Introduction to a Psychoanalytic Psychiatry

P. Schilder

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Introduction to a Psychoanalytic Psychiatry

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Schilder's book must be approached with the clear understanding that he "rather seeks to set forth problems than to solve them." It is a first attempt at a systematic presentation of a clinical psychiatry on a psychoanalytic basis, by one who is admittedly a leader among the younger generation of psychiatrists, but who is also a well trained psychologist and psychoanalyst. An acquaintance with his *Medical Psychology* will readily demonstrate that he is capable of bringing to this important task the necessary background of a broad catholicity in the mental sciences.

In undertaking the task of preparing an English version of this book, the writer was prompted by the conviction that it constitutes a very important addition to the already existing literature dealing with the application of psychoanalytic theory to the problems of psychiatry. Apart from deepening our understanding of schizophrenia it contributes much that is of value for the understanding of the organic types of reaction. The book reflects also to some extent the efforts of the "Phenomenological School" of psychology and philosophy to envisage the problems of psychiatry from the point of view of this school. The student to whom the very stimulating literature in this field is inaccessible will do well to consult at least the résumé of Schilder's contributions along these lines published by Sam Parker.[1] A candid criticism of the book from the Freudian point of view was published by Reich.[2] Whatever one's attitude may be in this respect, and we shall not enter here into a discussion of Schilder's departure from some of the Freudian doctrines, one can readily agree with Reich when he says that an entire generation of psychiatrists could well be kept busy working at the problems raised in this book

[1] *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, April*, 1926.
[2] *Internacionale Zeitschrift für Psa*, 1926, H. I.

once it agreed to accept it for what it is; namely, the first psychiatry on a psychoanalytic basis.

The book aptly illustrates Freud's contention that there need be no conflict between psychiatric and psychoanalytic research, the latter merely bearing a relation to psychiatry such as histology does to anatomy.

As a matter of fact, it is the growing recognition of this truth which has made possible the extension of the psychiatric instrument to fields of human endeavor which lie quite outside of the strict realms of clinical psychiatry, such as education, child guidance, industrial relations, vocational guidance, criminology, etc. In so far as psychiatry has been able to prove its worth in connection with these various enterprises, it has been able to do so very largely because of the influences exerted upon it by the findings of psychoanalysis. In expressing this opinion one need not be unmindful of the various other adjuvant disciplines such as neurophysiology, endocrinology, experimental psychology, etc., which have contributed to a perfection of the psychiatric technique.

But psychiatry's growth as a psychological instrument for the understanding and amelioration of human problems, which made possible its wider applicability as mentioned above, must be attributed chiefly to the refinements in understanding and technique which psychoanalysis made possible. A recognition of this fact ought to eliminate the difficulty of finding a proper designation for the type of psychiatry which is applicable to the various social enterprises mentioned above.

Such designations as extramural psychiatry, orthopsychiatry, social-psychiatry might well be abandoned in favor of the term "psychoanalytic psychiatry." Psychoanalysis has long ceased to be merely an instrument for the psychological treatment of certain psychological disorders. The theoretical superstructure which evolved in connection with its clinical application in the treatment of these disorders furnished those newer conceptions of human motivation and behavior which made possible the

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extension of psychiatry into practically every field of human endeavor. The effectiveness of the so-called newer psychiatric approach to the various problems of human adaptation which lie outside of the strict field of clinical psychiatry is in direct proportion to the degree of psychoanalytic insight which can be brought to bear upon them. The extension of the libido theory to the psychoses and the examination of the facts of psychiatry from the point of view of metapsychology, that is to say, from their dynamic, topographical and economic aspects, offers the only way out of the dilemmas and confusion presented by the etiological and nosological problems of psychiatry. Although these problems have always occupied the center of psychiatric discussion, critical estimates of tendencies in psychiatry, such as have been published in recent years by Stärcke, White and Kleist indicate that we are no nearer a resolution of these problems to-day than we ever were, unless we attack them from the point of view of psychoanalytic theory. The moment we do so the entire problem becomes very much illuminated, certainly with respect to the functional psychoses, and to a very large extent also as regards the organic psychoses, as illustrated in this book.

Although Schilder adheres to the traditional method of classification, he indicates plainly in the discussion of the case material his complete agreement with Freud's opinion that the clinical symptom-complexes of psychiatry embrace ordinarily three types of phenomena, as follows: (1) Those representing such remains as there may be of a normal state or of neurosis (phenomena of a residual nature); (2) those representing the morbid process (the detachment of the libido from its object, the phenomena of regression); and (3) those representing an attempt at recovery. The game of trying to fit the manifestations of a given psychotic patient into any one of the traditional nosological groups, of the functional psychoses, at any rate, might at least become a more interesting game and certainly of more vital importance for the patient when an effort is made to dis-

tinguish in the clinical picture these fundamentally different types of phenomena.

Moreover, whatever the grouping of symptoms may be in the individual case, the living patient can only be fully understood when one takes into account the specific, infantile fixation points as predisposing causes, and the damming up of the libido and the regression process as the immediate cause of the disorder. All clinical psychiatric entities are in the last analysis mixtures of the above types of manifestations, one symptom complex gaining ascendency at one time, another at another time. The important thing to recognize in all these manifestations, is the ebb and flow of dynamic forces which are concerned with an expedient distribution of the libido. We then find back of all abnormal mental manifestations a common process which enables us to judge the individual case in the light of this process which determines all.

Psychoanalytic psychology furnishes psychiatry with the only dependable instrument for measuring the quality and, shall I say, the quantity of any psychotic process. The importance of this for the problems of etiology and nosology is obvious. Of no little significance is the effect which this manner of viewing the psychoses has upon the destiny of the individual patient. By enabling us to discern and understand the play of the libido and ego dynamics in the individual case and the forms of speech, attitude and conduct through which the patient expresses these forces, it renders possible a decidedly better understanding and a more humane management of the individual case. If the psychoanalytic approach to the psychoses does not as yet reflect the same therapeutic possibilities as it does in connection with the transference neuroses, it certainly makes possible, in many instances, an arrest of the regressive process at a socially more acceptable level.

Moreover, it renders possible the elimination of the artificial lines of differentiation between the neuroses and the psychoses on the one hand, and between the former and normal psychological manifestations on the other hand.

In doing so it encourages an increasing effort in the direction of an application of psychoanalytic therapy to the narcissistic disorders (Abraham, Clark, Jelliffe), and the extension of this instrument into problems of human conduct which lie outside of the strict field of clinical psychiatry. In so far as social organization and social practice are coming to be more and more influenced by the facts and principles of psychiatry and mental hygiene, it is an influence which was rendered possible through a recognition of the rôle which the ego-libido dynamics play in human conduct, in health and disease.

Schilder's broad catholicity with respect to the problems of psychiatry is well illustrated by his statement that "personality appears to be reflected primarily in those aspects of experience which have not as yet become rigid and structuralized into organic forms" and also, when he says, "we adhere to the postulate that every organ might be looked upon as the structuralization of instinct."

American psychiatry is occupying a leading position in such efforts as are being made to apply psychoanalytic theory and technique to an elucidation of the problems of psychiatry. Among the many leading American psychiatrists who have been keeping alive this tendency, no one deserves more credit than Dr. William A. White, whose *Outlines of Psychiatry,* and *Foundations of Psychiatry* might well be read as a preface to the present book.

B. G.

Stony Lodge, Ossining, Autumn, 1927.

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Schilder's book must be approached with the clear understanding that he "rather seeks to set forth problems than to solve them." It is a first attempt at a systematic presentation of a clinical psychiatry on a psychoanalytic basis, by one who is admittedly a leader among the younger generation of psychiatrists, but who is also a well trained psychologist and psychoanalyst. An acquaintance with his *Medical Psychology* will readily demonstrate that he is capable of bringing to this important task the necessary background of a broad catholicity in the mental sciences.

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CHAPTER I

The Ego-ideal

In the following pages an attempt will be made to present an outline of a psychiatry on a psychoanalytic basis. A systematic presentation is intended. We will first set forth what previous psychoanalytic research has already accomplished in this field, and then will call attention to such problems as still remain unsolved. It seems to me advantageous to refer to the latter, for the value of a method of research is shown no less by its tangible results than by the new problems which it brings to light.

Hence, in the following lines, I will rather seek to set forth problems than to solve them.

In a recent small publication Freud has characterized the difference between a neurosis and a psychosis by stating that in the former, there is a conflict between the "ego" and the "Id," while in the latter, the conflict is partly between the "Ego" and the "Super-ego," and partly between the "ego" and the environment. But what do these terms, "Ego," "Id," "Super-ego," "Ego-ideal," "Environment," signify, and what is their content? We shall consider this first of all, adhering closely to Freud ("Das Ich und das Es"). Originally, psychoanalysis dealt with ego-instincts and sex-instincts. By the former are meant those instinctive dispositions which have to do with the maintenance of the individual and his adaptation to society. The sexual instincts reveal themselves as constituted of a series of partial impulses. Freud's original assumption was that the repressive forces were derived from the ego-instincts. The sexual, not being readily assimilated into societal aims, is tabued by society, a tabu which is taken up by the ego-instincts. It soon became obvious, however, that this fundamentally adequate formulation was not altogether

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in accord with the facts. It became necessary to postulate the existence of a libidinous stream which has the individual as a whole as its object, in addition to the libido involved in object-cathexis and in the autoerotic organ activation. This libido, which was termed narcissistic, was assumed to have differentiated itself already during the most primitive, late-foetal and new-born stages of the individual (primary narcissism, Tausk), but acquiring its permanent configuration only later on (secondary narcissism). Originally, this narcissistic libido appertains only to the body, but is soon carried over from the body to the mental image which the individual constructs of himself, to the ego-ideal. This ego-ideal is therefore, like the somatic-self, narcissistically invested. But it carries in addition to the energies derived from the sexual instincts also those which have their origin in the ego-instincts. The discussion of the structure of the ego-ideal calls therefore for a more general consideration of instinct and object.

Every instinct has an object toward which it directs itself. Freud speaks of instinct representatives, or, one might say, every instinct possesses a content. In agreement with Husserl I prefer to designate this content as the object of the instinct. Through an instinct, I desire something instinctively. In connection with hunger it is food, with sexuality, perhaps bodily contact, and so on.[1]

What is it then that is sought by narcissism and what is its content? Quite likely complete satisfaction to one's own body or sensations. It is nevertheless difficult to conceive of a mere desire for sensations as such. Some sort of vague desire with respect to the outer world must go with this, even if we assume that the mere consciousness of one's own body may already carry with it also a representation of the outer world. Secondary narcissism already possesses as its object a clear image of the body and its possible modes of satisfaction. With further development the psychic personality likewise becomes the object of narcissism.

[1] Naturally also much else, if one desires a strict differentiation. But we need not consider this here.

The body as such, however, always remains invested with narcissistic libido. With the introduction, however, of the concept of narcissism, there is brought about, according to Freud, a connecting link between the ego-instincts and the sexual instincts. For this narcissistic libido must also strive after the integrity and maintenance of one's own body. It is clear that the developing individual only gradually comes to regard himself as a psychic unity in addition to being a somatic unity. He now ascribes to himself not only a somatic quality, but also psychic characteristics. But, from now on, the individual begins to be dissatisfied with himself. He scrutinizes his bodily and psychic characteristics more closely, and finding himself dissatisfied with them, either proceeds to deceive himself concerning them and sketches an inaccurate picture of himself, or begins to carry about an image of himself as an Ego-ideal which indicates to him how things ought to be. But how is this sort of Ego-ideal constructed? The child, exposed as it constantly is to the influences of its environment, receives from it continuously guidance in the form of speech and action. It is made to observe cleanliness and reserve in speech and action. Those who are charged with its upbringing exercise an extraordinary power over it.

Apart from this, they are objects of libidinous attitudes. We know that identifications frequently come about on the latter basis. To identify oneself with someone means to take on the rôle of that person without necessarily being conscious of this. By means of the identification one expresses the desire to be like some other person. It is clear that erotic fixations form a favorable basis for identification, since whom would one sooner be like than those one loves.

Naturally, one must always keep in mind that the relationship with another person may become endangered through identification, since, when the identification is complete, the object becomes superfluous; one becomes oneself the object, and no longer needs it outside of oneself. This holds good for love relationships, and, as is well known,

we are accustomed to refer certain forms of homosexuality (we speak here in the interest of simplicity of male homosexuality) to the fact that the boy has identified himself with his ardently loved mother, so that she has become superfluous to him. He himself now behaves like a mother, and possesses male love objects upon whom he now projects a portion of his own former personality. Simultaneously with his identification, he eliminates parts of his own experience. A reversal of rôles now takes place; his love objects represent a former stage of his own personality, whereas he himself assumes the rôle of his former love object. In such cases of complete identification with the love object, there takes place an introjection of an object into the province of one's ego, in place of which one's own personality, or at any rate, parts of one's own personality are projected onto other personalities. Something different is apt to take place in connection with the identification mechanism when the identification concerns persons who are acting in the rôle of guides. Naturally, it is possible even here that, after complete identification with the teacher, the rôle of pupil is projected, transferred to other persons. Frequently, however, it happens that the identification leads to this, that the former personality is not eliminated and projected onto another personality but assumes a special position in the ego-experiences. In that event two aspects enter into the composition of the ego. Fragments which originate from the identification and which demand instruction, and parts upon which the instruction is directed. In other words, there has taken place a splitting of the ego. But more or less complete identifications occur not only with a single person but with any number of personalities who appear in the life of the individual. Unquestionably, one's identifications begin with one's parents. Father and mother especially enter into the composition of one's ego-ideal.

Apart from this, identifications take place during one's entire lifetime which, in the final analysis, never reach completion. Parts and fragments of one's personality are being continuously projected onto other persons, or onto

other portions of one's own personality, according to our provisional formulation, onto the "instinctive-self." If we were to treat the "instinctive-self" and the ego-ideal as units, we might say that the two show continuous fluctuations in their constitution. Only, one should by no means assume that when an identification takes place it embraces all the characteristics of the beloved or honored object of the identification. More commonly, at any rate, quite regularly, the identification relates only to certain characteristics of that person. When a specific identification has taken place, it does not mean that this phase of the ego-ideal has, because of this, become a rigid, fixed, quantity. On the contrary, all the guidance coming from the object of the identification is being continuously modified by the instinctive-self. It is those instinctive stirrings which are especially opposed to the ego-ideal which require for their subjugation appropriate powers in the ego-ideal.

On the other hand, as we have already seen, the ego-ideal has its basis also in libidinous attitudes. It, too, has its origin therefore in instinct and reflects in itself a conflict between the demands of reality and those of one's instinctive impulses. In accordance with this we see also that the ego-ideal invariably shows instinctive features. The voice of conscience reveals at the same time our own preferences and inclinations; the ego-ideal therefore comes about in a manner similar to the origin of a symptom. It satisfies on the one hand the demands of reality and on the other hand one's instincts. The strict moralist who directs his cruelty towards himself as well as towards others, satisfies by means of his rigorousness toward himself not only his ego-ideal but also his instinctive requirements. In a case observed by me the patient while in a delusional state believed that a number of people about him compelled him to observe whether he did not have homosexual stirrings. But only men made these demands upon him and the repressed homosexuality found in the ego-ideal a far-reaching gratification. The ego-ideal is therefore constructed on the pattern of a compromise.

However, in connection with the identifications with people in our environment, we also take on numerous forms of adaptation to reality, thus, the identifications serve also as aids to the ego-impulses. Every educative situation in which the individual finds himself furnishes the opportunity for acquiring from the environment groupings of modes of adaptation. The ego-instincts do not direct themselves towards external objects so to speak singly, but are coördinated and classified into groupings as result of the identifications.

In accordance with what has already been said, the ego-ideal is therefore invested with narcissistic libido, which is partly derived, however, from the object and becomes, together with its cathexis, introjected into the ego. Eventually however, the ego-ideal takes on also ego-instinctive energies which are utilized together with the narcissistic energies in the service of repression. With this we have gained a fair idea of the nature of the repressive forces and a glimpse into the constitution of the ego. It is apparent however, that this ego-ideal represents our inner voice of conscience; also, that it is in some way related to the testing of reality. To be sure, Freud has recently ascribed the sense of reality to the "ego" (the "perceptive-self"), whereas formerly he attributed this function to the "super-ego." (See "Das Ich und das Es.")

However, we will return to this problem later. In the mean time let us pass to the consideration of the ego-instincts, in order to gain an understanding of that phase of the personality which Freud designates as the "ego" but which we will designate as the "perceptive-self." (The basis for this change in terminology will be furnished in what follows.)

CHAPTER II

The Ego-instincts

Thus far we have learned nothing concerning the ego-instincts as such. We have only seen that in much of that which we have formerly attributed to the ego-instincts, there is a libidinous component. Thus Ferenczi (1911) in discussing the developmental stages of the sense of reality, considered as its most primitive stage that in which the individual, resting in the mother's womb, free from all desire, considers himself omnipotent. A further stage appeared to be the one in which the child compels the people in its environment to gratify its wishes through its crying, later, aiming to change the external course of events through an expression of its wishes until finally it does justice to life and activity. But according to present-day analytic theory we must bring all these manifestations of a magical view of life into relation with the narcissistic trends. The "ego" invested with narcissism, ascribes to itself exaggerated abilities. We do not deal here therefore with ego-instincts. These must be brought into the closest relation with the perception of objects as this is made possible to us through the eyes, the ears, the senses of smell, taste, and touch. We must especially adhere to the general point of view that every image, whether it be a perception or a representation, and every thought, in a word, everything that deals with objects contains within itself a call to action.

Evidently we are dealing here with a very deep-seated peculiarity of the organism. One might say that every sensation has also an efferent component. The motor response in connection with the primitive organic manifestations serves precisely as proof that something receptive has transpired. Receptivity and motor responsiveness

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