The Journal of the American Medical Association

Published Under the Auspices of the Board of Trustees

VOL. LXIII, No. 22

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

NOVEMBER 28, 1914

SERVICES TO BE EXPECTED FROM THE PSYCHANALYTIC MOVEMENT IN THE PREVENTION OF INSANITY *

JAMES J. PUTNAM, M.D.

BOSTON

I understand that the problem before us for discussion is, How can we best help people to preserve their mental health? and that my part in it is to answer the particular question, What contribution can psychoanalysis make toward this end?

I shall confine my remarks almost exclusively to this one point of prevention, resisting the temptation to wander at length over the wider field of the mental treatment of patients who have actually shown distinct symptoms of one or another form of the psychoses.

It is, however, germane to say that inasmuch as psychoanalysis is best definable, from the therapeutic point of view, as an educational method of high value, and since, under all circumstances, it exerts its usefulness largely through helping the patient to become a more thoughtful, more rational, and more mature person, the aims of prevention and the aims of treatment are to a great extent the same.

It is also proper to point out that the psychoanalytic literature contains very encouraging reports, indicating not only that the temperamental tendency to depressive states, but even the tendency to recurrent manic-depressive outbreaks, can sometimes be affected favorably by this treatment; and that there is some evidence that patients with dementia praecox in its initial stage can occasionally be benefited in the same manner.

It is my confident belief that the contribution of the psychoanalytic movement to prevention is to become an important one, but that it will make itself felt not so much directly, through the treatment of individual patients, as indirectly and gradually through the stimulus which these searching studies into the nature and history of human motives must exert on parents and educators, in proportion as the principles discovered or emphasized by them become an integral part of psychologic doctrine.

To assert that it is possible to prevent or cure a psychosis by mental influence is equivalent to asserting the psychogenic origin of these diseases. To maintain this is not to deny that special toxic influences, general disorders of metabolism, or abnormalities of cerebral structure or development may play an impor-

tant part as predisposing causes, or even that the influence which these causes exert in one or another case may have been the controlling influence, *sine qua non*.

It is, however, certain that even where this is so, the mechanism of the psychosis, as a mental phenomenon and as the sign of the occurrence of a mental process having a more or less clearly definable aim and meaning, ought to be specifically studied, and that in order to do this thoroughly the physician should have made himself aware of the patient's inner life, both as an individual and as a member and representative of a social group or social groups.

The psychoses and psychoneuroses are not to be regarded (psychologically) as mere misfortunes or mere accidents, but as phenomena that represent definite, instinctive attempts at readjustment and the securing of some workable equilibrium, on the part of persons whose actual adaptation to their environmental conditions had proved unsatisfactory in the face of this or that special strain, and whose powers of readjustment had shown themselves inadequate to the task of restoring the disturbed balance in any better fashion. This view is in harmony with that of Meyer, Hoch, Bleuler and others who have stood for a partially psychogenic origin of the psychoses, and have recognized that the constitutional and temperamental make-up of each patient's personality is partially responsible for his illness, or, as I should say, for the method which he instinctively adopts to reassert himself. The psychoses form, in short, one more illustration of the general principle that illness may be classified as the manifestation of efforts toward a certain sort of health.

It is no valid argument against this view to say that the outcome of these efforts, from the clinical and social standpoint, seems anything but desirable. The "desirability" depends, as a rule, only on the satisfaction of the patient's unconscious cravings; but in this sense his illness may secure him something which, with one portion of his nature, he may be said to wish for.

There are times when, from this point of view, a fit of anger fills, psychologically, a useful purpose—then, namely, when it makes the rational thinking which the angry person does not wish to use, or cannot use, seem so impossible that no one asks him to attempt it. Similarly, when a wife's hysteria gains her the attentions of her otherwise inattentive husband, it fills, from the standpoint of her deeper longings, an important place. And the process is, for her, all the more "desirable" if it works without any conscious acquiescence on her part.

* Read before the Section on Nervous and Mental Diseases at the Sixty-Fifth Annual Session of the American Medical Association, Atlantic City, N. J., June, 1914.

It is believed by those who accept the explanation offered by psychoanalysts¹ that the difference in mechanism between the psychoses and the psychoneuroses is one (from the psychologic standpoint) mainly of degree. Leaving wholly aside the problem of physical or chemical influences (not by any means as unimportant, but as not germane to this particular discussion) it may be said that in the case of the psychoses the patient's emotional interest and attention is engrossed in his complexes to such an extent that he becomes submerged in them. The "gain" to him through this process is to be reckoned, as already stated, in terms of the fulfilment of an instinctive but unacknowledged attempt to escape from an intolerable emotional situation, or else to satisfy an unconscious craving.²

It is of no importance, as a counter argument, to say that this complex process of readjustment (the details of which I do not attempt to indicate here) would never have taken place but for the presence of a physical "disease-process" in his brain or elsewhere.

Let this be proved by all means if it be possible; or let us admit, as with Hoch, that the brain-cells may be undeveloped. We are not questioning or studying these facts, but are studying only the mechanism of the patient's attempts to find an equilibrium of a new sort.

This principle that the psychoses and neuropsychoses come into existence because they serve a purpose, has been discussed so often that I ought perhaps to assume it as granted, and pass on; but its recognition is so important for the prevention of the psychoses, that a few words of further explanation may not be out of place, the more so that the doctrine here at stake is distinctly an outcome of the psychoanalytic movement.

It seems at first sight almost impossible to get away from the patient's conscious point of view, and to deplore with him and his friends, as if for a misfortune without mitigation, the signs of an oncoming mania or depression or paranoia or dementia praecox. But if, through the aid of knowledge and insight, one can succeed in placing oneself in the depths of the patient's mind, at the center of his vain struggles to make the conditions around him square with his desires, even though these be immature and narrow, it becomes possible to see that his illness may have furnished him a real way out of his perplexity, even if not the one that we, looking on, or he, if possessed of full conscious insight, might have wished to see adopted. The justice of this conception becomes clearer if one scrutinizes, to begin with, the psychologic significance of one's own fits of temporary depression, of the "blues." Whatever else the "blues" accomplish, they certainly afford us the chance to bury ourselves in an ocean of self-engrossment, self-pity or self-commendation in which we may become for the time being almost as thoroughly immersed as a dementia praecox patient in his delusions. The difference lies in the power of emergence and its special causes.

1. See especially, as making clear the grounds for this mode of reasoning, Jung's now classical study of dementia praecox (published in English as one of the monographs of the Jour. of Nerv. and Ment. Dis.). Freud's investigation of the Schreber case of paranoia (Jahrbuch für Psychoanalytische u. Psychopathologische Forschungen, iii, 9), Abraham's study of manic-depressive insanity (Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse, ii, 302. See also the brief but excellent study of the psychoses by Bernard Hart entitled "The Psychology of Insanity").

2. The term "unconscious," as here used, indicates the absence of selfconscious awareness only.

I have recently followed with great interest the gradual transition of a reactive outbreak of depressive self-pity, excited by a misfortune in business, into as severe and prolonged and typical a melancholia as one could wish to see.³

It occasionally happens that a patient with obsessive fears is intelligent enough (after a certain amount of treatment) and frank enough to see and say that in some respects he feels better satisfied with the prospects offered by his dissociation than by those offered by health; then, namely, when to be well means the facing of situations and renunciations that he is unwilling to contemplate. The only alternative recourse seems to be suicide. As a rule, of course, the logic of the process is concealed from his conscious view. Such persons are somewhat like children, who learn to create, in fancy, a separate realm of feeling and fancy, to which they may retreat⁴ for the private enjoyment of emotions in which the other elements of their nature do not permit them openly to indulge. In this realm of fancy the child may become for the time a king, or a being to whom all sorts of excesses of imagination are permissible. If, however, he stays in this realm too long, the return into a life of relative reality⁵ and social responsibility may be attended with difficulty. The justification of this comparison only becomes clear when (as sometimes in dementia praecox or paranoia) it is possible to get at the patient's delusions from their deeper and, to him, better side.

What such a child does for a brief space, when he withdraws into this delightful world of fancy, peopled, it may be, by beings from some other sphere,⁶ the paraphrenic (i. e., "dissociated" or schizophrenic) patient may—in the terms of this important theory—be said permanently to do. And, *mutatis mutandis*, similar statements may be made for manic-depressive and for paranoid patients. Such persons may, namely, become in different degrees and ways, so preoccupied with the details of their "autistic" life, even when, to the untrained eye, this does not appear to be the case; they may get so immersed in their fantasies and day-dreams that they lose touch, to a greater or less extent, with the life of relative reality. During a period of many years I have had the chance to watch a young girl⁷ who, although still able and even brilliant in certain intellectual lines, has been gradually sinking into such a life of fantasy, in which secret marriages, pregnancies and miscarriages play prominent parts.

We are too apt to define each other's tendencies in terms of misfortune, weakness, deficiency and lack. This procedure is misleading. There is really nothing negative in nature. If a plot of ground does not grow grass, it runs to weeds, but the weeds are as positive in their nature as the grass and often more resistive to destruction.

3. No psychoanalytic treatment was attempted or would have been practicable. After the attack is fairly over it should be used for the prevention of a second attack.

4. Compare Bleuler's *Das Autistische Denken*, Jahrb. für Psychoanalytische und Pathologische Forschungen, iv, 1.

5. I say "relative reality," because even the most conventional and usual sort of life gets its form and color from the imagination of each individual. Each person's world is, in part, his personal world alone.

6. I have a patient at present in mind, of good intelligence, but small in stature and timid in temperament, who suffers both from depression and from compensatory ideas of courage. All his life long he has gained great satisfaction from day-dreams of power and prominence. Even at the present time, when he is about 22 years old, he occasionally imagines himself to be a supernatural being, wandering through space in the skies or "talking with God," and dreams of driving a four-horse sleigh or piloting a swift boat into that unknown world from which, in reality, he shrinks.

7. She entirely refused treatment.

Life may often be said to consist in the gradual (at times apparently sudden) abandonment of equilibriums which had sufficed well enough up to a certain point, in favor of new and more insistent equilibriums that loom up as representing, as the case may be, a more advanced (sublimated) or a more regressive (infantile) but seemingly more stable stage of evolution or of evolutionary tendency.

It is in the terms of this process that the history of the psychoses should be written.

It is important to recognize that this substitution of new equilibriums for old ones often concerns, at least in the first instance, not the whole personality, but only a part of it, and that in proportion as this happens the individual loses his unity and becomes relatively dissociated.

Also, and by the same token, the process may go on to a great extent without the active or even passive intervention of the consciousness and the constructive imagination, although these powers might, if properly trained to the work, be counted on to lend powerful assistance to the maintenance of the mental unity and to the binding of the forces of the past (which in a certain sense still lives) into one coherent whole with those of the self-foreshadowing future.

These two facts—that the mentally unbalanced person is “dissociated,” i. e., subject to two or more sets of strongly conflicting motives, and that this happens without the intervention of consciousness—which, however, might intervene with profit, at least in a certain proportion of the cases—are to be considered as of fundamental significance.

It is the function of psychoanalysis to see that consciousness comes to its rights and is given its due share in the determination of the result.

I have, however, been led by my experience to believe that patients with oncoming psychoses, several of whom I have watched with interest throughout the gradual development of their illnesses, are very tender plants and need to be handled by psychoanalysts (as by therapists of all sorts) with extreme care.

I also sympathize heartily with the view expressed by several experienced observers,⁸ that similar care, as well as great patience and friendliness, are essential, if one wishes to do good and avoid harm in dealing with neurotic children by the trenchant weapon of psychoanalysis.

But to say this is to broach the subject of prevention; and before speaking on that point I wish to discuss a little further the general claims of mental influences to be considered as both causative and curative, in theory at least.

It is obvious that the questions which are before us for consideration would never have been asked unless the belief was somewhat prevalent that the degree of liability of any given person to fall a prey to mental disorders of one or another sort was in a measure dependent on the mental influences to which he had been previously subjected. As a matter of fact, I suppose that all physicians tacitly assume this proposition to be proved, if not, indeed, self-evident—even those who would think that we ought to look for the final causes of the psychoses in brain-changes, of toxic or degenerative or hereditary origin, and who would reject the formal assertion that a purely psychogenic basis for these disorders was conceivable.

But if it makes even some difference as regards his liability to insanity, as to what mental environment a person has been subjected to, then several important inferences follow:

In the first place, if the psychoses are even partially of mental origin—i. e., “psychogenic”—who can say how far this may or might be true?

An adequate explanation, satisfactory to all disputants, of the exact etiology and nature of these serious mental disorders will, to be sure, never be furnished until the time arrives when the nature of the relationship between the body and the mind is expressible in clear and comprehensive terms.

This is largely a philosophical problem,¹⁰ and as such cannot be discussed here. I venture nevertheless, to assert that but few students of philosophy would to-day get warm over the particular difficulty that confronts us and that forms a real stumbling block to a certain proportion of physicians. Most such students would surely encourage us to believe that a psychogenic etiology is, theoretically, just as admissible as a physical or an hereditary or a chemical etiology.¹¹ But when one says “psychogenic etiology,” one should be understood as including all that that term implies to the man who uses it. If he believes that all mental phenomena have their physical aspect or that they are hereditary, then “psychogenic” means for him, in so far, “physical,” etc. If he does not believe this, then “psychogenic” means for him purely mental.

Both practical and scientific considerations justify us in accepting as genuine any causes which *seem* to lead to these disorders, provided only that they are not reducible to simpler, more manageable terms.

One thing seems to me certain: While it is true that those who study the psychoses as diseases of the brain can count on the powerful aid of chemical and histologic tests, it is equally true that those who, on the other hand, prefer to emphasize the psychogenic aspect of this etiologic problem have the great advantage of placing themselves squarely in the position of the patient who is striving to find himself and to realize his destiny on the battle-ground of social life.

But I pass, now, from the consideration of the mechanism of the psychoses and the needs of the distinctly neurotic child to the subject of preventive education in the stricter sense, as applicable to children at large, whether at home or at school and whether sick or well; and I attempt again to answer the question, What contribution has psychoanalysis to offer.

As I have already indicated, this contribution will perhaps always be mainly an indirect one. I propose nothing so insensate as that parents, or even teachers, should practice psychoanalysis; but I maintain that this branch of medicine has something to offer to parents, more to teachers, and a good deal to the family physician. All these classes of persons need to have their own points of view reformed before they attempt to form the character of the child. They need a wider comprehension than that which has been current hitherto, as to what the psychologic nature of the child is, and what his purposes and his dangers are, as expressed in terms of his conflicts, his con-

8. Provided that his disorder is of one of the types here in question.

9. Compare Internationale Ztschr. f. Aestz. Psychoanal.

10. For the most recent discussion of this problem, from the points of view of philosophy and physical science, see the Concept of Consciousness, by Prof. Edwin Holt, Harvard University.

11. This applies even to the psychoses of periodical recurrence and relatively long duration. It is hard to explain these periodic recurrences on any hypothesis. But it is hard also to explain the recurrences of the seventeen-year locust pests.

cealed and repressed thoughts, feelings and desires, and his so often misused imagination; and they need to have this knowledge on the basis of a thorough acquaintance with the psychology of human nature in general, as gained through clinical research.

Needless to say I do not claim that psychoanalysts have, at present, surpassing claims to recognition as physicians, educators or parents. The qualities required for serving in these capacities are numerous, and those which nature and instinct provide may, at their best, be more valuable than those gained through any kind of training whatsoever. No innate capacities are, however, so good but that they can be made still better by study and by knowledge.

In the first place, I think our current standards of conduct, and of thought as related to conduct, inadequately reflect the best conceptions of the ultimate goal of education and of life. Of course there are vast numbers of persons to whom this proposition is not applicable to any practical extent, and the proportion of these to whom it does not apply is doubtless particularly large among educators.

I presume it will hardly be disputed that the kind of person who most completely fulfils his destiny is he who looks on himself not only as a private and independent individual, but also as at once a member and a representative of the community in which he lives, then of a widening series of communities, and eventually of an ideal and all-comprehensive community. This proposition was long ago made the basis of the educational system of Froebel¹² which should be accepted as offering the best prophylactic method at our command, applicable to all children, though its influence might easily go for nothing unless reinforced by that of the child's environment and home.

But although definitions of this sort are generally accepted as indicating theoretically a suitable scheme of human opportunity and obligation, yet the observation of human conduct leads to the conclusion that the sentiments corresponding to them do not exert the thoroughgoing influence that one might look for. Obviously, these sentiments are but imperfectly accepted by some portion of the minds of most men. The very prevalence of the psychoneurotic illnesses and of the corresponding defects of character and temperament from which all men suffer in some measure, indicates that this is true. For many of these forms of illness, as well as many of the defects of character, are largely based on the self-assertion of the individual in the narrower sense, with his demand for personal "rights," and his (largely infantile, and thus selfish) longings and cravings, as against the assertion of his broader, his ideal self, recognizant rather of obligations to the community and of capabilities for usefulness than of rights.

I blame no one for this situation, and least of all do I bring an indictment against nervous invalids as a class, most of whom are handicapped and narrowed only by virtue of a necessity of development or evolution, against which they may have contended with all the force and light at their command. But the facts are so; and if it be asked what classes of persons it is that most often, even under conditions of the severest strain, escape the toils of invalidism, and of the sense of isolation that goes with it, it may fairly be said that they comprise, first, the persons of high

grade such as I have just described,¹³ who are able thoroughly to learn the lesson of "sublimation," perhaps because they were so "set" by nature and so favored by their environment that they could learn it easily; next, those who are so constituted—whether by inheritance or by training—that they fit adequately into the conditions by which they find themselves encompassed, and are not hampered by the visions of unattainable ideals.

It will be understood, of course, that I would classify as high-grade not only those persons whose native powers of reason and intuition, unhampered by serious defects, have been such as to enable them to grasp and define the doctrine of loyalty in its most highly developed and rational form, but all persons who are genuinely loyal to such ideals as they see. It is, in fact, this quality of genuineness that is controlling and indispensable as a factor in education and in life.

It may be urged that psychoanalysis does not take the cultivation of social ideals as an end for which it should directly strive. Technically, this is true. But psychoanalysts know well the evils that attend the overassertion of personal desires, cultivated too exclusively in and for themselves, and the importance of the opposite course follows by inference. The primary task of the psychoanalyst is to remove handicaps to progress, but only in so far as these give rise to painful conflicts in the mind. They can, however, see and should endorse the schemes of education by which these handicaps are best avoided.

Doctrines of this sort cannot, obviously, be preached to young children, either at home or school, with any prospect of considerable benefit. If too strongly reminded, even of their social obligations and opportunities, children are likely either to react by a revolt, or to develop a hypocritical tendency, both of which results indicate the activity of that very repressive and dissociative tendency which is so objectionable.

On the other hand, teachers, parents and physicians can appreciate these principles, testing the genuineness of their beliefs, if necessary, by psychoanalytic methods, and through them strong influences of the best sort can be brought to bear on the children under their charge. The best teachers do this already, but the background of intelligent cooperation should become more effective.

The steady progress toward sublimation of those individuals whose developmental tendencies are of the best sort, seems to indicate that they instinctively cultivate (in modes conforming to their age), even from the moment of their birth, the powers and pleasures which seem most personal and private, with reference to a social outcome which is soon seen to imply a loyalty to communities or social groups that exist for them only in an ideal sense;¹⁴ while those who fail to instinctively seek this outcome are apt to exhibit, in a negative sense, a dim recognition of the binding force of these social obligations, by developing tendencies

13. This statement might be considered as misleading, but it is difficult to cover every contingency in a brief space. I do not, of course, mean to deny that nervous invalidism is to be found, perhaps to a considerable extent, among persons devoting themselves unselfishly to the public welfare. Of course, among persons of this class, as among others, innate differences of endurance are found, and specific tendencies of a neurotic sort may happen to develop. What I mean to say is that in so far as the ability to lose oneself in one's job, whatever this may be, acts as a steadying and wholesome influence, this influence is likely to be more far reaching in proportion as the job in question enlists tendencies of genuine disinterestedness, and makes it possible to put aside considerations of purely personal, as contrasted with social, interest.

14. Compare Royce's *Philosophy of Loyalty*, and numerous other publications by the same writer.

12. Froebel: *The Education of Man*; see also *Report on the Kindergarten* by Susan E. Blow and others.

which are positively asocial or antisocial in their significance.

Even the study of the sex life finds its most important bearing in its accentuation of the fact that man belongs to society in a sense deeper than commonly appears; that the family and, in general terms, the group should be considered as the unit, rather than the individual.

We ought to work for the maintenance of those educational systems and principles that help children first to feel and then to see that every man is most truly himself as an independent agent when he feels himself bound to merge his private interests in the interests of persons and causes outside of himself. But this tendency should go, in word and conduct, no further than it is expressive of a genuine sentiment.

Social sentiments of this better sort and the conduct based on them should not be regarded as implying standards seldom to be reached, but rather standards to which many persons might measurably attain. Children, especially, are natural idealists and respond to appeals which adults often dismiss as idle.

As illustrative of the kind of service that education can sometimes render, even to very young children, through planting the seeds of the broader sense of social obligations which is so favorable to mental solidarity and health and so hostile to the dissociation that is brought about by repression I will mention an observation, superficially trivial, but suggestively important.

A small child, who had fallen into habits of theft, became strongly captivated by the idea, which was carefully presented to him, that he could take "with his eyes," instead of with his hands, the things that he longed to appropriate, and thus gain, ideally, the satisfaction of possession, reinforced by the gratification of satisfying a dim social ideal, although obliged to renounce the pleasure of exclusive ownership,¹⁵ with its denial of the social principle. Subsequent developments indicated that this discovery, which appealed, perhaps, primarily, to his imagination only, helped to effect a real change of temperament.

The educational system that has elaborated most thoroughly the methods of inducing or emphasizing this community sentiment as a goal of progress and has placed them on a practical footing for children between 4 and 6 years old, is undoubtedly the kindergarten system of the great thinker and educator Friedrich Froebel. Kindergartens do not by any means always come up to his ideals, but one cause of this lies in the failure of parents and their advisers to recognize the part which this system aims theoretically to play, and in their failure to give an adequate support to those who are working toward this end.

It is, however, not enough to admit the importance of a general preparatory training of this sort, even if it could be supposed that its principles were to be emphasized through the discipline of the home.

Each child has his own special needs, to be met by appreciative sympathy, direction and correction, and these needs are to be best understood when they are studied in the light of a knowledge of those to whom the tendencies to repression, dissociation and ambivalence have gone on to a more or less excessive degree.

A certain amount of repression, dissociation and ambivalence seems to be an inevitable attendant of competitive existence; but it has not been appreciated

until recently at what an early stage in the child's life these tendencies may appear. It is true that, with the majority of children, neither repression nor dissociation, nor the tendency to primary or reactive emotional excess that leads to these results, is developed to any very objectionable extent. Children of the best sort, no matter how childlike and, for a time, immature their traits may be, appear to be marked by a characteristic quality that stamps every act as belonging in part to a maturer future of which it may be said to be prophetic, while, perhaps on that very account, it appears also to belong peculiarly to the present moment.

Nevertheless, the pitfalls into which so many children actually stumble (not so much because they are degenerate in the sense of having progressive brain defects, as because their power of adaptation is insufficient for the requirements of life in a given environment) should be recognized as standing open for even the most broadly adaptable child. The earliest years of all children are years of self-engrossment, the finding of themselves in the sensations that attend their reflex acts, their impulses, the recognition of their powers, desires and fears, and as reflected in the attention of their parents. And this period is beset from the outset with the danger that these new-found gratifications and excitements will be taken too exclusively in and for themselves.

The engrossment of these primary, primitive and elemental pleasures — which soon become modified by the comparisons which children institute between themselves and others, and the instructive discovery of their capacity for compensations and over-compensations — is then more or less superseded by the engrossments of their powers of fantasy, through which the unpleasant realities of the social life, for which they are still unprepared, can be shoved off for a time, in the interest of a more unified life of imagination.

Hand in hand with this tendency comes the recognition of the possibility of repressing what is too distressing, coupled with that of preserving the pleasurable aroma even of excitements that might be reckoned painful.

And here begins the double life of which every child lover should be able to see the traces and the dangers, and also, it should be said, the possibilities of added usefulness.

Children outgrow, it is true, vast numbers of habits which they are tempted to adopt in these earlier years, and it is as objectionable to see signs of permanent mischief in incidental tendencies as it is to overlook their psychologic significance. One may be trustful, but should none the less be watchful.

The principal dangers to which parents are exposed are of a twofold sort. First, they may fail to get any adequate idea of the process which is going on in the child's mind. Next, they may fail to recognize that each child, at each stage of his existence, is instinctively trying to construct a species of unified world, and is using therefor a set of symbolisms which must, perforce, be based on the sensations which he gets from his own efforts and functions, however foreign and trivial, or even revolting, the language of these symbolisms may seem to the adult.

Finally, they may let the desire to seek their own gratification (even though unconsciously) stand in the way of the best interests of the child.

This latter danger is important and familiar and although not difficult to understand is very difficult to

15. I am not attempting here a complete explanation of theft-habits, certain roots of which have been shown by psychoanalysis to be very deeply rooted in infantile instincts.

avoid. The love of the parent for the child usually means great devotion; but this is too often given for the sake of a return in kind, and it then partakes of the character of self-love, or mirror love. This sort of devotion fetters the child instead of making him more free, whereas really disinterested love increases the child's independence by arousing in him a corresponding disinterestedness on his part, in a form suitable to his age.

The parent should be a bridge over which the child may pass to a social existence of a wider sort, carrying habits and tendencies of loyalty and service, and feeling within himself a foreshadowing sense of the larger community of which he is to become a part. But, instead, it too often happens that the father or the mother, by dint of the very exclusiveness and intensity of their own affection and the fascination of its exhibition, creates or intensifies a similar exclusiveness in the child's mind, and thus chains him to a set of private gratifications which become sensuous and exacting in proportion as they are asocial. The "father-complex" and "mother-complex" have played with good reason a large part in psychoanalytic writing, as in life.¹⁶ Repeatedly have I seen lives that should have been eminently happy, threatened with unhappiness through influences like those which I have outlined.

Another important principle which every one should know is that the fantasies and desires of children, even when their object is something which to the adult seems insignificant or unworthy, have meanings which *come near* to being good and useful meanings, and may by chance be transformed by good management into something useful and creative.

If the old saying is true, that the highwayman makes often a good turnkey, then there must have been a time when a dose of prevention would have been in place for him. And the same is the case with children. The slightly neurotic or imaginative child who is bound, at each phase of his life, to try his hand at building an imaginary world of interest, of beauty, and, above all, of power, will do this or symbolize his attempts to do so, by every means that lie at hand.

The intelligent parent will seek to see through the act or the symbol, and to appreciate the child's meanings. These meanings should be divined through real sympathy, based on close but intelligent intimacy, and should be taken at their best value.¹⁷ For it may depend on the turn of this straw whether a desirable outcome finally emerges or whether the act or interest that might have served a good turn as a symbol and then have been replaced, becomes, through repression, the center of a hampering craving. The tendency to relive, in later years, the fantasy-life of self-indulgent childhood may arise from either of two sorts of causes; an excessive preference for the self-indulgent pleasures first exhibited at an early period when another and better choice might perhaps have been made with almost equal willingness; and a tendency to regression toward these renounced but simpler pleasures, showing itself under conditions of fatigue and strain from which every person seeks instinctively to escape. The child should be protected so far as practicable from both of these dangers, first through having ample inducements offered him for making the best

choice, and, next, through being taught to do well and easily the tasks that he is to be called on to do.

In other words, his incitements to the best choice (as, especially, through the imitation of living and historic characters, and through examples afforded by literature), his adaptations and his adaptability should all be held in mind, and with special reference to the specific sorts of dangers that he must encounter.

The imagination of the young child is a weapon of immense power for evil or for good. It can be turned to the support of the reason or to the intensification of sense cravings. But on this great subject I cannot enter here.

The supplementary addition which I propose to this educational scheme is one that in a certain sense restores the ambivalent principle, as one that when rightly understood is broader than even the principle of independence and power, as commonly conceived. The best man—or child—is not alone a single individual; he is likewise a member of a community, or series of communities, eventually of an ideal community of some sort to which he feels that his loyalty is due and to which he becomes rebound. Similarly, just in proportion to the degree that a man makes himself independent of narrowing ties such as imply slavish dependence, whether based on fear or favor, or longing for approbation and attention, or jealousy or envy, and becomes in that sense independent, he becomes once more dependent on the obligations imposed by his own good qualities and powers, according to the principle hinted at by the term "*noblesse oblige*."

If such a person frees himself from the objectionable and hampering features of his childhood, he should retain, nevertheless, and all the more, the best that his childhood stands for, thus expressing, in his life, all that "religion" literally taken, indicates, namely, a rebinding accompanied by a setting-free. Nothing less than this sort of ambivalence should be, I think, the goal of education for the normal and the neurotically disposed child. This sort of rebinding which should show itself able to meet, at least fairly well, any ordinary test of genuineness is also a goal aimed at theoretically by the educational system of Froebel. It is, of course, not to be supposed that a couple of years even in the best kindergartens, much less in any given school which bears that name, is to be reckoned as a sure prevention against subsequent psychoses, any more than it is to be supposed that every person of the type to which I have above alluded as the best in kind, is to be considered as, *ipso facto*, beyond the reach of these dangers. The causative factors ordinarily involved are far too numerous for that, but one reason that I rate so high the possibilities of this system is that while it aims to use all obvious means for the development of character without needlessly calling the conscious attention of the child to this aim, it recognizes also the importance of taking some measures to prepare the child, through very simple investigations into the results of his own acts,¹⁸ for making later, even if still only in a psychal form, that kind of rational self-scrutiny which psychoanalysts have learned to look on as of so much value.

One of the most obvious fruits of this rational self-scrutiny is that—contrary to the usual belief—it is destructive of that morbid, emotional self-scrutiny that goes by the name of introspection and that shows

16. Compare papers by Abraham and by Jung in the *Jahrb. f. Psychoanal. u. Psychopathol. Forsch.*, 1, 110, 155.

17. Compare R. L. Stevenson's *Lantern Bearers*.

18. Compare *The Kindergarten: A Report* by Susan E. Blow and others, 1913.

itself so often as a sign and a promoter of the neurotic disposition. I am not wedded to any one plan of education, however, and should welcome any scheme that could show evidences of its capacity to develop character, self-reliance and the recognition of community obligations.

Let it not be supposed, however, that this claim can, without further inquiry, be made for any and every system that makes a great point, with quasi-military vigor, on the overcoming of difficulties just for their own sake. This has its value, but it is a value that can easily be estimated too highly. After all, it is the personality and previous training of the teacher that are the elements of chief importance. But every such teacher should have been taught to accept a hint from the experience of the psychoanalyst, and to use, not only general but specific means to make his personality eventually unnecessary to his pupils. The importance of following this rule was pointed out by the able Mme. de Staël, as a consideration worthy the attention of every legislator.

GENETIC FACTORS IN ONE HUNDRED CASES OF PSYCHONEUROSIS*

DONALD GREGG, M.D.

BROOKLINE, MASS.

The object of this paper is not to present any new genetic or etiologic factors for the psychoneuroses, or to claim any one genetic factor as the origin of these nervous conditions. It is merely to present an analysis of 100 cases which have been studied to see what genetic factors have been found to occur. Theories can be met and controverted, or strengthened and established, only with the help of statistical studies. What are needed to-day are statistics of cases by hundreds and thousands. This is my excuse for presenting the following study:

The cases were gathered from the records of the out-patient department of the Boston Psychopathic Hospital. Here the clinic has been a steadily increasing one since its opening nearly two years ago, until it now numbers over 100 new cases and over 400 old cases a month. The cases are of three classes: patients discharged from the hospital that are subsequently followed up in the out-patient department; patients brought to clinic by various organizations; by court order; by charity agencies, etc., and cases of patients coming of their own initiative, alone or with friends. Over 1,500 new cases have been seen, and of these over 100, or about 7 per cent. of them, have been diagnosed as psychoneuroses and include cases of hysteria, psychasthenia, neurasthenia, etc.

METHOD

First, the statistics dealing with 100 cases as a whole will be presented, next, an analysis of various groups will be considered, and, lastly, conclusions will be drawn.

In the 100 cases studied, 57 patients were males and 43 females. The patients varied in age from 14 to 58 years. The average age was 34+. By decades the patients were distributed as follows: in the first decade, none; in the second decade, 10; in the third

decade, 28; in the fourth decade, 36; in the fifth decade, 17; and in the sixth decade, 9 cases. Thus, two-thirds of the patients were from 21 to 40 years of age. Thirty-five patients were of native stock and 60 were foreign-born, or of foreign parentage. In 5 cases the stock was undetermined.

Ten years ago, Dubois wrote: "Nervousness arises from two factors: the one, essential and variable, viz.: natural psychopathic tendencies (hereditary or acquired in fetal life); the other, contingent and polymorphic—viz.: provocative agents."

An analysis of the cases for possible genetic factors showed that in fifty-six cases congenital causes seemingly existed, for the psychoneurosis subsequently developed; that is, psychopathic tendencies of an hereditary nature, or acquired in fetal life. In 44 per cent. of the cases, no such congenital causes were found. This absence of evidence of psychopathic tendency in these forty-four cases is probably explained by one or more of the following reasons: first, the large number of these patients (70 per cent.) that were of foreign stock, which means, in a majority of instances, inability to give intelligent and inclusive family histories, or histories of early life; second, the natural tendency of individuals to hide evidence of any trace of familial inferiority or deterioration; third, the impossibility in a large clinic of taking a detailed and thorough history in all cases.

The fifty-six cases considered to have probable congenital psychopathic tendencies, were grouped as follows:

1. Luetic stock: those showing evidence of congenital syphilis.
2. Insane stock: those giving a history of insanity in their families.
3. Alcoholic stock: those having alcoholic forebears.
4. Neurotic stock: those having "nervous" forebears, some of whom possibly were insane.
5. Tuberculous stock.
6. Miscellaneous stock: those having a history of cancer, asthma, etc., among their ancestors. Statistics of these groups are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1.—FIFTY-SIX CASES OF PSYCHONEUROSIS GROUPED ACCORDING TO CHARACTER OF ANCESTRY

	No. of Cases	Sex,		Per Foreign Stock, Cent.	Age, Yrs.	Symptom Age	Duration of Symptoms
		F.	M.				
Luetic	3	0	3	33	19.7	12.7	7.
Insane	14	7	7	35	35.7	27.2	8.5
Alcoholic	4	1	3	50	30.5	30.	5.5
Neurotic	24	18	6	50	38.4	28.9	9.45
Tuberculous	3	3	2	60	40.8	36.2	4.6
Miscellaneous ..	6	4	2	100	39.6	32.5	7.1
Av. or total....	56	33	23	51	34.1	28.4	6.1

In this table, the most interesting point shown is the variation in age at which symptoms occurred in the different groups. It seems logical to assume that the more potent the congenital factor, the earlier symptoms may be expected to appear, or inversely, that the earlier symptoms appear, the more potent the congenital factor involved. Assuming that the symptom age bears some relation to the potency of the genetic factors involved in the production of the psychoneuroses, among the congenital factors luetic, insane, neurotic, and alcoholic defects of forebears are potent in the order named.

* Read before the Section on Nervous and Mental Diseases at the Sixty-Fifth Annual Session of the American Medical Association, Atlantic City, N. J., June, 1914.