EDUCATION AND ITS RÔLE IN THE PREVENTION OF NEUROSES.

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THE many factors and mechanisms concerned in the production of neuroses as revealed by psycho-analysis are becoming common knowledge, and even the complicated terms coined by psycho-analysts may almost be regarded as currency in the speech of to-day. But it is to psycho-analysis as a prophylactic measure that the medical man, especially the family doctor whose position often requires him to act as general adviser too, can most profitably turn. The curing of hysteria is a long and tedious process involving a great expenditure of time and much technique, but the application of the barest of psycho-analytical principles will do much towards correcting an education that is obviously inadequate to the present-day difficulties of mankind.

There are two main instincts with which education has to deal: (1) The sexual instinct, understood to include all such higher aspects of sex as love, maternal affection, the attachment of children to their parents, and certain reaction formations as exemplified by hatred and jealousy when having a sexual origin; and (2) The ego or self-preservation instinct. We find to a lesser degree a third instinct which is more developed than inhibited by education—this is the herd instinct. The first in the adult is present as what might broadly be called the love-tendencies of the individual, and is the basis of the original Freudian psychology. The second becomes the will-to-power, to which Adler ascribed all neuroses as a system of psychical compensations for a reality inadequate for the satisfaction of the power instinct. The third instinct is the one that later becomes the social tendency that binds individuals together into efficient communities.

As the growing child develops, any wish or desire prompted by these instincts, but which is considered as immoral, has to be repressed and subsequently sublimated. That is, the wish becomes forgotten and unconscious, and the original interest invested in such 'wrong' subjects has to be diverted and given an outlet in some other way which is admissible to ethics and yet still satisfies the original trend: for instance, nursing in a children's hospital as a satisfaction for a spinster's repressed desire for offspring. When, however, such sublimation is not successfully carried out, the repressed wish still makes

its effect felt, and strives for recognition in a subtle and disguised way, either by causing a neurosis, or else by merely influencing the individual's emotional reactions in a way not in accordance with his rational aspirations.

In so far as it is against sex that education exerts most of its restraining influence, it is not surprising that it should be found at the root of so many of the mental difficulties of childhood. Although the common tendency is to place the period of awakening sexual interest at ten or so, we must realize that it occurs at a much earlier age, and that an apparent innocence at ten is often due to the repression of a well-marked interest at the age of five. This sexual development of the child is therefore a very prolonged and complex one, which follows some such lines as these: First of all, the child's interest is naturally directed towards itself, and its thoughts find little with which to occupy themselves in other people. After a time, however, it starts to repress this self-love, and becomes attached to another person similar to itself, that is, of course, its parent of the same sex. From this, it passes to its parent of the opposite sex. This stage now lasts a considerable time, but at last, under the influence and pressure of its educational surroundings, it represses again, and turns to others outside its family. Thus, at first it gets drawn to the members of its own sex, but finally fixes its love-tendencies on a member of the other sex. A little girl's successive love objects would therefore normally be: herself, her mother, her father, her sisters, her brothers, other girls, and finally boys.

But since the appearance of each attitude demands the repression of the preceding one, we understand the sudden attack of foppishness which most children display at some time or another, when they take a great amount of interest in their clothes, hair, appearance, and so on. This stage is a sublimation of the self-tendency of early sexual development. The infantile tendency of exhibiting one's own form is frequently sublimated into public speaking, acting on the stage, or posing as a model. Repression of parental interest leaves behind the framework of what we call filial devotion and attachment. When repression of love interest in the same sex occurs, the sublimation products are all the conventional worldly traits of character that render possible the social links and interests existing between members of the same sex, such sociability being impossible between one sex and the other. The partial sublimation of the power instinct, on the other hand, gives rise to desire for success, the wish for personal influence of one's self over one's subordinates; in other words, to ambition. Indeed, the choice of a profession often appears to be influenced by unconscious repressions; for instance, a repressed cruelty instinct may lead its owner to become a butcher or a surgeon.

Similarly a dishonesty trait may dictate the adoption of legal studies. Such a series of important repressions to be gone through successfully before normal adult character is reached presents, therefore, many pitfalls to the developing child who does not get the best possible help in the shape of a rational education.

But it frequently happens that at some stage or other of a child's development an arrest takes place, and no further stage is ever reached. This stoppage at a certain mentality, without subsequently developing another, is known as a fixation; and such infantile fixations are much more frequent than might at first sight appear. A fixation, say, for one's own parents gives rise to an excessive form of filial attachment, which the world is very apt to regard as highly praiseworthy; whether it be so or not, the fact remains that it is a sign of a faulty and erroneous development of the child's mentality. A fixation for one parent may be partly departed from by attempting to realize in others the original parent ideal, thus causing the individual in later life to be unconsciously attracted by those that fulfil this ideal, though this is an entirely unconscious tendency, which may be against all the conscious dictation of reason. This results also in an instinctive aversion to those, however fine characters they may possess, who do not concord with the parental image. In the event of the fixation having been for the parent of the child's own sex, the resulting ideal will be one which can only be truly satisfied by a member of the same sex. This leads, therefore, to a tendency or an attitude from which very few people indeed are entirely free, and it is homosexuality. This term is applied to a tendency, a leaning, a taste if you like, and can therefore not be considered as descriptive of only the actual demonstrations of that tendency, or the acts to which it prompts. Homosexuality, therefore, is the pouring of a natural fund of affection on to people who would in the normal way have been chosen principally on account of their belonging to the other sex, whereas they have in fact been selected because of their belonging to the same sex.

Let me illustrate by an example, an abstract from a long case:—

A woman of the working class came to me and stated she had had an unhappy childhood on account of a drunken father; she was extremely strictly brought up, and in order to escape her misery married at twenty. Her husband is a man whom she respects greatly and admires. She has two sons, the younger of whom came rather against her wishes, yet she loves him dearly. He is home now from the R.A.F. She is forty-two, and is suffering from sleeplessness, marked depression, "shocking" neuralgia, and, above all, an uncontrollable temper. She is angered at every act of her husband, and "goes for him" in an entirely irrational way. Also she relates the following dream: "I am wrapt in a fur coat and I am in an aeroplane at night with a pilot by my side. I have orders to cling to a certain parcel, and I do so. I alight on the seashore with my parcel". Now, as regards analyzing this dream: a fur coat suggests warmth; she feels guilty for

being so frigid towards her husband, as she appreciated she ought to love him, but somehow she cannot; here her frigidity is changed into warmth, a wish fulfilment. An aeroplane reminds her of her son's entry into the R.A.F.; she was loath to lose him, but his father wished him to go; this was the cause of one of their biggest quarrels; her being in an aeroplane, then, pictures the unhappiness of her married life. 'At night' suggests the same thing, for her husband is away all day, and it is only when he comes home at night that the "rows" begin. The parcel is associated with her son, who is littering the house with parcels and souvenirs from the war; he will not unpack, as he is engaged, and hopes to fix up his own home soon. She is dissuading him from doing so, for she hates the thought of losing him, especially as his delicate and effeminate ways remind her so of her mother, whom she dearly loved all her life. The order she received in the dream she feels sure must have originated from her mother, for she never tolerated orders from anyone else. We see, therefore, a maternal influence that has caused her to enter into this aeroplane, i.e., married unhappiness—and concentrate on this parcel—i.e., her son. The pilot who is driving her reminds her of her son's chum in the R.A.F., who is very rich compared with her boy. The pilot, therefore, symbolizes wealth, and expresses the idea that were she to have wealth by her side her boy would not work, and, not being independent, could not marry. The seashore reminds her of Yarmouth, the only place where she spent a holiday without her husband, and this expresses attained peace and happiness.

This dream, therefore, shows that her maternal influence is responsible for her present unhappiness and her violent attachment for her effeminate son. She wishes to keep him by her, yet to separate from her husband; and were she wealthier her hold of the boy would be more secure.

Further investigations show that as a child she was wildly in love with her mother, but she attempted sublimation on to a lady next door, who treated the child very well. The disparity of age was corrected by a further transferring of affection to the daughter next door, who, however, did not return the child's love. This attachment lasted till the age of fourteen. Then we find a blank, colourless life till she was thirty-two, when she fell violently in love with another woman, who approached closely to her maternal ideal. At thirty-eight this so-called friendship ceased, and she has had no more since.

We see, therefore, the maternal ideal running through from her mother to the lady next door, her daughter, another woman friend, and now her son. Her husband, of course, had not the necessary traits pertaining to that ideal, besides the fact that he was of the wrong sex.

This provides us with an excellent example of how a faulty sublimation in childhood may result in the most unhappy of careers without the individual being aware of the cause, and therefore without possible remedy. We must appreciate, therefore, how these early and infantile tendencies, even phantasies, are kept relegated in the unconscious, and from there, in the event of sublimation being imperfect, are capable of influencing consciousness.

We have thus a sort of double personality, the adult and the infantile minds co-existing. Hence, the cause of an adult mental

symptom will be found in a repression that is unconscious, and therefore infantile. It is this shadow, so to speak, of one's child character that reminds us daily of the necessity for a correct education which will mould these repressions into the forms that will least imperil subsequent adaptation.

We note in the growing child the presence of two psychic systems, the one primitive and personal; and the other acquired and impersonal. Thus the primitive infantile gratification of a desire or wish is to imagine its realization, to find its fulfilment from within, and therefore to ignore in the process external relationships to others. The other system, which is a product of education, is the one that tends to make use of environmental conditions to procure actual and material satisfaction; it therefore takes into account outside objects and events, and utilizes them for a definite purpose. The first system is entirely personal and subjective, whilst the other is impersonal and therefore objective. We see the growth of the second system when we observe how a child is no longer satisfied with the imaginative games that used to please him a year ago. The first elementary and imaginative system remains in its primitive condition throughout life, and as it affects individual adaptation less and less, it becomes repressed, and forms the basis of the adult unconscious. The second acquired and objective system, developing further, becomes modified by experience and education into the rational and reasoned part of our mind we call conscious. The first system is normally controlled by the second one; yet we see, of course, numerous instances where the second reasoned system falls entirely under the influence of the first irrational and infantile one.

At a very early age—about five—the first system has crystallized itself, so to speak, into a few sharply defined tendencies, which are ultimately expressed only through the second or objective system: though they sometimes are satisfied by the first system, as in the wish fulfilment of dreams that are infantile types of imagination. And all our various trends and activities can be traced back to a limited number of primitive tendencies residing in the first or infantile system.

And when we divide human personalities into the introverts, who turn within themselves, reason, and thus apply themselves to the gaining of power, and the extroverts, who go out to their environment and thus adapt themselves emotionally (Jung), we must expect to find the foundations laid for both extrovert and introvert characters at an early age when certain impulses begin to predominate in the first system over other tendencies of less importance to the individual.

It follows that the difference between introvert and extrovert as laid down in childhood is not only one of opposite ways and tendencies, but also one of mutual misunderstanding, which plays a sad part in

causing half the sorrow and unhappiness in the world. We see that the strength of the introvert is the weakness of the extrovert, and on account of thus completing one another they are particularly apt to intermarry. Everything goes well as long as husband and wife are merely back-to-back fighting fate, but the day they have won and overcome their difficulties and assured their position, they turn to one another expecting to understand each other, and yet hopelessly fail because they are so different. This accounts for so much misery occurring in married life after years of conjugal felicity in spite of—we should say, of course, on account of—the struggle for life. It is this marked contrast between these two types of character, which contrast finds its starting-point in infancy, that shows the absolute and urgent necessity for an individual system of education, one that recognizes these contrasts, and treats each mentality accordingly. Thus, in order to prevent deficiency of adaptation from, say, an excessive extrovert character, the developing child should receive an education tending towards introvert characteristics. But in those circumstances, where a hold of that child is required, such hold can only be obtained through appealing to that child's adaptation processes, that is, its extrovert tendencies; thus, in such a case as this, we should try to develop introvert trends by appealing to the extrovert character. Thus and only thus can one ensure a fair equilibrium between the introvert and extrovert characteristics; for it is the undue excess of one over the other that spoils the powers of adaptation.

The proper recognition of the importance of these primary repressions of childhood will, in time, lead perhaps to such a regulation of educational influences brought to bear upon the developing child as will avoid the formation of faulty repressions. In this way, numerous traits of character that are really reaction formations could be reduced to a minimum. Instances of this are legion, and we need mention only a few, such as Puritanism, meanness, selfishness, or religious mania, all of which are undesirable characteristics. But we cannot entirely prevent reaction formations occurring; and since generosity, altruism, honesty, and so on, may also be reaction formations, we should therefore aspire to an education that will guide sublimation or reaction formations in advantageous rather than disadvantageous directions.

Careful observation of the formation of reactions and of sublimated interests will prove a guide to the ascertaining how much the infantile or first psychic system is still making its influence felt; excessive predominance of it will result in an outlook upon the world that will be too subjective. Instance, the infantile mentality of savages, who appreciate new events or objects only in so far as they

may be of personal interest, or may have some significance to their subjective attitude. The constant observing of objects from a personal point of view, irrespective of those objects' intrinsic or general worth, is naturally a bar to proper adaptation, and should be eliminated by education. But even if it were too strong to be entirely repressed, then at least this subjective attitude should be assisted towards sublimation in a more useful direction, such as art. The subjective attitude is well shown by the poet, for whom a rose, a sky, a brook, an insect, are of no specific significance, but are considered as symbolical of subjective and abstract ideas he wants to express. The general importance in life of symbolism and phantasy—all of infantile origin—can certainly not be denied. From what we have said before, it follows that the mental contents of the adult unconscious, and still more so of the child's first system, cannot be described as either moral or immoral, but only a-moral. Hence, since the child's instinctive tendencies are subjective and primitive, we cannot call them immoral because they are opposed to arbitrary moral considerations which the child does not recognize, let alone accept. It is only the contents of the newly acquired objective system, the system that places the child in relationship to others, that we can call right or wrong.

The application of this principle to infantile sexuality brings us to realize the necessity for a careful sexual education, that is, enlightenment. We must appreciate how, in order to ensure a correct mental evolution, we should never fear or shirk a difficulty, but should face it boldly; that is, repression should be avoided, and the subject considered. But the child of to-day could hardly do this with sexuality; he is too hampered by his surroundings; his curiosity concerning a vital subject is not wrong, it is entirely justifiable, arising as it does in the first place from an innocent and natural wonder. But the mystery and secrecy with which we meet his frank inquiries cause that child gradually to regard the whole matter in the light of a shameful and blameable tendency, thereby laying for himself the foundation of future neuroses and troubles of all descriptions.

It does not mean that a morbid interest should be encouraged in the child, but simply that enough assistance should be given to make a difficult subject, constantly playing on the child mind, one of ease and therefore of comparative unimportance, that once elucidated will only receive its just and limited share of interest.

Two other more direct and immediate, but still detrimental, results ensue from this. The child first of all loses confidence and faith in the parents to whom he turns in his natural curiosity; indeed, I should think that however well children hide the fact, yet most have lost their trust in their parents by the time they are five or six years

old. As a second result, the parents lose all further influence over the child, except that which comes from enforced obedience, and they must therefore abandon all hope of ever controlling again the youthful mentality entrusted to their care.

Although we appreciate that the energy and interest originally invested in sexual subjects can, and often should, be transferred, diverted, or sublimated on to other, perhaps social, interests, yet we can do no more to assist this transferring of mental energy than provide it with a new and proper path; and it is but courting disaster to believe we can force this change by pouring forth a vain and lengthy string of 'thou shalt not's'. That we should help interests to develop in connection with higher subjects, well and good; but let us beware lest we overestimate the value, if value there be, in forbidding that interest being invested in lower subjects. That way of flinging blame broadcast for tendencies that are not even offences, leaves behind a sense of shame that can never be washed off. It is more often than not the cause of self-consciousness, and of those reticent and secretive dispositions to which we owe so much of the misunderstanding that occurs in the world to-day.

We have, however, to beware of the exclusive interest arising from the teaching of sexual principles apart from all other sciences, for such an interest may well develop into a morbid attitude that, so far from detracting from the power of sexuality, will enhance it; and so we should procure sexual enlightenment, not as a study of its own, but as a small part of a natural science that should be taught in every school and college. We should thus avoid the detrimental effect of knowledge obtained from doubtful sources and against the inculcated principles of education. Does not this want of frankness in connection with sexual subjects lay the foundation for the neurotic troubles occurring in later life, examples of which are so frequently to be found in young married women?

What can we say about the early education that absolutely forces the developing girl child to do violence to its natural instincts, and teaches it to consider this primordial and essential tendency as one to be shunned and regarded as against all moral dictates of modern ethics, except that this education will create an attitude of mind that in later years must be severely jarred and upset by the reversal that takes place when those very tabooed and so-called loathful subjects are reintroduced by a husband who exemplifies the best and highest of mankind to the young and blushing bride?

We have seen once again, though from a new point of view, the truth of the statement that, in order to be of use to the individual, education should be individual. And for this we must extend our study in the hitherto little explored fields of child mentality. We

might note here a slight practical difficulty in recognizing introvert from extrovert characters. For instance, the extrovert may exhibit a considerable amount of reasoning power of which use is constantly being made; but one will find this reasoning of the extrovert is not for the purpose of true decision or deliberation, but is to justify, by means of reason that will concord with general criteria, the impulsive attitude that has already been adopted. Thus does an extrovert attempt to prove the justifiability of his emotional impulsiveness by means of logic and reason. The question is, therefore, not whether a particular individual reasons much or little, but whether such reasoning came first or not.

Having thus identified the type of psychology belonging to an individual, we should next proceed to recognize the general trend of his unconscious processes by means of investigation of reaction formations, symptomatic actions, and dreams. We may here point out that dreams not only show past mental processes, but show present and unconscious thoughts that will take part in the subsequent production of future acts. For instance, a woman who was repressing a normal sexuality dreamt she was in a position which necessitated resisting a man she loved. She saw in that dream a door—which symbolizes a way out of a difficulty—open and disclose a beautiful woman, with whom she went out. This dream, therefore, suggests that homosexuality would be a means of quietening the normal aspirations of that woman. Indeed, it turned out that a fortnight after having this dream, she fell violently in love with a girl whom she had known in an indifferent way for fifteen years.

The further application of such a constructive psychology as has been outlined by Jung to be used in the readaptation of a mentality according to its 'life tendencies' (Jung) is rather problematical as far as child education goes, on account of the infancy of the subject and the element of uncertainty that still clings around its results. But when we have realized the fundamental traits of human character, and the comparatively few ways in which these can be sublimated, we will next attempt to urge and direct a particular child in the paths of sublimation more fitting to its mental attributes. We must never forget, however, that a sublimation cannot in any case be forced, and all that can be done is to open up the most appropriate sublimating paths, and hope the individual will take them.

The correctness and extent of a sublimation is of course controlled by three factors: (1) The strength of the original tendency; (2) The strength of the repression; and (3) The opportunities for sublimation. As regards the first one, the strength of the tendency, we cannot diminish it any way; but what we can do is to prevent its becoming reinforced by undue excitation. As one instance only, I will mention

the kissing of the palms of a child's hands. It has been shown repeatedly that the child's excitability is widespread, in early years at any rate, all over its body, and we can but condemn such excitations as are caused in all innocence and ignorance by overfond parents and nurses. In the same way we should avoid strenuously such housing and sleeping conditions as are found in certain walks of life, and the reading of a kind of literature that will awaken interest in a wrong and morbid way. As regards the strength of the repressing influence, we have noticed that if a repression be too forced and sudden, the sublimation is almost sure to be faulty. So we must try to diminish the intensity of a repression by cultivating more freedom in connection with those reprehensible subjects. Also, we should not be in too much of a hurry; how can we expect a child to become moral all at once, for that is just the very attitude that would precipitate and upset a beginning repression. The providing of suitable forms of sublimation from a careful study of the child's character and tendencies we have already mentioned. One thing more should be said. Forms of sublimation, in order to be successful, should not be too closely related to the repressed material, for the strength of associations between the two will tend to bring up to light that which the individual was trying to repress. On the other hand, the path of sublimation should not be too far, as then the interest and energy bound up in the original and repressed material would not be so easily carried over such a distance, and the means of linking the two would be too precarious to ensure a correct sublimation.

To sum up then, we may say that we should, from an educational point of view, appreciate the importance of the unconscious mind; its characteristics in the different types of psychologies; the significance of the primitive tendencies responsible for the faulty repressions, the signs of which must be recognized; the normal and abnormal developments of child mentality and their influence on adult character; and finally, the necessity for an individual and rational education that will help to close the wrong paths, and open up the right ones for the various sublimating processes essential to human progress and development. Moreover, it is not enough for a few people to become versed in analytical psychology in order to correct in children the faulty influences of an ignorant home education; for it is only when everyone is acquainted with the psychic principles that will help towards the avoiding of developmental errors, that we may cease to do harm and perhaps do a little good.