

THE PSYCHO-SOMATIC UNITY—A FEW PRACTICAL
INFERENCES.

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THE fact that in the course of many neuroses there occur associated feelings of inferiority of a bodily nature, as well as the fact that there are neuroses originating in disturbances of bodily functioning—organ neuroses—compels us to scrutinize our hitherto accepted ideas of the nature and meaning, both of the somatic and of the psychic analysis of the latter. This need is based not merely on speculative grounds and on clinically or experimentally determined facts of recent medical research, but also in reference to the conceptions of modern physics and the views due to advances in zoology and biology. The accurate observations of these scientific disciplines and the inferences drawn from them no longer allow us to consider the somatic as merely secondarily informed by the psyche or as though inspired by a psychic act of projection. Just as the “wave” of the physicist is as much the carrier of the same primeval essence as is the “atom”, so also the world of organic forms has not been constructed secondarily by the conscious thinking spirit; on the contrary—apart from the aberrant (?) adaptations—we must recognize a prototypical pattern (?) also throughout the plant-animal kingdom. We have to recognize an æsthetic controlling principle that belongs to the somatic as such and is innate with it. The great creative artists have always sought for this essential pattern.

In the light of this conception (which really takes the “psycho-somatic unity” in downright earnest), the happenings that penetrate from the somatic territory into psychic awareness can no longer be taken one-sidedly as wholly processes of the immaterial spirit-soul. Neither may we any longer interpret the interests in one’s own particular body form and in its “attractiveness” purely reductively as due to recent narcissism. Just as little should we endeavour to treat bodily disturbances on purely rational objective principles. We should rather consider that frequently the interest in one’s exterior contains an inner kernel and meaning, full of justifiable and valuable qualities, just as the “groans from the depths” of the organism, the functional disturbances and discomforts, need to be understood as the “cries” of the psyche-soma, of creative Nature clamouring for her appropriate rights. We are here not only discussing bodily matters in general, but believe that there exists a “specific

psychic valency" for the different organs and organ systems, and that these are becoming recognizable to-day, and that the further study of them is one of the tasks of medical psychological research of the immediate future.

From our psycho-cultural history it is quite to be comprehended that an adequate understanding of the body-soul (and the appropriate treatment of it) should even to-day come up against resistances (frequently unconscious of their own dogmatic origins), and particularly against extraordinarily inept intellectual hypotheses. For 1500 years the terrestrial, plant and animal worlds were completely banned as heathen and diabolic. The self-modification of this philosophy, however, brought it about that what was banished into the magic circle—which meant a literal enrolment in the "mandala" of the time—became a repression. To a certain extent Freud saw rightly that repressions are to blame for many psychic disturbances; but his idea that only what is sexual is repressed is out of date and one-sided and must to-day actually be considered as topsy-turvy. What Freud called sexual is actually the creative range of the human vital organism.

For lack of a psychic flair for the essential, individual, natural instinctual organic drive, for his (as the biologists say) prototypical evolutionary pattern, for his own characteristic organisation, the modern man finds himself seriously perplexed in the search for his bodily form, and is apt—as one can observe over and over again—instead of living according to its primitive and inner image that dwells within him as his immanent and natural pattern, to look for and compare himself with various external copies and models (mainly of classical origin). Such a one, however, not only sees himself falsely (for he does not really see himself at all), but he will also be unable to become fully and bodily himself. Equally one will only be able to understand the "language" of one's organs if one is aware of their particular psychic representations in one's image of one's own living part soul.

In our present blindness on the body-soul side, which will only gradually be removed, a temporary orientation offers itself in the cultural sphere where historical prejudices in favour of our "immaterial" oneness do not exist. The teaching and methods of the Indo-Aryan Yoga for the clarification of the relations of the body-soul and the organ-part-soul are particularly valuable. Not that we should merely imitate, or could take over (which would in fact be worse than nothing), a technique developed in an entirely different climate, from another tradition and amongst a very different race, but, as a beginning, as a stimulus to inquiry and as an adventure in the possibilities of such knowledge and of such methods in general. For instance, the breathing exercises and the postural exercises associated with them and the astonishing potentialities of the body-soul "wordless control" that we could also develop.

In this way the individual—particularly in the æsthetic sphere in reference to feelings of bodily inferiority—can activate the essential, characteristic body or form (in the place of the previous mere copying of an external æsthetic

model). It is a constant surprise how individuals who have in this way attained to their own form and expression, impress one as somehow sincere, even indeed as beautiful, as contrasted with all the earlier useless attempts to achieve this in the Procrustean bed of an imaginary ideal.

In particular it is equally remarkable how psychoneurotic disturbances (inhibitions, anxieties, compulsions, etc.) are modified or may even disappear completely when, by means of inner, and especially breathing exercises—that is, by a freeing, activating and complete inter-relating—the organs and organic systems of that part of our essential soul that we call the somapsyche are readjusted. For the psyche, as I endeavoured to say above, is constituted not only as spiritual-immaterial, but also for the other moiety as material-psychic.

We believe that by the inclusion of this world of the organically bound part-soul, treatment of that component of the psychic that we (in Jung's sense) call the unconscious is much advanced. We are also unable to see why one should so often speak of the unconscious as a "spinal cord", a "belly-mind" or as a "sympathetic soul" if one is not actually attempting to deal directly with this inner essence of the autonomic system, of the endocrine glands and their organs of expression, but is approaching it purely and solely from the psychically conscious brain level.

Finally the view must be expressed that a great number of the customs and rites of primitive peoples become comprehensible if, behind these ceremonies, one does not feel obliged to search artificially for successful teachings and intellectual preparations (somewhat like those of the medicine-man at initiation ceremonies), but if one starts from the fact that amongst such unselfconscious human beings there does actually exist an inner "knowledge" of the essential design of purposive bodily functioning. While the medicine-man is in some sense intellectually aware of what raises him above the others and makes him effective, for the most part the duller members of the tribe are merely aware of direct effects upon their bodies (and upon the innate soul of the latter).

These primitives live, however—exactly as analytic psychology has shown us—not very deeply under the surface of things, as also occurs amongst our most cultured and learned here and now. To be able to speak with them in the right "wordless" language would be to understand depth psychology for the first time. It justifies the wisdom of Goethe in his old age—"animals are informed by their organs; mankind directs (teaches) its organs". In so far as we are organisms and unconscious organ-souls we are taught by the latter, and, in so far as we are human beings, we teach (not master, discipline or dominate) our dumb soma-psyche.