with homosexual intentions; in the second case the persecutor and skybalum are simply treated as equivalent things; in the third patient the morbidly anxious interest in the w.c. (in his dream) was a further development of the patient’s interest in his own waste-tube and in what might come out of it.

C. W. FORSYTH.


The writer sees in insomnia the establishment of a vicious circle. After a sleepless night, an undue strain is involved in maintaining awareness. Absorption in the task becomes obsessive, and the accompanying mental excitability to external stimuli constitutes the beginning of restlessness. The degree of these counter-tendencies is the measure of the unconscious desire for sleep. Unconsciously lazy, the patient becomes pathologically active. This pathological activity is maintained when the patient goes to bed, and shows itself in a condition of muscular tension which, owing to its reminding him of strychnine poisoning, the author considers may be due to fatigue toxins, and a general attitude of attention. As has been said above, the absorption in the task is the measure of its unendurability. As the unconscious becomes more exacting in its demands for sleep, any activity becomes abhorrent, and the wish to escape all demands is formulated in a yearning for the nirvana of death. This often finds conscious expression in fear of accidents, or questions as to the value of life. Death is, of course, a great and final lapse of consciousness. Hence any lack of mental activity, suggesting the greater loss, must be compensated for by greater conscious activity—the patient seeks to maintain contact with his environment by an apparently purposeless restlessness. He is in a state where anything suggestive or symbolic of death repels and at the same time fascinates him. The author conceives that a struggle now ensues between the instinct for life and the desire for sleep, with its symbolic significance of death. The circle is complete in its viciousness.

Two cases of insomnia are cited in which treatment consisted in explanations on these lines, with completely satisfactory results.

JAMES YOUNG.


The biologic strivings as seen in animal evolution are discussed, and it is shown how in man the psyche becomes the chief control of all human
activities, and enables him to adapt himself the more efficiently to his complex environment. Social adaptation brings psychic conflict in its train, and the ‘will to power’ becomes a motivating force. Mental flight from reality as seen in day dreams, phantasies, etc., is not a good method of overcoming difficulties, and must be considered pathological at the social level. Just as bodily defence mechanisms if continued for too long a period may cause individual exhaustion and death, so at the psychical level delusions and hallucinations are defence mechanisms and may lead to a similar end. Man is a reacting unit, a transmuter and transmitter of energy, and all his activities aim at the better adjustment to environment to satisfy his biologic demands. As a social unit he meets obstacles in his attempt to satisfy his libido, and the overcoming of such may be attempted by fight, by changing social custom or repressing his desires, or by flight through psychical substitution, so that the individual perceives the environment in a way compatible with his wishes or conceives himself the possessor of desires approved by society. Cases to illustrate the compensatory mechanisms of delusions and hallucinations through which biologically inefficient individuals aim to adjust themselves as social units are given and discussed. It is pointed out that just as fever is no symptom of any definite disease, so a certain delusion or hallucination is no indication of a definite mental conflict; and just as certain groups of symptoms often indicate a specific disease, so a certain group of delusions and hallucinations frequently point to a definite mental conflict. Delusions of persecution and reference coupled with ideas of great efficiency, power of invention, and a history of heterosexual abstinence, in a majority of cases indicate homosexuality and impotence.

C. Stanford Read.


This patient complained of ‘something’ lurking in the dark, especially in his bedroom. During the Somme battle he had frequently to pass the unburied head of a soldier; one night he accidentally trod on it, and was instantly filled with great revulsion of feeling. This incident was associated in the unconscious with a repressed sexual trauma which occurred when the patient was 16, and which was the cause of the homosexual regression. The analysis effected a cure of his ‘war shock’ symptoms, but the writer found that the sexual inversion was so complete that heterosexuality was a closed channel.

C. W. Forsyth.


This is a further exposition, covering seventy pages, of Dr. Prince’s well-known case of multiple personality. It is impossible to give an account of it here, but the writer’s conclusion is interesting. He says: ‘This interpretation or theory of dissociated personalities is opposed to present-day attempts of a monistic psychology to refer the phenomena of the psychoses to a single subconscious motive, a wish, whether sexual or one
to 'escape from reality' (so-called defence reaction) or some other, and which would only use organized complexes of innate and acquired dispositions to effect a philosophic purpose. . . . In the alliance of the psychological dispositions, the conception of a primitive unconscious sexual or other desire, . . . like Descartes' soul in the pineal gland, pulling the wires and directing the dynamic forces of organized systems constituting personality, both 'shocks the imagination' and is to my mind untenable. The present-day tendency to find a quasi-philosophical single principle to explain the complex psychological phenomena of personality, a sort of psychological monism, is not only fallacious, but is bound to remove psychology from the field of science. Psychology deals with concrete phenomena which are the resultants of a complexity of forces driving in different directions. The law of the final drive is more comparable to the physical law of the 'resultant of forces'.”

JAMES YOUNG.


The writer gives a detailed account of four cases of regression. He is careful to state that he uses the word regression in a descriptive sense only, and dissociates himself entirely from the Freudian use of the term. He compares the more lately developed parts of the cerebral cortex (which apparently are co-extensive with the more lately developed psychological functions) with the growing points of the upper branches of a tree. If the latter are injured, new buds appear in the lower, older parts of the tree. The sap (libido) regresses and reanimates a zone of earlier development. Similarly, under the influence of fear the human being regresses to a level in which older, more primitive infantile levels of functioning are reanimated. The writer sees no reason to postulate as the root of these regressions any hypothetical incestuous fixation on the mother or any unconscious desire to return to the womb. Moreover, even if it were possible that a 'mother complex' played a part in determining regression, it would still remain a question whether such a complex contained any sexual component.

JAMES YOUNG.


With regard to this subject two contrasting opinions stand forth conspicuously. One is that every symptom for which no grave physical sign can be found is due to simulation, and that every soldier should be suspected of malingering unless he can prove to the contrary. The other is that every simulator is proved by that very fact to be abnormal mentally, and he should be interned rather than punished. Really malingering is a normal reaction of simple-minded persons, and is almost universal in young children, given circumstances which permit it. It is not a mark of disease, unless we so call the human desire for comfort, sympathy, and protection from danger. The argument of irresponsibility is quite refuted by the salutary effect of the fear of punishment. A class of simulators who are
pathological are the mythomaniacs or pathological liars. They are akin to the dipsomaniacs in that they are not deterred by the knowledge of inevitable serious consequences. The genesis may often be found in the environmental conditions of childhood, and their character is only an exaggeration of tendencies present in everyone. In warfare the motive is commonly one of self-preservation, and a certain aesthetic pleasure is often obtained from such conduct. Normal mythomania appears to have a motive, and is proportioned to it, whereas abnormal mythomania seems insufficiently motivated or not motivated at all, its duration is persistent, and its intensity is out of proportion to its cause.

Three kinds of mythomania are to be differentiated—vain, malicious, and perverse—and the three may be combined. One must remember that there is often a groundwork of fact, but by auto-suggestion the psychopath believes everything he has invented. Mythopathic activity is often unconscious and involuntary, but often works with the help of will, especially at the beginning of fabulation. Simulators of deaf-mutism are then discussed, and here two groups are recognized: the creative simulators, who seek to realize imaginative attitudes, movements, or sensory difficulties calculated to awaken pity; and the fixative simulators, who, having really suffered from a nervous lesion and perceiving a betterment, exploit and perpetuate their symptoms. Every subject who, without any verifiable disorder of the nervous centres or of the organs of hearing and speech, and without a characteristic psychosis, remains completely deaf and dumb for three or four months, may almost certainly be considered a malingerer. Out of 17 cases of complete deaf-mutism attended during three months, 9 confessed their simulation. In 6 cases the fraud was discovered by appealing to their patriotism and conscience, and also giving them some physical treatment which serves as a pretext for their rapid cure. The fixative simulators may remain obstinate. Intensive faradization and the threat of court martial only remain. In conclusion, the questions of the management of malingerers, their legal and moral responsibility, the detection of simulated pain and weakness, and the problem of prevention are all touched upon.

C. Stanford Read.

TREATMENT.


The author complains of the neglect of the physiology of ‘nervousness’ in its treatment. Even in the Weir-Mitchell régime, when relaxation of mind and body is aimed at, little stress is laid on this, in the written accounts of it. The neurotic has lost the habit of relaxation, but it is not enough to tell him to relax his muscles; indeed, a patient may be apparently relaxed in bed for days, and still be worried and show this in his facial expression and the hypertonicity of his muscles. Complete relaxation is necessary for repose and sleep, but most people are unaware when they

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