THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CHARACTER.—II.

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WE have now to consider the general question of the structure of personality, as revealed by the study of pathological cases. All the evidence of pathology points to the necessity of believing in an unconscious form of mental activity, which may in certain conditions show itself in consciousness. The large majority of people who concern themselves with psychopathology believe in the unconscious mind, and look upon consciousness as only one characteristic of mental process in certain conditions, when certain conditions are fulfilled. And in modern times it is important to realise that the unconscious mental is not merely what at one time or another has been conscious and has been driven out of consciousness. Many people think the modern psychoanalyst works in terms of consciousness which becomes unconscious under the influence of repression or mere neglect. We have a distinction of the pre-conscious and the unconscious, where the pre-conscious is not conscious at the moment but capable of becoming conscious under certain conditions of redistribution of attention. Originally the unconscious, for Freud, was those forms of mental activity that were driven out of consciousness by the process of repression and suppression. The general distinction between the unconscious and the pre-conscious corresponded fairly closely to the distinction between repressed and unrepressed memories and mental tendencies. That is not quite an accurate statement of the position at the present time. I do not wish it thought I am closely following Freud. I am not concerned to give an exact statement of his views, but the conclusion that I myself have come to by my own studies of the facts in the light of Freud's teaching. Certain unconscious mental activities were at one time conscious and have later ceased to be accessible to conscious attention through incompatibility with the main personality; but other such activities may never have reached consciousness, partly through incompatibility and partly through lack of adequate stimulus, *e.g.*, certain powers of ethical and æsthetic insight and activity. The unconscious also may include repressing forces themselves. The forces of repression may sometimes be conscious forces. It may be assumed that in the early life of the individual a good deal of conscious repression occurs. But to a great extent such repression is unconscious. There is a part of the mind—the ego-ideal, super-ego, or censorship (these seem synonymous terms with Freud)—which is unconscious itself, and prevents other unconscious mental processes from becoming conscious. There is not only a repressed unconsciousness, but an unconscious repressing of the unconscious. If we consider the

problem of repression in early childhood, we shall see that we are in a false position if we think of the original repression as even mainly conscious, because in that case we are throwing back to the tender years of childhood mental stress and strain far greater than we would expect even the grown mind to stand and bear up against. These repressions in early childhood must themselves have been unconscious rather than conscious. Repressed interests in the other sex, repressed interests in the members of the family, etc., are repressed in an unconscious way. We cannot believe that the individual has actually experienced intense love for one parent, and hatred and jealousy for the other, and then through his own force of character and strength of mind has repressed these tendencies and changed them to something different. The repression must itself be unconscious. Whether in some bygone age there has been conscious repression is a debateable question.

The situation is analogous to that touched on by Aristotle in his doctrine of Responsibility. We praise or blame people, he said, for what they do; they do things because of their character. They are responsible for their character, their character is the result of the building up of habits of action on the basis of circumstances and heredity, and we are thus thrown back to earlier and earlier years for the source of this responsibility. We find that we are led to attribute responsibility most definitely at the earlier stages of character formation, when the child is least able to bear such responsibility. We must avoid such an impression as that, and we may do so by admitting that early repressions may be entirely unconscious. Such unconscious repression is, no doubt, a matter of mental incompatibility, but its implications are far reaching, and have not yet been adequately thought out. Pure theory and the acceptance of this position will cause us to modify the Freudian explanation very considerably, quite apart from actual direct evidence. If we look for evidence through psychoanalysis, we have to keep our minds open to the possibility that the process of psychoanalysis itself may produce conscious changes that were never real occurrences in the child's mind, but rather the product of unconscious potentialities in the child, in interaction with much more recent direct experience. We can assume that in this analysis, if we go back and back, we are eliminating the effect of later experience, but we cannot be sure that apparently sex experiences in early childhood were really in that form at that time, and have not been coloured by more recent experience of a sexual nature. That is one great difficulty in this whole line of thought.

What we can say is that since analysis does help the individual in the way of giving him the opportunity to work out certain tendencies, although the actual conscious experience he enjoys in the course of the analysis may not have been more than merely potential in the beginning, yet there is some potentiality in him that needs this outlet. Each individual has a number of potential selves, and he is enabled to harmonise them with his actual realised experienced self by giving them outlet. The person who is himself not

consciously artistic may in analysis display a great deal of artistic interest, indicating artistic potentialities in his unconscious which have been denied expression under the conditions of his ordinary waking life. There is not only a potentiality for things like that, but a potentiality for things harmful, which might influence his conduct and judgement if allowed an outlet. Take an extreme case of homicidal tendencies; they may be there unconsciously, they may never have shown themselves in consciousness, but yet may have influenced the patient's conduct and have had something to do with feelings of hate and tendencies to destructiveness which he occasionally has had; and in the course of an analysis they may come out more clearly, especially in dreams. He may work clear of this potentiality; having seen it in its full reality, he can, as it were, abjure it more completely. These early tendencies of the mind may be unconscious.

But among these there is a very pronounced tendency which has an important bearing on personality—the tendency to identification. The young child has a strong tendency to identify himself unconsciously with people he is fond of and admires. He takes them into his mind, as it were; the ‘ego-ideal’ or super-ego begins to grow in early years, modelled on the nature of the father or the mother or others of his immediate surroundings. Later on it becomes a more conscious identification. With the school-child there is a great deal of hero worship which plays its part in determining the ego-ideal. Besides this there is laid down in very early years a sense of conscientiousness, which according to some writers is a reaction to inimical feelings. A child may feel not only identified with his father, but may also feel repugnance to his father because he wishes his father out of the way in relation to the mother, and develops towards the father an identification, and also a feeling of hatred. This combination of identification and antagonism is responsible for the beginnings of a feeling of bad conscience. Such is the explanation given by some psychoanalysts of the doctrine of the Atonement—a sense of sin and a need for being at one with God. The conception of God arises out of the earlier feelings towards the father and carries with it the germ of conscientiousness. This form of conscientiousness, which is unconscious conscientiousness, may show itself in mental disease. Later on, one may find such people falling ill of melancholia, and imagining that they have sinned against the Holy Ghost, where analysis, instead of diminishing the feeling, intensifies it. The patient becomes more and more conscientious, and this becomes more intense because it wells up from the unconscious, and may stand in the way of cure. The patient is so conscientious that he feels that he does not deserve to get well. The resistance here is very different from the ordinary resistances we meet with in the course of analysis.

In the psychopathology of personality, a phenomenon which has always bulked large is the dissociation of personality. Pierre Janet's theory of dissociation is the obverse or complement of his theory that the normal

personality is a unitary system of psychophysical tendencies and powers, which may break up into its component parts under certain conditions. And in the earlier history of Freudian doctrine we find Freud explaining the dissociation of personality in terms of mental conflict and repression. Certain parts of the mind split off from the rest because of incompatibility with the main parts. In Freud's recent work, *Das Ich und das Es*, he makes the further suggestion that the foundation of dissociation of the personality may well be looked for in these early tendencies of individuals to identify themselves with different types of character. Such various identifications may not be in full harmony with one another, and tend so to fall apart. The individual may identify himself with Napoleon or the martyrs, or St. Francis, and he certainly has a strong tendency to identify himself with his father and mother. And in cases where these characters are different, especially where there is strife at home, the strife is internalised in him. He takes the family strife into the depths of his own character. There is the lack of at-one-ness which may not be apparent in earlier years, but which may show itself later when he has to choose a career and face the problems of adult life.

The general trend of all psychological discussions of personality is in terms of multiplicity—looking for unity as a result of interaction between the many, instead of regarding the unity as something ultimate. This theory is not a proved fact. We always have before us the opposite possibility that the mind may be a unity from the earliest times, but under the influence of conflict and strife, and the conflicting claims of one's environment, lack of unity is introduced into the personality. The problem to decide in the end is as to which is the more ultimate, unity or multiplicity. The unity of the developed adult mind is to a great extent an acquired unity. But we have further to ask the question whether that acquired unity, the result of training, centres round an ultimate unity or an ultimate multiplicity. Undoubtedly we are multiple as well as unitary, but the feeling of unity is certainly there at every moment of consciousness. Although there is multiplicity there is also unity, and often a person who is alienated from himself and feels 'beside himself,' can only feel 'beside himself' because he is a unity. If he were not a self he would be unable to feel alienated from himself. From day to day our mood changes, we pass through stages of unconsciousness, but we wake up to a feeling of some identity with our past. A materialist would say that this is a simple consequence of the identity of the body. Not so; we pass in the argument to identity of the body from identity of the self.

We can say that nothing in psychopathology forces us to surrender a belief in the unity hypothesis. We cannot say that the unity is proved, but it remains not only a possibility but a probability. A mind is one from the start, but although its aspects then are fewer than they become in later life, and in old age they may seem to diminish, there is the possibility that the self is something beyond the phenomenal, owing its apparent multiplicity to

the conditions of its physical existence, but able in its unity to survive bodily death. We simply do not know. If psychical research could prove the survival of character and personal identity it would greatly increase our belief in the unitary nature of the self. One often finds people saying that researches in personality prove that the mind is not a unity, but those who study these cases closely at first hand are the first to admit that the multiplicity is less fundamental than the unity. Although there may be a break in the memory, so that when the person is in one psychological state he has no access to memories to which in another state he has access, that is not derogatory to the reality of his unity. We observe the same in the most normal person, who finds from day to day the scope of his memory varying. On certain occasions he finds certain memories associated with certain interests very readily accessible to him and others accessible with difficulty or not at all. The fact that we can say these interests are not in harmony with one another in ourselves shows that there is an underlying unity. If we set one desire, ambition, and mood against another, and realise their incompatibility, in that very process we are forming or rather emphasising an underlying unity.

Theoretically, at any rate, all the probabilities are in favour of ultimate unity. We are told to watch a young child and see how slight a unity there is. The child's interest flits from one thing to another, passes from laughter to tears, is ready to forget what has occurred a moment ago, but the fact that he can gradually synthesize these moods and hold in the unity of his consciousness a larger and larger field of psychological tendencies and make it into a system, shows there is something there beyond and at the back of his experience. The experiences do not come together of their own accord and join up into a unity. One can observe plainly the work of association, but as one observes that, one is forced to contrast it with the deeper and more thorough-going forms of unification of the mind, and recognise in spite of our changes that there is and has always been a continuity. If we turn to the animal world we may prefer to say with William James that the only unity is the unity of the "passing thought" that connects what has gone before with what comes after. "Every thought is born an owner and dies owned," to quote James's phrase. That is not convincing. If we start from that we cannot understand the higher unities of the mind. And indeed it seems to me that the results of psychoanalysis itself show an underlying thorough-going unity. The patient's mental development has been distorted, twisted by different forces, conflicting influences, and under analysis he gets free from these influences, and yet there is something left behind—the more normal self. The person becomes more normal because there was a normal unitary self all through. Though there was a tendency to multiplicity, the analysis itself has diminished that. And we might go further and say that even the person who has to spend his last years of life in an asylum in a completely alienated state of mind may hope to regain his freedom and real self at death. Although psychoanalysis

is not capable of undoing the facts of heredity, yet this twisting and strain is a matter of the mind and body rather than of the mind itself.

If the reader has followed what I have been trying to express, he will realise that this is certainly my own view. The perfectly normal mind is in direct relationship to the world about it ; its perceptions and its appreciations of value are direct revelations. It is through stress and strain in the physical organism that it gets a distorted view of things and is kept back from adequate appreciation of beauty and truth. Although the body seems to serve as an instrument to bring the individual into relationship with those realities, it is quite as much something that stands in his way. Difficulties are produced in the body. The body working at its best is an instrument which reveals to him a reality outside, and in doing so it does not make any contribution itself. The person whose brain is working quite normally is not conscious of the different organs of his body. It is often said that the *joie de vivre* of a perfectly healthy normal person is based on organic sensations from the smooth functioning of the body. This is a possibility but by no means a certainty. We are not forced to accept a view like that. The genuine pleasure of being really in touch with things may be a purely mental feeling.

Nothing we can learn from physiology and biology prevents us from believing in mental entities in relation with physical structures. Take an extreme case. Take the case of the feeble-minded, of idiots. There the general doctrine is that it is a deficiency, a lack of certain parts of the brain so that a person is unable to live a full and complete life. Certain ranges of existence are withheld from him. He is unable to pass beyond the most primitive level of morality or intelligence. But the same situation is explicable in terms of a faulty instrument. Through lack of some power of the instrument, other parts of the instrument are not able to function, and so the mind cannot get into touch with the external world. Why a person should be abnormalised in that way is, of course, a serious problem.

While considering the pathological and the normal, we have borne in upon us the parallelism between pathological states and corresponding normal states. Take the higher and lower states of mysticism. There is a form of mystical experience which is pathological as well as one which is pre-eminently normal ; such is the mystical experience of the hysterical, who sees pictures in the clouds, etc. The individual is not in direct communion with ultimate reality, but suffers from a disturbance of the instrument which should bring him in touch with reality. In all true religious experience it looks very much as if we come into touch with the spirit of the universe within ourselves rather than outside ourselves. Each one of us is in direct relationship through his own subconscious with the divine, and our view of religion is blurred and obscured by our complexes, the twists in our character, and the unfortunate experiences that disturb our belief. That is the reason why analysis and autognosis will increase a person's power of experiencing genuine religious

feeling. A patient will tell one that after a time in the course of his psychotherapy he has reacquired the power of prayer that he had lost.

Here, again, one is always confronted with the alternative possibility that religion is an infantile thing, primitive, undeveloped, and in analysis a person is taken back to his childhood, to primitive credulity, to the trustfulness of the young child which is undeveloped and needs to be corrected by experience. Surely we can allow for that, and admit that there is infantilism in religion as experienced by the ordinary man which stands in the way of his clear religious vision, and yet that true religion itself dates back to the earliest years. It is the trustfulness and faith of the young child—call it primitive credulity, if you like, not merely ideomotor action but a direct awareness. The child is aware of something beyond itself even in its earliest years. That may later on through experience become repressed, and with analysis may come back. I am strongly against any criticism of psychoanalysis from the point of view of the risk of its endangering religious belief. When carried out by inexperienced or otherwise unsuitable people there may be some danger; but if carried out with due regard to the needs of the situation, there is none.