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Ben Karpman

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## IMPULSIVE NEUROSES AND CRIME: A CRITICAL REVIEW

BEN KARPMAN, M. D.<sup>1</sup>

Is there a human problem or a field of endeavor to which the medical man may not be called upon for help and guidance? It would seem to be the fate of medicine in general and that of psychiatry in particular to contribute to quarters far and distant solutions of problems that apparently have but little relation to medicine. The understanding of the mechanisms underlying certain types of anti-social reactions, especially as referring to criminal conduct, forms a chapter of appalling complexity and confusion in the psychopathology of human behavior. Now that after centuries of effort, the jurists and the sociologists are obliged to give up the task of solving the problem of crime, the physician steps in and shows what direct and intimate relationship there exists between crime and disease. It is, therefore, most refreshing to come across a work which gives one such an illuminating insight into the nature of this type of behavior.

INSTINCT, AFFECT, IMPULSE: In this, the second volume of his monumental work on the Disorders of Instincts and Emotions,<sup>2</sup> the veteran psychoanalyst takes up the problem of the type of behavior the most significant feature of which is its impulsiveness. In the introductory chapter he discusses briefly the nature of instinct, emotion and impulse in their normal and abnormal setting. He regards instinct as the biologic guardian of life, essentially organic in its function, coming to obvious expression and operation as an urge, whenever life is threatened. While in the very lower forms of life there is a direct relation between instinct and activity, in the more highly organized living creatures, an intermediate step is interpolated—the spinal cord and the brain as centers for regulating the responses of the instinctive expressions to the environment, seats for the intellectual elaboration of the instinct. Out of the interplay of craving and gratification, emotional reactions arise, as hunger is the cerebral expression of the instinct of self-preservation and love, of the sexual instinct. There is, therefore, no affect that does not feed itself

<sup>1</sup>St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, D. C.

<sup>2</sup>Steckel, Wilhelm, "*Peculiarities of Behavior. Wandering Mania, Cleptomania, Dybsomania, Pyromania and Allied Impulsive Acts.*" Authorized English translation by James S. Van Teslaar, M. D. Two vols., pp. 633, with notes and glossary. Boni & Liveright, New York.

upon instinct and the strength of the affect displayed is directly proportional to the strength of the instinctive urge behind it.

To Stekel there is but one fundamental instinct—the instinct of life with its two component instincts, namely the instinct of self-preservation and the instinct of race-preservation. In accordance with his Law of Bipolarity, the instinct of self-preservation is the death instinct, concerned as it is with activities of current life but ultimately leading to the death of the individual; while the race preservative instinct is the life instinct, taking care of the future of the race.

The original reaction of every human being to his environment is essentially egoistic and self-centered. It is the primitive reaction in man that prompts him to ask in any situation: "What is there in it for me?" Our first reaction to another's misfortune is that of hidden joy, or else the glad feeling that the misfortune didn't overtake us personally. In anticipation, we are always optimistic; when we are in pain, the whole world looks gloomy. Owing, however, to the vast superstructure of repression and prohibition that has been erected by society upon the original instinctive drives, the primitive reactions are never allowed full and open expression by the community in which the individual lives; the imperative of the social order being expressed as morality, ethics, law. In the neurotic, however, the original primitive reactions have failed to undergo adequate repression, and their expression, therefore, forms the neurotics most obvious and predominant characteristic. With the neurotic the imperative of pleasure stands supreme; in an attempt to gain gratification by the most direct route he disregards the inhibitions imposed by culture. Every neurotic manifestation is expressive of the conflict between morality and primitive instinctive drives. Out of the conflicts of these antithetic trends, there frequently arise crises in the form of antisocial acts as those of the criminal and the neurotic, showing marked divergence from the normal. Whereas the acts of a normal individual, although emotionally conditioned, are usually carried out under the control of consciousness and further, have an onward trend, the acts of the neurotic are regressive in character and often are of an impulsive nature, that is, committed while his reason is so overwhelmed by an affect that the inhibitions of ordinary consciousness are suspended. Whereas impulsive deeds committed through anger, jealousy, greed, revenge, etc., are with normal individuals everyday occurrences, they are nevertheless transient in character and more or less consciously controlled adequately combining phantasy with reality which for a moment are fused

together; in the instance of the neurotic, however, we find that the impulses stand in sharp contrast to reality; they are permanent drives that ceaselessly impel the subject to commit some anti-social deed, while the psychic and mental state is such that the distinction between reality and phantasy is quite lost. Indeed, many impulsive acts are committed in a half-dreamy or hypnoidal state and represent symbolic attempts to solve an impossible problem. Whereas, further, the civilized man will yield his instinct for the better of society and accept the law outside of him as the law of his own heart, joyfully and with conviction, the neurotic at best accepts it only in appearance with gnashing teeth, resisting and under compulsion.

Until but recently the most baffling of the manifestations within the realm of clinical psychopathology, we have now come to recognize behind these impulsive reactions acts of individuals whose one desire in common is to get away from the situation in which they are placed. Their personality is split by, on the one hand, the desire to adjust to life as it is, and on the other, by the constant and persistent tendency to regression; adults biologically, they are still children psychologically craving repetition of infantile situations that are still charged with strong affect. Living as they do in a civilized community they are nevertheless guided by aboriginal, egoistic instincts, not at all unlike the primitive man to whom social sanction is foreign. The reactions of the neurotic must be regarded as archaic because to him his will and pleasure are the supreme law.

After outlining in general his conception of instincts and emotions, Stekel proceeds to discuss some of the main motor impulses. He speaks of these as manias, defining mania as an impulsive act centering around one specific aim. He points out, however, that these manias do not occur singly but in combinations. It is characteristic of these persons of impulsive temperament, as it is true of all neurotics, that the impulses of which they are victims, are never single; it is merely that one or another of the impulses is given greater stress. Thus the dypsomaniac may also be a dromomaniac, cleptomaniac, pyromaniac, etc.

**DROMOMANIA:** The impulse to wander or dromomania, is not a specific morbid entity, but a particular manifestation that may be found in a great variety of psychic and mental disorders, that otherwise have but little in common. These attacks express a flight from home—centrifugal dromomania or fugues, as well as a flight back—centripetal dromomania, and the two may be combined—one may flee from home (running away from one's parents, marriage, or one's own past) and at the same time seek it in a symbolic form (longing

for parents, running away from marriage, desertion, flight back to one's past life, etc.).

Impulsive wandering seems to set in whenever our every day life is no longer satisfactory and unfulfilled wishes, unsatisfied longings, puzzling excitations and repressed impulses, strive for expression in some motor form of reaction—the affect linked with impulse requires motor release. It arises when the self is split by an acute conflict and the conscious personality is unable to meet the demands of the instinctive self; the individual is unable to rest in one place because in his breast he harbors a craving for other forms of gratification that he cannot find there.

There is an oppressive feeling and a torturing restlessness about these patients which they themselves are unable to explain. They will roam around for hours and it is then a question of incidental circumstance how the impulse pressing for activity, will express itself; and the sufferer may find relief in the taking of narcotics, stealing, setting a place on fire or merely running off and running around aimlessly. Occasionally the wandering impulse may be linked with an overt sexual impulse that is distinctly pathological in character. The wandering may or may not be accompanied by impairment of consciousness and not infrequently there may be a partial or complete amnesia. After wandering for hours or days at a time, the patient quiets down, for a shorter or longer period of time and then the cycle begins anew. Medical literature records many cases showing that persons in that state drift or take long journeys, awakening in some distant place (shell-shocked soldiers, for instance).

The motives that lurk behind these dromomanias have been learned from the analytic study of many cases. These unfortunates are either running after their own past or after some unattainable ideal. They run after their infantile experiences and away from their adult integrating self, or it is an attempt to flee from their infantile attachments to their adult self.

As illustrating "fugues," instances are brought to mind of the father with strong paedophilic tendencies who leaves the house and drowns his troubles in alcohol, because he has death wishes against his wife who stands in his way. A devout Catholic, because he developed a passionate liking for his sister-in-law, flees from the house to save his moral self. A man who hates his father, after several quarrels with him, flees to the mountains, in order to avoid turning into a criminal; while away, he spends his time by throwing large stones into the valley, symbolically slaying his father; returning home

a few days later, exhausted, but meek and pliant. In such cases as these, the death of the father may change the old feeling of hatred into remorse, and be evidenced by depression, dromomania, dypsomania or other neurotic manifestations. Sometimes the neurotic, unable to live in close proximity to his enemy, drives the later out of the house; equally often, when not succeeding in this, he will himself take to flight. Sometimes, the incest wish is masked under the cover of hatred on account of jealousy which hatred leads to the development of criminal-feeling attitude and flight. Jealousy will also account for a brother fleeing from home when his sister is to marry, the motive being jealousy toward his future brother-in-law against whom he entertains death wishes. These are all neurotic reactions. As an instance of dromomania in a psychotic, the case may be cited of a man who left his home, wandering all over the globe. His sex life is practically nil; he loves his wife as a sister, but sexual relations with her are repulsive (incest barrier). In his wanderings, so he states, he seeks the garden of eternal spring, where man is immortal, where every man has a wife whom he truly loves without begetting children (expressions of impotence and incest). On his wanderings he goes barefoot, often throwing off his clothes to get close to earth (mother) and to be bathed by the sun (father). In his phantasy he is but 20 years old. At 65, after having traversed 25,000 miles, he will attain his aim—he will reach the paradise. He shall then be drawn first to Venus (mother) and into the paradise (mother's womb), then nearer and nearer to the sun (the father's body), his real objective; and he will never return to earth. The man apparently proceeds onward in his wanderings, but as a matter of fact he runs back after his past childhood life; he is in a continuous emotional daze from which, perhaps, there is no awakening.

In centripetal dromomania or nostalgia we also have a form of behavior that has a varied motivation. It is known that if not fulfilled, it may lead to crime, desertion, murder, etc. The longing for home is accompanied by feelings of anxiety which may become so strong as to interfere with clear reasoning. The longing for home has its earliest roots in the family circle, in the first experiences and memories of childhood. To the deserting soldier, the army restraint is symbolic of the old family restraint which they have long wanted to shake off and which in fact may have been the original cause of leaving home and joining the army; at the same time the desertion is the renewed longing to return to the family circle, to the father and mother as the case may be. But many will

wander home not for love but to compensate for the humiliation of childhood; particularly common are the revenge thoughts of son against father, which are usually discharged in some substitutive form of behavior—drink, card playing or just wandering about.

**SLEEP WALKING:** Sleep walking, with which incidentally the moon has nothing to do beyond facilitating orientation, is another form of impulsive activity. We are dealing here with a very complicated neurosis of which somnambulism is only one aspect and as the motives are multiple, the impulses are correspondingly varying. The sleep walkers are dreamers with their eyes open, struggling with temptation repellent to consciousness. During sleep when the conscious inhibitions are removed, these neurotics are prompted to commit some deed, which, at least when the affect is strong enough, and all fear and inhibitions lost, becomes expressed in some form of motor activity. In every case of sleep-walking we must think of repetition compulsion (to repeat symptomatically some earlier situations) and bear in mind that the strongest impulses emanate from unfulfilled wishes. As an illustration, the case may be cited of a young woman who suffers from a number of neurotic symptoms: absent-mindedness, depression, restlessness, fatiguability, sleepiness, suicidal tendencies, frigidity, etc. In addition, she also suffers from a strange sleep disturbance. She always wakes up at 3:00 a. m. and in a somnambulistic state walks in the direction of the toilet, but merely opens the door of the room and returns to the bed. The analysis, among other things, revealed that the patient has a strong fixation on her brother. In her somnambulistic state she sees a picture of herself when once as a little girl, she went to her brother at this hour and had a passionate intercourse. Afterwards, she went frequently to the toilet, leaving the door deliberately open in the hope of being surprised there by her brother. As a girl she was frequently surprised mornings to find the door of her room unlocked.

On awakening from a somnambulistic state there is a complete amnesia which is seldom overcome through analysis. Although criminal deeds are relatively rare, considering the frequency of criminal dreams, crimes may and actually have been committed during sleep and dreams. Under the drive of a dream, which may furnish the necessary setting and illusion, an individual may commit a murder or perform an act symptomatic of it, such as carrying out a sawing motion in the air representing the act of striking one with a dagger, or the act may be brought to a stop in the middle. As

it is the function of the dream to prevent such crimes by representing them vicariously in the dream visions, the impulse must obviously be extraordinarily powerful to lead to action during dream state. Motivated by rivalry, ambition, jealousy, hatred or other emotions, the criminal impulse may break out during the dream state and be enacted as it were under the conditions of conscious life, as dreaming of being attacked by a rival and then killing him.

Sexual impulses are expressed in dreams even more frequently than the criminal tendencies and individuals may completely abandon themselves in their sexual propensities during sleep and dreams; as parents playing with the genitals of their children, or a boy going over the bed on the sister and performing intercourse with her. Indeed, most serious sexual trauma may occur in dreams without leaving any memory trace during the day time, yet have remarkable after effects in later life; as in the instance of a man who could only be potent when his wife was completely passive as if asleep, and completely impotent when she showed the slightest activity; this particular type of behavior being expressive and reminiscent of his early somnambulistic acts with his sister while she was asleep. These criminal and sexual acts may be committed without the danger of incurring punishment—as one cannot be held responsible for “unconscious” acts committed during sleep. Occasionally “nocturnal doings” may be malingered, especially among brothers and sisters, and it is not always easy to determine to what extent this is done in a somnambulistic state or whether it is a deliberate pose.

**NARCOTOMANIA:** It is not perhaps universally realized that in drug addiction we are dealing with a definite neurosis. The drug addicts are individuals who are afraid of themselves, of some unbidden impulse and then through the use of drugs attempt to overcome the pathological depression and thus, albeit vicariously, achieve a state of well being and render themselves more or less socially adjustable. Hence, the leaving out of the narcotic is associated with tremendous anxiety which is essentially a psychic manifestation and not, as thought by some, a somatic symptom; because clinical studies of such cases reveal the fact that the feeling of agitation or depression preceded the drug addiction. Indeed, it is the original agitation or depression that first led to the use of narcotics which give the individual peace and forgetfulness.

The habitual drinker is no exception to the above. He is always a severe neurotic, whether his conflicts are conditioned by wounded pride, unfortunate family constellation, latent homosexuality, sado-



masochistic components or morbid sex life in one form or another. Although intellectually he may be above the average, his personality make-up and the characteristics of emotional life are essentially abnormal. The sudden shifting from weakness to brutality, the lack of resistance, the predisposition to wandering, heightened jealousy reaction and the unstable character of his emotional life as well known, while the "all-is-well" reaction is merely intended to cover an underlying anxiety and depression or to stifle the voice of conscience; his good nature is often but a mask to cover deeper passions.

In the drink the patients seek oblivion from the world of reality: hence, the distraction and inability to concentrate on any task. Upon investigating their phantasies, one is surprised to find how often sadistic criminal impulses furnish the content of their day dreams. Analysis always reveals a gap between capacity and ambition or an inner obstinacy traceable to an infantile sexual objective which conscience would not permit to appear on the surface; so that the parallel conflict between intelligence and instinct goes constantly on. The instance of Poe stands out conspicuously as a victim whose manner of death closely associated as it was with his dypsomania, epitomized once more a whole life course woven through with the tragedy of his illness.

The morning-after feeling, the drinkers katzen-jammer, is not wholly toxic but includes a psychic component as well: disgust at self (self-depreciation). The implied depreciation of self often leads the drinkers to deeds of revenge which may take the form of arson, joining the Army against parents' wishes, etc.

Many neurotics show a high intolerance to alcohol, sometimes a few sips and even the mere sight of a filled glass being exciting enough to precipitate symptoms of a reaction and be followed by a morning-after katzen-jammer, similar to that which follows actual over-indulgence in alcohol. That a good deal of the drinkers' reaction is of psychic moment is evidenced by the remarkable fact that the morning-after feeling bears no direct relationship to the amount of alcohol imbibed. Under the influence of drink, a marked change in personality takes place in the individual, the inner misery being drowned and the feeling of inferiority is covered by a compensatory and overbearing attitude. On sobering up, the plight looms up again and there is thus a new reason to drink one-self into forgetfulness.

Delirium tremens is brought about not only by intoxication; it involves an important psychic component. When intoxication alone is insufficient to prevent the voice of conscience from becoming manifested, the individual takes refuge in a spell. The attack may be epileptic or a delirious. The psychic mechanism is the same, except that the epileptic spell discloses a deeper split. Often the delirium and the epileptic attacks are combined. In the delirium the small animals seen by the drinker stand for reproaches; criminal thoughts and feelings of guilt are expressed in the marked fear—fear of police, court, etc. During the delirium many a drinker rehearses his arrest and trial; he is accused of gruesome crimes, of having committed wholesale murders, of having been castrated, horribly punished and tortured. The dread held in check by drink breaks thus all over and because of intoxication is expressed in a psychotic manner.

All narcotomaniacs, particularly drinkers, admit that they indulge in order to overcome an inexplicable dread—the fear of crime, the fear of self. The fear renders the victims uneasy, impelling him to wander from place to place to commit various deeds. Ethical inhibitions change the impulse into a fear of impulsive prompting. The fact that the delirium may break out after a period of abstinence, while on the other hand, it may disappear with alcohol still being administered, clearly suggests the operation of determinants other than purely physical. When the polar tension, that is the difference between the integrated personality and its antagonistic trends, becomes unbearable, the pressing impulse involving a criminal deed discharges itself either in an epileptic attack or in an attack of delirium. Of course, that does not prevent the impulse from breaking out after all, so that crimes may be committed during the delirium.

There is a relation between alcohol and paraphiliac reactions. Usually pronounced bisexuality leads to dring during homosexual flare up (to avoid breaking through of the homosexual component). Equally, some homosexuals will drown in alcohol their heterosexual period. The phantasies ordinarily strongly suppressed by the conscious mind are thus lived through. Alcoholism also stands in close relation to masturbation; hence the diminished sexual activity of the alcoholics. They have a secret sexual objective and gratify their cravings through masturbation. When they abandon masturbation they become depressed. Other narcotomaniacs suffer from pollutions.

The great difficulty with which the drug addicts are weaned from the habit while persons using morphine to allay physical pain form no habit, is due to the dread to give up the drug-induced narcosis,

trembling with fear lest their secrets break through. During the intoxication and sleep-like state, the addict lives over again the specific, often infantile, events of his life. In many subjects a morbid impulse arises that prevents sleep, lest a crime be committed during sleep; hence insomnia and the use of drugs to overcome it. In narcotomaniacs, the periodically threatening impulse is silenced through intoxication with the drug—nor the thirst for drug is periodic but the morbid impulse which is being stifled by it. Because of this, the various "habit cures" are meaningless without the aid of analysis which must at the same time be educational. But these cases are among the most difficult to analyze, particularly because they are such notorious liars and have no sincere desire to give up their narcotics.

**CELEPTOMANIA AND ALLIED ACTS:** It is undeniably a fact that stealing is a property deeply ingrained in human nature so that in spite of punishments and all educational and religious proscriptions it cannot be uprooted. In a large sense it is a primitive reaction, since the primitive man, guided by purely egoistic drives, regarded the whole world as his rightful property. Not unlike the primitive man, the child too, shows a more or less pronounced tendency to stealthily appropriate things. The repression by society of the primitive reaction is a matter of slow evolution and its failure is often observed in neurotics and other individuals with anti-social tendencies. With the growth of repressive influences, the forbidden often exerts a tremendous attraction which in adults may express itself symbolically in "forbidden indulgences"; and many peculiarities of behavior derive their great emotional stress from the fact that they center on something forbidden.

Depending upon the particular motive behind it, there may be several types of thefts. There is to begin with the habitual thief; his motive appears to be purely a material one; the crime is committed under the control of consciousness; the act of stealing with him relieves no tension, nor brings him any joy. Then we have the theft by the fetishist whose motive is quite open and the sexual etiology quite on the surface. Not the act of stealing, nor the economic value but the sexual value of the article that is desired by the fetishist; the articles are sexual symbols fixed through some special circumstance. Finally, we have the kleptomaniac in whom the conscious motive is lacking and an irresistible impulse is observed. The kleptomaniac steals for the sake of stealing. He is at work amidst an emotional spree which amounts to an intoxication; the act is preceded by feelings of anxiety and the emotional tension seeks motor relief. Not the stolen article proper, nor its economic value is important to the

cleptomaniac; it is indeed the act of stealing proper, and the emotional release consequent upon it, that is of greatest significance to the cleptomaniac.

A group of cleptomaniacs deserving particular attention is that of the women of the better class who are often found stealing from the department stores. Here, surely, the ordinary motives for larceny are either absent or wholly disproportionate to the risk incurred. A study of these cases reveals almost universally that the deeds are traced to ungratified sexuality. Not infrequently is it observed in strongly sexed, mostly married, ungratified women, who are forced to be abstinent because of husbands' frequent absence or impotence, yet lack the courage or the opportunity of gratifying their urge. The larceny is a symbolic act for them—they are doing something that is forbidden, taking something that does not belong to them. The associative connection is responsible for the shifting of affect-energy from the sexual motive which is forbidden to the act of stealing which is more easily tolerated. The stealing as a symbol eventually becomes clothed with the whole affective value, absorbing all of the impulse energy belonging to sexuality. Cases have been observed where stealing induced in the women the same full organ as sexual intercourse. Normal but thwarted heterosexual longing is not the only determinant leading to kleptomania. Auto-erotism, infantile fixations, homosexual tendencies (from love object) sado-masochistic reactions (causing pain to the owner, or stealing—punishment—a source of pleasure) and other fixed sexual ideals may also lead to impulsive acts.

Instead of stealing we may have larval attempts at it—touching of the desired object "*folie de toucher*." Also, instead of stealing, the impulse may lead to inordinate buying—symbolically desire for a change, something new, buying new love objects. It is a repressed form of kleptomania, the desired object merely being paid for. After the article is bought, it is often promptly given away—it is not the genuine article.

Closely related to kleptomania are the lender and the borrower. In the majority of instances of the "lending mania," it is easy to prove that the individuals in question symbolically give their love to others and reciprocally wish to be loved in return. There are many persons of this type among the so-called leaders of society who overcompensate for their anti-social sadistic trends by transferring these into socialized compassion. The borrower (excluding the psychopathic type), on the other hand, stands out as a Don Juan of phantasy; for money to him means love and every person whose confidence he enjoys is one of

his love objectives, for which reason they seldom "touch" an unsympathetic person. This type is common among men, whereas among women the seeker of gifts is more frequently observed. In all these cases we find a neurosis with an emotionally stressed money complex.

In the analysis of kleptomania, a sexual root is quite universally observed. Indeed, although many impulsive acts are not plainly sexual, it is an open question whether impulsive acts are other than sexual. There is a wealth of clinical observations proving quite clearly that there exists a definite relationship between kleptomania and sexuality. In the instance of the fetichists we have individuals who are quite aware of the sexual motivation behind their deed, particularly because the act is often accompanied by orgasmal reactions. But most kleptomaniac, because of the repression of their sexual thoughts, feel no sexual excitation during the act; the pleasure of the sexual act has been transferred to the symptomatic act. There is as a rule no erection in the male kleptomaniac and perhaps but little of sensation in the female. But the accompanying secondary emotions are the same; excitation, a state of expectancy, anxiety or dread with sometimes somatic manifestations, and finally release of tension. We have here thus an affective overtone, but without the sexual counterpoint. Even where anxiety is capable of leading to orgasm and detumescence, the patients regard these manifestations only as a part of the familiar manifestations of their anxiety spells and not as a sexual process. But the release of the dammed-up affect through an action leads to freedom and to loss of tension which the subject perceives merely as a beneficent result while the minor accompanying manifestations betray to the experienced observer their sexual character.

**PYROMANIA:** Under pyromania are to be considered only those cases which present no conscious motivation. If an individual, for whatever motive, consciously and deliberately sets a house on fire, he is not necessarily a pyromaniac, especially so if it is an exceptional act with him. We speak of pyromania only when the deed is committed through passion for fire on account of an explicable impulsion and through motives that are neither clear to the man himself, nor obvious to the outsider. Such pyromania is distinctly an expression of a neurosis and as such must be viewed psychiatrically as well as legally. These individuals are typical neurotics and along with the pyromania are subject to a host of neurotic manifestations—depressions, instability, etc.; they also often suffer from other impulsions, and combinations of pyromania, kleptomania, dromomania, etc., may be often traced to a single background.

Pyromania has for a long time appeared an unsolved psychological riddle. The incendiaries themselves are unable to tell the motive which impelled him to commit the deed and the alleged reasons given—giving the firemen a chance to get busy, petty revenge, nostalgia, etc., are insufficient and puerile, the deed and motive failing to show logical relationship.

The normal interest in fire appears in us from the earliest of childhood; equally, abnormal pyromaniac tendencies may break out in children, especially at the time when they encounter the sexual problem; the motive often being revenge on adults who oppress and humiliate them; and behind that a sexual root can quite universally be found. The revenge motive is also a very frequent cause of pyromania by adults, as is also unrequited love—the latter cause being particularly observed among adolescent homesick servant girls. With women the offence is often committed either prior or at the time of menstruation or during pregnancy. The motive may sometimes be directly sadistic, the individual deriving satisfaction from the suffering of the victims. As an illustration may be cited the case of young peasant, unsuccessful in his love for a girl. Angry at her, he gets drunk, then sets fire to the house in which she slept; the motive being revenge, jealousy; symbolically setting her on fire.

It is a frequent observation that alcohol excites pyromaniac tendencies, by nullifying inhibitions and turning a slumbering unfriendly attitude into a destructive hate and an anti-social outbreak. Stekel, however, believes that the relationship between alcohol and arson is more complicated than that. It is not merely that alcohol removes inhibitions. The cause of drink is usually the same as that of pyromania. Behind both is ungratified sexuality, the individuals having failed to find their adequate, to them alone peculiar form of sexual gratification, for, however, normal an individual may appear sexually, if the gratification is not that which specifically suits his emotional needs, he is going to be a neurotic and in constant struggle between craving and inhibition. For this reason we find that in the history of pyromaniacs the problem of masturbation looms large. The pyromaniac may be sexually excited by the fire and led to masturbate during conflagration. On the other hand, with some neurotics masturbation is a defence against setting fire, and arson may be committed during a period of enforced abstinence. Or the arson is intended to free the masturbant of the habit, and cases are recorded that after the arson, the habit ceased. Among other motives which lead to arson and impotence in men and frigidity in name also play prominent roles. This follows from the

relation between masturbation and impotence; the cause of both being traceable to an unrealizable sexual goal. The instance may be cited of a man who, having proven himself impotent at the time of marriage, has set fire to the first peasant house he passed. Subsequently, whenever he was unsuccessful in his attempts at sexual intercourse, he would get up in the middle of the night and set fire to some place, the motive, presumably being that lack of potency in one field was compensated by an expression of potency in another. The wives of impotent men are also subject to pyromaniac impulses. Anesthetic women too display pyromaniac impulses the longing of fire being expressive of their desire to overcome their frigidity.

From the above it is seen that as a group the pyromaniacs are simple-minded individuals who easily transpose an impulsion to an anti-social deed; child-like, they are still guided by primitive instinctive urges, having failed to cultivate their crude emotions into socialized sentiment. Considering that one pyromaniac may do more serious harm in terms of lives and property than a dozen murderers and burglars combined, pyromania presents a very grave social problem. It is, however, distinctly approachable through psychotherapeutic means and in this lies the hope for redeeming the pyromaniac as an individual and citizen of the community. It is indeed a matter of fact, that many of them turn out later on to be very respected and useful members of the community.

**THE GAMBLER:** Gambling is so universal a phenomenon common to all people of all ages, that a certain inclination to indulge in games of chance may be considered normal; useful in a sense because it provides an outlet for a certain surplus of mental energy. With some people, however, it becomes distinctly a mania. These individuals dwell in a make-believe world, they lack any real interests in life and like all neurotics, are ready to exchange play and reality. There are individuals, who having failed to achieve the smallest distinction in life, are driven by some obscure urge into gambling in which to express some superiority. In a game, all are eager for mental supremacy; men, otherwise honest, will resort in games to tricks and cheating; in playing, trivial losses often ridiculously affect our feeling of personality. The surprises of the game with its many unforeseen possibilities constitute another of the chief incentives of gambling; they rouse our tensions as well as relieving them; they are rich in unexpected combinations.

Play and alcoholic indulgence have a common affect background and both show a certain relation to sexuality. The relation between play

and sexuality is expressed in the popular suggestion that game and love are contraries. When a young man who is engaged, does not want to give up his card parties, it is a bad sign. Abnormal sexual drives are often back of gambling; absolute or growing impotence drives some men into gambling as a compensation for sexual incompetency, while constant association with men gives expression to their underlying homosexuality.

**Tics:** In tics we have localized, involuntary, convulsive-like muscular phenomena which, although apparently organic in nature, are now recognized as being essentially functional in character and having a distinct psychic basis, being closely related to compulsion neuroses. Their psychogenic character is proven by the fact that the trouble is curable through psychotherapeutic means. Originally, a coordinated purposive act, conditioned by an idea, it has in the course of time and by repetition become habitual, finally manifesting itself involuntarily without apparent cause or purpose, and often so changed that the original motor act is not recognized. Their psychogenesis is not without interest and it has been shown by the analysis of a number of cases that tic is universally symbolic of some arrested criminal motive. As a simple illustration may be cited the case of a clerk, who, grossly insulted and persecuted by one of his superiors, felt the impulsion of slaying his hateful antagonist. He acquires a tic which plainly expresses this intention. It consists in thrusting his arm forward, as if he were stabbing. After a few months this originally purposive motion leaves only a rudiment in the form of a slight twitching of the hand which seems meaningless, hardly suggestive of the original gesture. The tic here expresses a conflict between two opposing drives, one thirsting for revenge and murder, the other inhibiting, saying: "Thou shalt not do that." The latter triumphed, but the former, although inhibited, still pressed for expression and manifests itself not in an act, but in an intention thereof, a tic of whose character the subjects integrated personality was apparently unaware. But as the danger of the meaning being interpreted and understood was too great and as the resentment was cooling off in the course of time, the originally purposive act—the arm motion of stabbing—was little by little abbreviated, changed and transformed until all that remained was a slight tremor as a rudiment or caricature (Charcot) of the original act; it has become a symbol of an action and an expression of reproach. Such masking is particularly common in the case of tics associated with forbidden sexual cravings that can not be tolerated by the integrated personality and which under no circumstances must be allowed to enter consciousness. Thus the cravings persist



like foreign bodies within the subject psyche maintaining a deep split of emotions. Quite frequent are the so-called collar tics; the individual suffering from it feels uncomfortably around the neck and constantly goes through the usual hand motion around the neck as if for want of air to breathe; the motion is repeated automatically all day long without the subject being aware of it. In one such case analyzed, Stekel was able to trace the tic to a wish on the part of the patient to kill his wife and the children, the tic expressing the fear and a warning to hang for the murder. Tics are also very common as masturbation substitutes.

The cause of tic, therefore, is a conflict between two opposing mutually exclusive drives, the tic being an arrested impulse, a sudden outbreak of an instinct, restrained by moral inhibitions. By ferreting out the unconscious motives and bringing these into the conscious, it is possible to relieve the tic; the language of the muscles becomes superfluous after being replaced by frank thoughts. The strange energy which compels the patient to carry out certain motions, is no longer foreign, and entering consciousness, it becomes a governable part of the personality.

It is difficult adequately to portray within the compass of a brief review the entire series of problems touched by Stekel in these volumes. One must go to the original source and read the many splendidly described cases in order to appreciate the significance of the problems discussed. The three cases of kleptomania, one case of pyromania and one of dromomania ("flight into parathiac delirium") are particularly worthy of careful perusal as demonstrating the deeper psychic roots of human behavior. These volumes should be on the desk of every jurist, criminologist and mental hygiene worker, because they discuss some of their problems in a manner and vigor hardly approached by others. But it not only states the problems but answers them as well. In the concluding chapter, Stekel asks the question: "To what extent are persons of this type criminals?" His unequivocal answer is that the individuals are not criminals, but sick persons suffering from morbid affectivity and pathological instinctive cravings. He indorses the motto that "The Criminal is the State's Greatest Crime." These impulsive acts, he says, have their social as well as individual causation. The patients usually belong to the unfortunate families, they are the children of drunkards, or illegitimate children with all the burdens that such status carries. Many of them are victims of abnormal family constellations; extremely seldom are they the offspring of a happy marriage. Many of these ailments are products of educational blunders—the burden of

spoiled children or of children who have been brought up without love. It is therefore possible to cure these cases from the social as well as individual standpoint. Rational training, under the guidance of a wise and rightly balanced love is the best prophylaxis for these ailments. Training by fear only generates morbid reactions, which although hidden, constantly break forth and express themselves in anti-social behavior. One can only indorse wholeheartedly this view of Stekel, for anyone who has had any experience in dealing with criminals and kept his eyes open, must have come to realize, sooner or later, not only the uselessness, but the absolute harm, of punitive measures, while benign therapeutic endeavors universally bring beneficial results. Since their troubles are deeply hidden, nothing less than deep and thorough therapy will do. Psychoanalysis enables us not only to understand these cases through uncovering the basic motives; by reversing the emotional transference, through changing the subjects feeling-attitude and over-valued ideas, it brings about salutary results in the individual character. These individuals are distinctly redeemable and their energies can be directed into socially useful channels.

The translation is nothing less than excellent as is also the printing and editing of the book. There is a good glossary at the end, although the correctness of some definitions might be questioned by some psychiatrists (Delirium—mental confusion!). The footnotes placed at the end could probably be placed more profitably at the foot of their respective pages. An index is sorely lacking. It might finally be added that these volumes do not include all of the works of Stekel on the subject of "Impulsion Neuroses." For instance, "Exhibitionism" is surely an impulsive reaction, but it is found in his volume V of the series (*Psychosexuelle Infantilismus*) while the remarkable phenomenon of fetichism, also with a large impulsive and criminal component, is discussed in rich and significant details in a separate volume VII of the series ("*Fetichismus*"). These are still untranslated. Let us hope that these volumes will soon be available to the English speaking public, more especially for the benefit of psychiatrists, jurists and criminologists.