ABSTRACTS

Psychopathology.

PSYCHOLOGY.


The aim of this article is to draw attention to the fact that whilst much has been said about the effects of repression, little has been said about the cause of it. The writer says that repression is ordinarily attributed to the effect of 'finer feelings', 'ethical principles', 'better self', 'fear morality', 'herd instinct', 'conscious standards of morality and propriety', all of which can be subsumed under the concept 'censor'. In his analyses he always finds that quite early in childhood the patient performed some act of the 'polymorphous-perverse' variety, for which the beloved parent showed displeasure. On further analysis it appears that, to please the mother, the child repressed the desire. This repression, while pleasing the parent, also secured pleasure for the child. It was therefore sexual. Repression, according to the writer, is a specific pathogenic method of gratifying a normal infantile sexual desire. It would appear that the reality principle, in so far as it involves repression, is orientated by a sexual motive. Human psychology is thus effectively sexualized.

JAMES YOUNG.


In a previous work (Instinct and the Unconscious), Rivers has argued that Freud's concept of the censor is superfluous, and in this article he applies a similar line of argument in an endeavour to show that the peculiarities of the affect in dreams may better be accounted for by regression to infantile mental levels than by distortion and disguise due to 'censorship'. Rivers instances nightmares and war dreams as evidence that the dream is concerned with the solution of a conflict and does not represent the fulfilment of a wish. If a satisfactory symbolic solution is arrived at, there is no affect; but in proportion as the attempted solution fails, affect is manifested. In sleep the higher levels of the mind are out of action, and it is the more primitive, lower or infantile levels which function. This regression to the infantile is held to explain both the transposed imagery and symbolism in which a conflict finds expression in a dream, and also the nature of the accompanying affect.

Thus, whilst accepting the concepts of mental conflict and repression, Rivers seeks to discredit as unnecessary the concept of the censor and of wish-fulfilment in dreams; and therefore presumably also in the psycho-neuroses. He uses Freud's 'Augean stables dream' as an example upon which to demonstrate his views. It is, however, not clear what, if not opposed wishes, are in conflict, and what, if not some instance corresponding to the censor, is responsible for repression.

ALFRED CARVER.
The anatomic seat of the emotions: a discussion of the James-Lange theory.—Charles L. Dana. *Arch. of Neurol. and Psychiat.* 1921, vi, 634.

Due to increased attention to emotional factors of late, the James-Lange theory has been reconsidered, and there has been a leaning towards its acceptance as true, at any rate with some modification. Though this hypothesis has never been satisfactorily proved or convincingly refuted, Dana brings forward some clinical facts which seem to show that the somatic or skeletal muscles and sympathetic system proper have only a minor effect in arousing conscious emotional states. A patient broke her neck at the 3rd and 4th cervical level and was completely quadriplegic, with entire loss of sensation from the neck down, and abolition of all deep reflexes. On the peripheral theory it is difficult to see why there should have been no emotional change during the year she lived with the skeletal system practically eliminated and the sympathetic entirely so. Reference is made to patients in the terminal stage of tabes, with family periodic paralysis; to certain forms of progressive muscular atrophy; to those with absolute bodily rigidity in terminal arthritis deformans; and to those advanced stages of paralysis agitans with rigidity. In Dana’s experience the emotional reactions are present and normal in such patients. It is concluded that the bodily sensations which accompany emotion are produced by stimuli from the automatic centres in the brain-stem, but they only co-operate to extend and perhaps intensify the emotion. Emotion is centrally located, and results from the action and interaction of the cortex and thalamus. The James-Lange theory is therefore regarded as true only in part.

C. Stanford Read.

The psychology of the dance.—B. S. Talmey. *Amer. Med.* 1921, xvi, 129.

Protoplasm has inherent within it the impulse to rhythmic activity. The animal world danced before man either in service to individual or species preservation. In the amœba rhythmic movements subserve hunger; in the higher animals the dance stands almost exclusively in the service of sex, its object being to produce a state of tumescence. Human infants show a love of rhythm early. In primitive peoples and in all civilizations rhythmic movements have crystallized into the dance, which is first instinctive, then studied, and later becomes an art. Early in history the dance is first met in religion and is prescribed for all solemn occasions. Later, folk-dances appeared, and gave an epitome of man’s neuromuscular energy as the different trades were told in art form. Love dances, symbolizing attack, defence, and overcoming in courting, are seen to-day in many parts. In civilized western countries dances for generations expressed emotions consistent with modern life. The dance is able to draw us out of everyday life and lead us into a dream world. It is now no more a show but a social pleasure. The modern dance copies the oriental, and represents not wooing and love, but a substitute of the normal gratification of the erotic impulse. It is no longer a sublimation of the sex ardour, but is a
mode of attaining contrectation and detachedness. Conflicts relating to sensuality are the subsoil for an entire army of neuroses. The only safety-valve for the repressed emotions is either solitary auto-eroticism, promiscuity, or the dance, and the latter is the least harmful of the three, though somewhat auto-erotic in character itself. The young who are not yet afflicted with repressed emotions, and the married, who have no need of repression, should better look for the gratification found in rhythmic motion in the more sedate waltz, which is free from all the tumultuous cestic motions as met with in the more modern dance.

C. S. R.


Flügel points out that while psycho-analysis has done much to reveal the universal occurrence of sexual repression, the intrapsychic conflict to which this gives rise, and the fate of the repressed impulses, much uncertainty still prevails as regards the nature of the repressing forces. His contribution aims at gaining a deeper insight into the biological significance of sexual repression, and then at the psychological application of this.

The biological antagonism existing between genesis and individuation was clearly enunciated by Herbert Spencer, and its tremendous significance emphasized by the principles of Malthus and Darwin. The antagonism thus expressed in biological terms corresponds with the conflict between libido and ego-trends as understood by Freud. Flügel traces in some detail the biological import of the inverse relationship between genesis and individuation as it manifests itself within a community and inter-racially, before turning to its psychological aspect. Natural selection favours the direction of human energy to work (sublimation) rather than to the alternative path of sexuality, though this more primitive and easier path remains open, and man is burdened with greater tendencies towards reproduction than he either needs or can easily control.

Apart from actual reproduction, his desires tend to be directed upon sexual matters to an extent that seriously interferes with his working ability. A further complexity is found to be involved when we consider that both tendencies are derived from the libido—cf. Freud's more recent papers concerning the narcissistic components of the libido—and a powerful sexual energy is a prerequisite of sublimation. Only a certain proportion of the available libidinous energy is capable of sublimation; attempts at excessive sublimation are apt to lead to psychoneuroses rather than to useful adaptations. It would seem as though sublimations must constantly be re-enforced by sexual functions—failure in the latter occasioning disturbance in the former.

As a result of the repression to which it has been subjected, a certain degree of inhibition has become, as it were, an integral part of the complex sexual instinct itself, even the non-reproductive partial components suffering repression on account of their associations.
If restraint is lacking, sexuality thus loses its charm, and a too abrupt approach results in a loss, not in an increase, of sexual excitement. Man seems to have made a virtue of necessity and to have utilized these restraints as a very means of obtaining an enhanced pleasure from sexuality; for sublimation, though it involves some renunciation of immediate pleasure, promotes mental development and actually brings about greater pleasure when the tension is on occasion released. Flügel finally discusses the reasons which have prevented man from recognizing the principles in question, and deals lucidly with their bearing upon social and economic problems.

Alfred Carver.


An inquiry is made as to whether the acquisitive instinct is inherent or the outcome of environment. A distinction is drawn between gaining and holding; acquisition being necessarily instinctive only in connection with gaining, which is characteristic of the basic instincts. The problem dealt with is whether the concept of property has an instinctive basis. Bearing in mind the difference between individual and group interests, it is difficult to determine whether acquisition is modified from the former by grading or is the result of experience.

References are made to the instinct of acquisition in animals, birds, and insects. Eliot Howard's researches into the acquisitive instinct of birds in relation to territory show that the male is aggressive to other birds approaching his particular territory, and that this attitude is only connected with the parental and sexual instincts.

In bees the individual instinct is modified in the interests of the community, certain bees acquiring honey for the common interest. In this case the author thinks that this was primarily an individual interest, and became modified as part of the gregarious life. The bird is gregarious and sociable except when the parental and sexual functions are active at one period of the year. While the bee achieves complete socialization of the acquisitive instinct which may once have been individual, the bird has this instinct less completely socialized. It is suggested that the individual acquisitive instinct in the bird is suppressed in the interests of communal life, but that this suppression is not as complete as in the case of the bee.

In man the acquisitive instinct shows itself in collecting habits characteristic of the psychoses, and also in kleptomania, examples of regression which are striking evidence of the human instinct of acquisition. Acceptance of this depends on the belief that the psychoses and psycho-neuroses are examples of regression to early stages of ontogenetic and phylogenetic development. Sometimes the impulse to collect articles of little or no value continues into adult life, but in most cases these collections have a definite relation to other social activities. All this points to the existence of a crude undiscriminating instinct of acquisition in the individual. It is questionable how much individualistic acquisition is instinctive or how much it is due to tradition and example. The fact that
ABSTRACTS

kleptomania and miserliness are regarded as anti-social shows that the crude
instinct is socially under control; the question therefore arises as to how
far normal social acquisition is instinctive. Individual modification
probably accounts for the different degrees in the human species.

In Melanesia a peculiar individualistic and communistic behaviour
towards property exists. Nothing is known of individual ownership, and
this common ownership is characteristic when applied to land; this is
not quite universal, however, as in one island it is customary for the parent
when clearing land to allot a portion of it to his children. A comparison
is made between the disputes arising in consequence of this, and those con-
ected with the acquisition of territory by birds. In man acquisition is a
primary and more deeply-seated process, but in the bird and Melanesian
it has been partially suppressed for social requirements. The Melanesian
example shows the association of communal ownership with peace and
individual ownership with strife. Both Melanesian and bird show that
individual acquisition can be so greatly modified in response to gregarious
needs that it practically disappears. Is this due directly to the gregarious
instinct or to social tradition and example? Both Melanesian and European
are individually acquisitive, and it is probable that this instinct
has been modified by social conditions rather than by the gregarious instinct.
This should satisfy those who advocate a change in the social attitude
towards property.

ROBERT M. RIGGALL.

PSYCHOSES.

[178] Acute psychoses arising during the course of heart disease.

Among the more important types are the following: (1) Auditory and
visual hallucinations, usually recognized by the patient as such. (2) A
state of confusion as a constant symptom, or only present on awakening
from or on going to sleep. This mild type is common in myocardial cases
with auricular fibrillation with or without decompensation. (3) Excitation
with decided disorientation is not infrequently seen in elderly persons
suffering with fibrous myocarditis. In some cases the state of excitement
alters with complete apathy and silence. (4) Acute mania may arise
very suddenly and defy all efforts at control. (5) Delusional states, which
usually take a persecutory form. The author has only seen the persecutory
type in lesions of the aortic valve. (6) During attacks of Cheyne-Stokes
breathing, there is at times in the dyspnoeic period a state of mental excite-
ment or delirium which subsides during the apnoic period.

Riesman then briefly considers the causes of what he terms the cardio-
genic psychoses. In a psychopathic individual the connection may be
accidental. A probable factor in some cases at least is kidney disease and
uraemia. Acidosis may perhaps play a part sometimes. Drugs and poisons
may be etiological factors. In a patient with disordered circulation alcohol
may easily lead to a psychosis, and more than one writer has held digitalis
responsible for maniacal and other acute psychopathic outbreaks.

C. S. R.