

THE RELATIONS OF COMPLEX AND SENTIMENT. V.¹

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THE conceptions of complex and sentiment have developed as the result of investigations conducted along different lines of approach, and in this historical fact is to be found the explanation of the overlapping of their denotation, and of the difficulty which is now being experienced in finding satisfactory lines of demarcation between them. The concept of the complex has been evolved by writers whose main interest lay in the pathological or, as Pear aptly terms it, the "untidy" aspects of mind, whereas sentiment has been the product of researches directed almost entirely into the normal or "tidy" mind. Nevertheless, as Tansley has clearly shown, complex was not originally used by Jung as having a necessarily pathological significance, although it can be easily understood how the direction of his interests and of those of the psychoanalytical school in general have led to the ultimate limitation of the term to morbid conditions. In his *Psychologie der Dementia Praecox* Jung's chief aim was to discover the dynamic factors responsible for the phenomena in that disorder, and he found these to consist in collocations of mental elements carrying specific affects to which he gave the name 'complexes.' He indicated, moreover, that dynamic factors of a closely similar kind could be found in action in the normal mind. Clearly he was here approaching a conception identical in many respects with the 'sentiments' which McDougall reached as the result of a different line of approach. It is important to bear in mind in this connection that Jung's book was published in 1907, that McDougall's *Introduction to Social Psychology* did not appear until 1908, and that Jung was presumably not acquainted with Shand's earlier work.

My own line of development was by way of Jung and, although I was acquainted with McDougall's work, I had not clearly formulated in my mind its relations to Jung's conceptions when I wrote my *Psychology of Insanity* in 1911. It is necessary to emphasize this latter date, because

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eleven years is a long time in the history of recent psychology and, were I to re-write the book now I can unhesitatingly say that I should not use the term complex to indicate the conception developed therein. Nevertheless I still believe the conception itself to have a certain value, and I shall endeavour to set out here the grounds upon which that value rests.

If we seek to discover the causes determining the direction of flow of our thought and conduct we find amongst these causes systems of mental elements to which, following Jung, I gave the name of 'complexes.' The essential feature of each of these systems is that the constituent mental elements are linked together to form a 'higher psychic unit,' which has a more or less definite conative trend, and which therefore tends to influence the flow of thought and conduct in a definite direction. It is in virtue of this conative trend that the 'complex' can be regarded as a unit, and I desire to emphasize that this and not the possession of a common affect is the central character of the concept in question¹.

If a complex is subjected to further analysis it is apparent that the conative trend is due to the incorporation within it of one or more instinctive processes, using this latter term in the sense developed by McDougall. The answer to our inquiry concerning the causes determining the flow of thought and conduct must therefore ultimately be formulated in terms of these instinctive processes, but at a more superficial level it is possible to distinguish agglomerations in which instinctive processes and other mental elements are linked together, and which act as functional units. These functional units have always this much as their common feature, that they act as determinants of thought and conduct, and that they are composed of mental elements linked together and incorporating one or more instinctive processes, and this degree of similarity would seem to justify the attribution of a common name to all functional units possessing these characters. Rivers² admits that both complexes (in Rivers' sense) and sentiments determine thought and conduct, but holds that they differ profoundly in other respects and that therefore nothing but confusion can result from including them in one category. But surely, if they both determine thought and conduct it is profitable to inquire whether common features cannot be discerned upon which this

¹ If, of course, we regard 'affect' as the central limb of an instinctive process, the 'common affect' would have the same practical significance as 'conative trend,' but to define complex in terms of affect tends to obscure the dynamic aspect which is its essential feature.

² Rivers, *Instinct and the Unconscious*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, 1922, 88.

common property depends, and if such common features can be formulated then we have a concept which is of value in helping us to understand the dynamic aspects of mind.

It is of course beyond dispute that the concept so formed has a very wide denotation, and that it includes a number of processes which differ from one another in important respects. In other words there is clearly room and necessity for a subdivision of complex into subordinate classes, for example into repressed and unrepressed, or into sentiment and not-sentiment. But this subdivision should not obscure the common dynamic character which runs through them all. The complex which is repressed exerts its effect on thought and conduct in virtue of the same driving forces which act in the case of the complex which is unrepressed. The circumstance that it is repressed modifies the action of these forces, but the repression is merely a secondary and superadded factor. The Freudian 'nuclear complex' produces its effects because of the component of the sex instinct which forms its core, although the action is distorted by the repression to which it is subjected. If it were not repressed its effects would be different, but it would not produce something of an absolutely unrelated character.

The objection that it is undesirable to include under one category factors of a normal and of a pathological kind is of questionable validity. The attempt to subdivide relatively simple mental processes along these lines is, indeed, in my opinion fundamentally vicious, in that it tends to obscure the essential identity of the factors concerned. 'Normal' and 'pathological' have meaning only when we are considering the relation of the total mental economy to the welfare of the individual. Repression in itself is neither normal nor pathological, and it may lead to results which are either desirable or noxious according to the total setting of the picture of which it forms a part. Pear has developed this point in his contribution to this Symposium, and he remarks that Rivers in his *Instinct and the Unconscious* has himself insisted throughout upon the naturalness and necessity of repression.

Nevertheless, it is clear that repression is an important superadded factor in determining the effect produced by a complex, and we may accept as a first subdivision of the concept that into repressed and unrepressed varieties. Whether or not we decide to limit the name complex to the former variety only is purely a matter of terminology, but if it is so limited then there is room for another term to indicate the wider concept.

Sentiment, according to McDougall's definition, would seem to be

practically identical with complex, and McDougall¹ recognises this explicitly in his *Social Psychology*, although he thinks it desirable to limit the term complex to "morbid or pathological sentiments." There seems, indeed, to be no reason why a sentiment, defined as McDougall defines it, should not be repressed, and a system of emotional tendencies organised around some object may continue to act as a functional unit, even though its action is modified and distorted by repression. Evidently, however, this definition is not sufficient to delimit sentiment as it is understood by other contributors to this Symposium, and to describe all those functional units to which the name of complex may be applied as sentiments would certainly strain the meaning of the word far beyond that which it has in common speech. The further limitation which is desired beyond that covered by the words of McDougall's definition seems to depend essentially upon the degree of organization attained. This factor has been dwelt upon at length by Pear, and he proposes to separate off from the relatively perfectly organized system of emotional tendencies to which he would limit the name of sentiment, another type of system consisting in "a relatively unorganized collocation, sometimes almost a fortuitous concourse, of such tendencies."

Organization might be taken to refer either to the internal organization of the complex or to the organization of the complex with the mind as a whole. In the former case sentiment and not-sentiment would constitute a line of cleavage which has nothing to do with repression and not-repression. If, however, organization refers to organization with the whole structure of the mind, then the line of cleavage between sentiment and not-sentiment would bear an indirect relation to that between repression and not-repression, although it would be by no means identical therewith. This indirect relation would arise from the circumstance that repression would necessarily limit the degree of organization of the complex with the whole structure of the mind, and repressed complexes therefore would be unlikely to attain to the dignity of sentiments. Predictability of the effect of a complex or sentiment is partly dependent upon the same factors in that it tends to be greater in the case of a unit whose functional integration with the whole structure of the mind is more extensive and highly organized, but it is also dependent upon other factors such as the internal organization of the unit and the potency of the instinctive forces incorporated therein. Owing to the latter the degree of predictability may be high in the case of complexes of relatively simple structure.

¹ McDougall, *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, 16th ed. London, viii-ix.

It is apparent that there is no unequivocal consensus of opinion as to the exact meaning to be attached to 'sentiment.' McDougall explicitly states that he is not in agreement with Shand on this point, and McDougall's definition certainly does not necessarily imply the relative perfection of organization which Pear requires before a functional unit can be admitted to the rank of sentiment. If, as would seem desirable, sentiment is only applied to units which satisfy this criterion, then the relation of sentiment to complex, in the sense in which I have used the latter term, would be that of a subordinate to a wider concept.

Rivers' criticism that a product of suppression should not be classed with a product of fusion approaches the subject from an angle different from that which has been attempted above, in that the developmental rather than the dynamic aspect is accentuated. Rivers has pointed out an interesting biological analogy between certain mental and physiological processes, which casts light upon the way in which the mechanism of repression may have developed. But from the dynamic point of view the essential determinant of thought and conduct is to be found in the system with its conative tendencies, and whether this system acts by the method of fusion or that of suppression is a secondary and super-added character.

We may summarize the considerations set out above as follows. The term complex, as employed in my *Psychology of Insanity*, is attached to a concept which is of value in that it marks off a class of functional units, all of which have certain common features. Its denotation is, however, very wide, and it is essential that the concept should be subdivided into subordinate classes. The most obvious of the possible subdivisions is that into repressed and unrepressed. The use of the term complex has tended to become limited to the first variety only, but this is in my opinion unfortunate in that it tends to obscure the essential similarity of both varieties as functional units. Sentiment and not-sentiment are dependent upon a line of cleavage which is only indirectly related to that between repression and not-repression, and they involve in common speech, and in the usage desired by several recent writers, the taking into consideration of the degree of organization which the functional unit possesses. Sentiment would therefore be limited to a comparatively small class of functional units distinguished by a high degree of integration and organization with the whole structure of the mind.