PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

PROGNOSIS AND TREATMENT.


A comparison of two cases of tetanus treated with intraspinal serum combined with injections of somnifen, and one case treated with serum in the same way combined with sulphate of magnesia. The author considers that the first method is superior to the second and gives his theoretical and practical reasons for thinking this the best method for the treatment of tetanus.

R. G. G.

Psychopatology.

PSYCHOLOGY.


Three main libidinal types, each according to the predominance of the investment of libido, are distinguished—the erotic, the narcissistic, and the compulsive. Erotic persons are mastered by the fear of losing love, and are therefore especially dependent on others who have love to deny them. Even in its pure form this type is quite frequent.

The compulsive is distinguished by the predominance of the super-ego which is differentiated from the ego under high tension. This type is mastered by the fear of conscience instead of by the fear of losing love; is, so to speak, inwardly rather than outwardly dependent; displays a high degree of self-reliance, and becomes the actual, for the most part, conservative pillar of civilization. The third type, the narcissistic, is essentially negatively characterized. There is no tension between the ego and the super-ego. There is no predominance of erotic needs. The chief interest is directed towards self-maintenance. Such persons are independent and little intimidated. A large amount of aggression which, moreover, is expressed in readiness for activity, is available to the ego. Loving is preferred to being loved. People of this type impress others as ‘personalities’ and are peculiarly fitted to serve as support for others, to assume the rôle of leadership, to add new stimulus to cultural development, or to attack the existing order. Mixtures of these types may occur. It is perhaps to the erotic-narcissistic type that we must concede the greatest frequency.

C. S. R.
Concerning emotion as impulsion and instinct as orientation.—J. C. WHITEHORN. Amer. Jour. Psychiat., 1932, xi, 1093.

Here instincts are considered as action patterns, oriented to fill biological needs; the most fundamental determinants of directed conduct, but not sources of energy. These action patterns are not assumed to be completely stereotyped or immutable, but their modification is attributed to intelligence rather than to some power latent within the instinctive disposition itself. Emotion is here conceived not as a psychic parallel or epiphenomenon of instinct, but as complementary or reciprocal thereto. Real biological significance is here attributed to the impulsion experience as the basis of emotion, the interrupter of inadequate attitudes. The provisional nature of these concepts is emphasized. When it is said that impulsion arouses to action, instinct orients activity towards objects and intelligence modifies and integrates activity, it is not to be understood in any metaphysical sense, that impulsion, instinct, and intelligence are distinct and separable entities, acting upon each other or upon the organism. They are merely concepts, abstracted from the real unity of experience for convenience of thought and discussion. These concepts represent a tentative concession, as it were, to the objectifying tendency of the mind, which is prerequisite to logical thought and verifiable inference.

C. S. R.

The perceptions of children and the psychology of form (Les perceptions des enfants et la psychologie de la gestalt).—RICHARD MEILLI. Arch. de psychol., 1931, xxiii, 41.

Children are unable to realize complicated structures. Their view of an ensemble is simple and more primitive. This is because the child is more subject to optical illusions as regards size and localization. Children have as strong a realization of symmetry and good form as have adults, but as regards topography objective conditions give way to the subjective and sometimes therefore a child sees good form where an adult does not. The child sees objects in a syncretic manner. In structures with strong unity the child will appreciate the parts, but where the internal parts are vivid it will destroy the unity to the child. The differences are attributed to difference in neural structure.

E. M.
Sexual initiation (L'initiation sexuelle).—N. Carnivet. Arch. de psychol., 1931, xxiii, 276.

The relationship between the mother and child can be profoundly disturbed when the child discovers that the parents have lied. Confidence is immediately withdrawn. There is a lowering of the parental ideal, a feeling of uneasiness and reproach. In no field of mental development are those disturbances more likely to take place than the field of sexual initiation, and it is the parents’ duty to tell the truth on the earliest occasion.

E. M.

The notion of temperament (Notion de temperament). R. Alendy. L'hygiène ment., 1931, xxvi, 189.

The recent work of Kretschmer on the relationship between physique and character is correlated with the concept of anabolic and metabolic types, and this latter was to define temperament in terms of its organic background. The author feels that he has correlated organic endowment with the psyche. Psychological plasticity, or its absence, as portrayed in Bleuler's schizoid and syntonic types, can be viewed in the light of Janet's theory of psychological tension. It is obvious that the author envisages the metabolic substratum for differences in character.

E. M.


The appearances referred to by occultists as 'aura' and supposed by them to be emanations of a substance of para-normal nature seem capable of being accounted for on the principle either of spatial or temporal retino-cerebral induction. The writer's experimental observations lead to the conclusion that auras have no objective, external, independent existence, but are essentially the results in consciousness of those states of the retina known as negative after-images.

On this view, the aura is neither an illusion nor a hallucination, but rather a subjective sensation or unshared perception corresponding not to the presence of an external object but to a more or less transitory physiological condition of the retina of the percipient.

C. S. R.