

## 2. Psychology and Psychopathology.

*Infantile Sexuality and the Neuroses.* (*Revue de Psychothérapie*, February, 1915.) Dr. J. Laumonier.

Freud and his school assign to sexuality the most important and almost exclusive rôle in the production of the neuroses and psycho-neuroses. To infantile sexuality he attributes the origin of hysteria and obsessions. In his early period (1894-6) he divided the psycho-neuroses due to sexuality into two groups: (1) Neurasthenia and the neurosis of anxiety, due to existing sexual troubles, and (2) hysteria and the obsessions due to sexual traumata of early childhood, *i.e.*, prior to the age of eight years. The later Freud (1905) admits that he has given too high a value to these infantile impressions, and that many of the histories told by his hysterical patients are imaginary. He now blames the "sexual constitution" of the infant. Here the word "libido" comes on the scene. Freud's definition of this term is that it corresponds in the sexual sphere with the word "hunger" in that of nutrition. It does not necessarily involve the idea of genital satisfaction, and may exist without the subject's knowledge of its import. The sexuality of the child consists in many fragmentary instincts, each evoked by the excitation of some special zone (the "erogenous zones"). In these Freud includes not only the genital zone, but the anus, belly, chest, neck, ear, thumb, and foot! Certain external causes may bring into prominence one or more of these extra-genital zones, to the detriment of the proper subordination of all to the genital zone in the normal sexuality. Thus, in Freud's view, the child has in him the germs of all the forms of perversion met with in the adult, and in spite of his "angel mien" is really a "polymorph-pervert"!

Normally at puberty the genital zone takes predominance, and the auto-erotic child transfers his sexual objective to one of the opposite sex. But there are three other courses open to him:

- (1) The infantile tendencies may persist, and be recognised by the subject, who then is a sexual invert or pervert.
- (2) The infantile tendencies, normal or otherwise, may be energetically repressed and hidden by the subject, but crop up after puberty as the neuroses and psycho-neuroses.
- (3) The sexual tendencies may be directed towards a purely psychic end, in art, science, or mysticism—and this process is termed "sublimation."

It is interesting that this conception of Freud should seem to support the old idea of the purely sexual origin of hysteria. Examined closely, however, its acceptance is full of difficulties. Doubtless there are children vicious from a very early age, and some develop the habit of masturbation untaught. But Freud invests certain acts of the infant with a sexual significance, and then from these acts postulates the existence of an infantile sexuality. Yet it is notoriously difficult to penetrate the child's psychology; even so simple a problem as whether the infant of a year old can distinguish colours has not yet been solved. How much more difficult to say whether the satisfaction which an infant

seems to derive from sucking its thumb is of a sexual nature or not! There is an inevitable tendency to attribute our own mentality to the child, and to interpret its actions in terms of our own—a simple method, no doubt, but one leading to quite false results, for, as a thousand disconcerting occurrences daily demonstrate, the child-mind is almost an unknown country to us.

The traces of infantile sexuality found in the adult are largely artefacts, due to the suggestibility of the subject, and to the suggestions of the psycho-analyst.

Other objections to Freud's theory are based on anatomical grounds. No doubt the infant has sex, but it is latent only, and the anatomical provisions which exist even before birth have only a potential significance. Sex, though present, has no part in the vital mechanism; there is an absolute lacuna of function, in spite of the presence of organs destined for future use. In the development of the embryo the appearance of the genital organs of ejaculation and copulation is independent of that of the genital glands, and we may find the efferent organs of one sex associated with glands of the other. Also, it is noteworthy that the interstitial tissue filling the spaces between the follicles of the seminiferous tubes, to which of late is attributed an important rôle in the development of the sexual appetite, is of somatic and not genital origin. It has in itself no sexual significance, but acquires one as soon as the associated germinal tissue takes on its special activity, *i.e.*, at puberty. Only then do the sexual glands begin to throw into the circulation their hormones, which on the one hand produce the secondary sexual characteristics, determining the excitation of the certain zones, and on the other by their action on certain groups of cortical cells give rise to psycho-sexuality.

Before puberty, then, there should not exist tendencies and manifestations truly sexual, since these are connected with the exercise of a function as yet in abeyance. When such seem to be present, the cause may lie in faulty interpretation on our part, crediting the child with the impressions and intentions of the adult, or they may result from a precocious education in vice.

According to Freud the age of eight years is the limit beyond which the manifestations of infantile sexuality are incapable of causing the neuroses of maturity. The author believes the exact opposite to be the case, and that it is only after puberty, or in the years immediately preceding it, that sexual variations liable to give rise to future trouble betray themselves.

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*A Contribution to the Doctrine of Psycho-sexual Infantilism [Zur Lehre vom psycho-sexuellen Infantilismus]. (Zt. f. Sexualwiss, August, 1914.) Juliusburger, O.*

From the alienist's standpoint, the author seeks to emphasise the importance of psycho-sexual infantilism. We are far too free, he states, with our diagnosis of neurasthenia, sexual neurasthenia, hysteria, and psychopathic inferiority, etc., without investigating the ontogenetic and phylogenetic build of the individual. Not only from the theoretical standpoint, but for therapeutic and forensic reasons, it is necessary to give much more attention to infantilism.