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CRIME AND THE SOCIAL REACTION OF RIGHT AND WRONG¹

A STUDY IN CLINICAL SOCIOLOGY

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I.

As one considers the turmoil of things in the world today, two phenomena stand out as being of major importance. One is the existence throughout society of a condition of economic insecurity, the other of a condition of ethical instability. These two phenomena represent in reality an acute phase or crisis in a condition which has marked the clinical history of man from a very early period. The two conditions, though occurring simultaneously, would seem to have arisen quite independently of one another. The marked disturbance in economic values and the equally marked disturbance in moral values appear to be quite unrelated. Certainly the economists and students of ethics, in their efforts thus far to solve our social difficulties, have dealt with these two problems as quite separate disorders possessing no intrinsic bond of connection between them. In the present moment of social discord and confusion, an approach which postulates an essential identity between these two spheres of human conduct may offer certain features which are not without interest.

Science, as it surveys the surface appearance of structures to be investigated, does not concern itself only with the superficial manifestations of these structures, but seeks to discover the hidden element accountable for the obvious appearances.³ In social disorders, however, in economic competition and conflict, the obvious is still at

¹Paper read in its original outline before the Section on Legal Psychology, The Ninth International Congress of Psychology, Yale University, September 3, 1929. This study in somewhat altered form is part of a larger thesis, "The Structure of Crime," which will appear later in book form and will further develop the theme contained in "The Structure of Insanity," *Psyche Miniatures*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London, 1932.

Other writings of the author in a similar vein may be of assistance to the reader. Reference has therefore been made to these earlier studies in the course of the present essay.

²Scientific Director of The Lifwynn Foundation, New York City.

³"Physiological Behavior-Reactions in the Individual and the Community," *Psyche* (London), 1930, Vol. XI, No. 2, pp. 67-81.

a premium; man has not yet developed a technique for isolating the element or hidden causative factor answerable for these disturbances.⁴ In the sphere of human affairs, everyone prefers to assume that he possesses authority on the strength of what he already knows rather than seek authority in causes which are still unknown. Experimental evidence indicates that the subtle cause or element inseparable from the driving urge toward general social competition and disorder is traceable to the existence of a factor in man that as yet lies hidden from him. Evidence further indicates that in searching for the cause of this hidden factor underlying social competition and conflict our surest clue lies in the field of investigation that has to do with those principles which constitute man's moral and ethical codes.

In his scientific preoccupation thus far man has concerned himself exclusively with investigations into the phenomena of the external world, with the objects and events that exist about him. The present theme relates to phenomena which are subjective and internal. It relates to the results of researches into those feelings and reactions which exist within the organism of man himself and which are the very springs of his conduct. Accordingly, following some years of scientific study of human relations, it proposes what must seem the preposterous view that the commonly accepted sense or sensation of "right and wrong" governing normal behavior is identical with the sense of "right and wrong" governing the behavior of the criminal and the insane and that this normal standard of evaluation is therefore false and undependable as a measure of human conduct.

II.

Crime, like insanity, is a disorder of the individual that implicates society at large. The outstanding symptom invariably present in both these disorders is found in the individual's reaction to sensations of right and wrong. As we know, the sensations and reactions embodied in our feelings of right and wrong are expressive of the relationship of individuals to one another. In the absence of inter-individual relationships there could be no sensations of right and wrong. The condition is social. To say that the condition is social means that in our human interchange the conformity or fitness we

⁴Weeks, Arland D., "Will there be an Age of Social Invention?" *Scientific Monthly*, October, 1932.

⁵"In human relations there has not been the slightest employment of the scientific method. Instead there has been stubborn resistance to change which is thoroughly unscientific." B. E. Schaar, "Scientific Method and Social Relations," *Science*, December 16, 1932.

designate by the word "right" represents a correspondence or agreement that is based upon an outer sign or symbol. It means that the accord we designate as "right" rests upon the mental and social systems of inter-communication we express in language or external code—that it does not rest upon an inherent, biological fitness or organic agreement, as we have come unwittingly to assume, but upon an outer sign or mental *image* of agreement belonging to man's more recent symbolic, cerebral equipment. So that the confidence or trust in which man's understanding or accord now reposes is based upon a merely external, social or symbolic sense of right rather than upon a sense of biological order and fitness intrinsic to man's organism.⁵

Whether in civilized man or in savage, in the educated or the uneducated, in neurotic or normal, this external sense of right, this symbolic, dissociated criterion of conduct, in whatever form it may exist, governs all our human relationships; it permeates all our thinking and feeling, and the evidences of its pathology press upon us on every hand. Though man prides himself upon his analytic acuity and upon his powers of scientific observation, he has yet to turn about and face the meaning within him of this ever-present social reflex. When a sense of right does not conform to his wishes he does not challenge the social basis of his "right" but, merely shifting to a *seemingly* opposite position, he gives it its other name and calls it "wrong." But it is idle to run to cover with the cry that such and such is "wrong." Wrong is merely the private sense of "right" that one is caught in by a sufficient number of people maintaining a sense of right contrary to one's own.

How uncertain a basis this is, how lacking in scientific criteria and how incompetent man is to reckon with his own blindness with respect to this common measure of mankind called "right," may be seen in the outstanding instance of war. And as with war, with its clash of equally "right" and irreconcilable forces, so with the issues constantly involved in our more intimate social interrelations. For this rightness that exists socially in the normal individual is as fixed and as adamant as the rightness that exists clinically in the self-vindictory paranoiac. It may no more be argued with in the one than in the other. It is omnipotent and inaccessible.⁶

Let us take a typical case—the situation in which this sense of

⁵"Social Images versus Reality," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology and Social Psychology*, October-December, 1924, Vol. XIX, No. 3, pp. 230-235.

⁶*The Social Basis of Consciousness*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Company; London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Company, 1927.

“right” prevailing in normal society is seen in its acutest phase. A man is being tried in court for a murder committed, let us say, for motives of economic gain. The consensus of the State or community is that the accused (assuming him to be of sound mind) knew clearly what was right and did not do what he clearly knew to be right. In this position at least the community is unanimous. If with a view to his private gain the prisoner committed murder, he did not do what was right. Such is the accepted legal view.

Now in a scientific inquiry any assumption or premise is at least tentatively permissible. And so, laying aside legal, moral, traditional interpretations, let us assume, for the sake of a scientific test, that every individual acts only in accord with what is “right” and that therefore the accused possessed also this sensation or feeling subjectively experienced as a sense of right. Let us assume that at the moment of committing the crime the accused felt his crime to be right, that the economic advantage to himself rendered his act right and justified in his own feeling. This may seem a somewhat novel assumption—the assumption that one does at all times only what is right—but even upon a superficial analysis we shall find it to be by no means as novel as it appears. We shall find that we accept this assumption quite readily where it comports with our own personal interests and their social guarantees. In fact we cannot find more telling instances in which we assume individual conduct to be motivated at all times by a sense of right than in the procedure of the very court in question.

For example, no one would deny that the attorneys on the opposing sides feel themselves to be doing what is right—the one side on behalf of the State, the other on behalf of the defense. But from the standpoint of a scientific criterion—from the standpoint of a biological accord or fitness—it is obvious that they cannot both be doing what is right, since the two are taking exactly opposite positions. The attorneys for the State experience a sense of right in resorting to every effort to secure the condemnation of the prisoner. With this intent they feel it right to bias the judgment of the jury through rousing their emotions to the highest pitch of indignation, and they do this notwithstanding that it was precisely a bias of judgment due to an emotional over-stimulation that led to the crime of which the prisoner stands accused. On the other hand, the attorneys for the accused are inspired by an equal sense of right and, in their efforts to present arguments in his defense that will incite the jury to a favorable verdict, they seek quite as deliberately to stimulate the

jury to the highest point of emotional "sympathy" or partisanship.

Or suppose we assume that there is doubt whether the prisoner is of sound mind—that the case is one in which the defense bases its plea upon insanity. In this circumstance we have the not uncommon situation in which eminent psychiatrists of equal experience and training are presented with identical clinical material, and yet, of these able, sincere and representative men, each group will hold an entirely opposite opinion from the other in regard to the data before them, and this opinion will, on each side, be based equally upon its sense of "right." For one group will "swear" and bring their utmost scientific resources to prove that by every known criterion of science the man is sane; the other group, equally gifted and likewise of the highest integrity, will reconcile it with their sense of right to present a completely contrary opinion.⁷

It is clear then that both attorneys and psychiatrists may possess a definite sense of right and yet this sense of right may afford no guarantee of a scientific basis of judgment. If legal experts and recognized psychiatric authorities may have this sense of right and yet lack a consistent stabilized criterion of procedure in their own special fields, if they may preserve a sense of right and yet not be dependable in their professional judgment, is it not to be expected that the accused, who is but a layman, might well have a sense of right also and yet not be dependable in his judgment?

What then is this sensation of right that is so prevalent among us socially? Could it be that the sensation of right about which we hear so much and which is the basis of our education, of religion, of law, of our ethics, economics, sociology and philosophy—could it be that this sensation of right, as we now experience it, is after all merely one's private economic advantage, that my sense of right is one with and inseparable from my sense of gain? In the case of the murderer his sense of right was admittedly aligned with his economic advantage. But it is noteworthy that with the attorneys as with the psychiatrists in the case, their sense of right is also definitely on the side of their economic interest. Those whom the State pays see the case with the eyes of the State; that is, their sense of right and that of the State correspond *in toto*. While with the lawyers and the psychiatrists for the defense, their sense of right lies also entirely on the side from which their fee is to be derived.

It would be absurd to say that men of the highest professional standing in medicine and the law have testified falsely; that, because

⁷Gault, R. H., *Criminology*, D. C. Heath & Company, 1932, p. 401.

of the monetary gain to themselves, they have spoken contrary to their sense of right—to what they believe to be true. On the contrary they have spoken precisely out of their sense of right. That is my whole point: that where one's advantage, one's economic gain lies, there lies also one's sense or sensation of right, that what is called "right" and one's private advantage are one and the same thing.⁸ Now if we do not penalize but on the contrary place a premium upon this wholly ulterior gain or sensation called "right" as it is represented socially in the legal and in the scientific expert with all their professional background of education and culture, what must be thought of our own sense of right as a State or community when we apply a different criterion to the sense of right as it is entertained by the so-called criminal individual when in pursuit of *his* private advantage?⁹

III.

This question has arisen not as a personal, philosophical or moral issue but as the result of a medical and biological inquiry into the processes determining human relations. It is part of an inquiry which occupied many years of research into the nature of those behavior-reactions which I first had occasion to observe as they occur in nervous and mental patients.¹⁰ Our earlier experimental studies of these inter-individual reactions made plain that crime and neurosis, as they occur in the individual, implicate society at large, that

⁸Of course this external image of private gain may be entirely unconnected with any "material" profit. As often as not this image of one's external right is associated with an abrogation of one's obvious gain. As often as not it is a mark of "sacrifice" rather than of acquisition. But under whatsoever exterior guise it may appear, it is the *image* of gain of which I am speaking. It is this secret image of private gain that is everywhere paramount.

⁹A study in retrospect by Frederick A. Fenning, which appeared in *The American Journal of Psychiatry* for July, 1933, gives an interesting summary of the trial of Charles A. Guiteau who, in 1881, assassinated President Garfield. He was later convicted and hanged for the crime. In considering the arguments of the defense and the prosecution even in this very brief summary of Mr. Fenning's, it becomes evident that the weight of opinion today would be very different from what it was then. The author expresses appreciation of our greater knowledge of dynamic causations at the present time, thanks to Freud, and remarks how different the verdict in this case would have been, due to our added knowledge. In other words, our "right" opinion today would controvert completely our "right" opinion of a few decades ago. But what would seem really to require adjustment is this mentally right attitude of the individual and of the community, with its ever shifting and inconstant determinants. It is these inconsistencies in our court procedure that point clearly to the need of establishing a stabilized, scientific criterion which would eliminate such haphazard verdicts as rest upon the "right" opinion either of the individual or the group.

¹⁰"So-called 'Normal' Social Relationships Expressed in the Individual and the Group," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 1930, Vol. X, No. 1, pp. 101-116.

what applies to the negative response of the neurotic with his unbalanced reactions based upon sensations of right and wrong applies also to the positive response of the criminal with his equally arbitrary and unstabilized sensations of right and wrong. With the progress of investigation the social implications of these studies became more and more inescapable. Indeed continued studies forced the conclusion that these social implications were of major importance in our clinical investigations, demanding the inclusion of normal social groups as an essential part of the material under investigation.¹¹

In general terms the concluding evidence of these studies established a basic connection between spheres of human activity which in their superficial manifestations have always seemed wholly unrelated, notably, as has been said, between the sphere of man's economic interests and the sphere of his moral or ethical life. Economic interests as a self-advantageous aim, the identity of competition and morality or the feeling-synonymity between might and right were established experimentally as being conditions as characteristic of the neurotic "invalid" as of the so-called criminal, and these same parities were found to exist side by side also in the so-called normal personality. These social implications are further supported by the etymological testimony of the folk consciousness where we find that equity in respect to property (competitive claim) and equity in respect to morality (competitive conduct) are both expressed by the term or symbol "right."¹² While within the limits of the present paper it is not possible to trace the connection between this wholly external code or sense of "right" and the basic disorder lying back of it, at least a statement may be made in regard to certain significant conclusions. Laboratory inquiry into the reactions of individuals socially has shown that such a divisive community-expression as is presented in the court room is typical of our community or social attitude throughout society generally,¹³ and that the sense of right commonly involved in our social interchange represents a standard that is purely imaginable, symbolic and fictitious.¹⁴ It has shown that

¹¹Syz, Hans. "On a Social Approach to Neurotic Conditions." *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, December, 1927. Vol. 66, No. 6, pp. 601-615.

..... "Remarks on Group Analysis," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, July, 1928, Vol. VIII, No. 1, pp. 141-148.

¹²Compare "I am right"; "I have a right," etc. Morality and acquisition disclose a common denominator also in the etymological identity of the words "good" and "goods." (Consider German, *gut* and *güter*; and French, *bien* and *biens*.)

¹³Consider such socially "right" alternatives as Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, or the still more poignant contrast Democrat and Republican.

¹⁴As there are in the United States a New England sense of right and a Middle-Western sense of right, a Wall Street sense of right and a Western

this sense of right is purely external, that it has nothing to do with the inherent biological fitness of the organism as a functioning whole and that when applied to the tangible, biological processes underlying human behavior, it proves to be an arbitrary and uncontrollable unit of measure.¹⁵

The condition of self-contradiction observable in the court room then is not a localized or isolated condition. It is not specific to this or that particular setting or circumstance. The condition is one that is generic and *internal*. By this I mean that it is a condition which affects the *intrinsic organism* of the race. In its quest, therefore, for a remedy, the race must turn to its own organism, to a study of its own internal processes—not this person to that, or this class to that class, or this nation to some other nation, nor all nations to a League of Nations busied, as it is, only with external, diplomatic, “mental” inter-relations, but the nations as a whole need turn to a disorder which is internal to man as a species. They need as a whole to regard this self-contradiction as an anomaly of development that is resident in man’s own intrinsic processes precisely as we have learned to regard tuberculosis or other pathogenic infections as community-disorders involving structural changes in the community tissue.¹⁶

There has always been much speculation regarding the behavior of man, both external and “introspective,” individual and collective, and it has concerned itself in no small measure with those social inter-relations which are governed by man’s sensations of right and wrong. But laboratory experimentation has shown that the sensa-

Coast sense of right, who can know which of these will predominate at any given moment? Is Mr. Stimson right when he hooks us into the League, or Senator Borah when he keeps us out of it? Is Mr. Baker right when he would boycott Japan, or Mr. Lindsay Russell when he would trade with Japan? Is Mr. Hearst right when he would collect the last sou of the war debt, or Mr. Hoover, whose emissaries conversed with European diplomats in the hills and woods and paths of Lausanne informally about the prospects of cancellation?

“This is not mere difference of opinion among honorable gentlemen; it is the natural confusion arising from the pursuit of policy which has no grounding in fact, no relationship to reality, no specific and definable aim, which is concerned only with the philosophic and undiplomatic concept of the ‘good’.” George E. Sokolsky, “The American Monkey Wrench,” *The Atlantic*, December, 1932.

¹⁵Galt, William, *Phyloanalysis—A Study in the Group or Phyletic Method of Behavior-Analysis*. Psyche Miniature Series, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Company, London, 1933.

¹⁶“The Morphology of Insanity as a Racial Process,” to be published in a forthcoming issue of *The British Journal of Medical Psychology*. Published in condensed form under the title, “A Phylogenetic Study of Insanity in Its Underlying Morphology,” *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1933, Vol. 100, No. 9, pp. 648-651.

tions which exist among us as "right" and "wrong" are, with the aid of a suitable technique, perceptible as the expression of definite physiological strains and tensions within the organism of man as a totality, just as sensations of pressure, pain or hunger are the expression of physiological reactions perceptible within the organism of the single individual. It is the finding of such experimentation, when applied to physiological sensations and feelings common to the species, that these inter-individual tensions and strains are traceable to a definite physiological aberration connected with the process of attention and that this distortion has occurred in the course of man's mental evolution as a species.¹⁷ Careful inquiry shows that due to this racial deflection of attention there does not yet exist among us a subjectively dependable basis of social integrity, that the moral or external behavior-reactions of individuals to one another socially are throughout determined solely by the arbitrary measure represented in one's personal advantage or sense of right, and that our external standards of right and wrong called "normal" do not therefore represent a trustworthy, scientific criterion of human behavior. Indeed it is not too harsh to say that the reason people cherish above all things this external symbol or formulation called morality is because this symbol or formulation called morality is of all things the most readily alterable according to each individual's private right or gain.¹⁸

If then both neurosis and trespass, insanity and crime, are the direct reflection, socially, of the physiological tensions and strains that lie back of our normal standards of right and wrong, we are reversing the direction of scientific inquiry when we seek to investigate the *social symptom* expressed in crime (whether neurotically "repressed" or actually "committed") rather than *the disturbed*

¹⁷The experiments to which I refer bear upon special studies in the physiology of attention regarded as a racial process. They refer in particular to the alteration in the attentive processes which are associated with the over-specialization of the function of the external cranial senses concurrent with the evolution of man as a social animal and coincident with his invention of language and ideation. With this specific neural innovation in the process of man's bionomic relation to the external environment, certain marked changes have been occasioned in his adaptation and development socially, and these changes affect the feeling—life of the organism in a manner which closely relates them to the cause of such community phenomena as crime and insanity. (Cf. "Neuropathology and the Internal Environment," paper read at the Twenty-third Annual Meeting of the American Psychopathological Association, Washington, D. C., May 11, 1933. To be published.)

¹⁸"Our Mass Neurosis," *The Psychological Bulletin*, June, 1926, Vol. 23, No. 6, pp. 305-312.

"The Autonomy of the 'I' from the Standpoint of Group Analysis," *Psyche* (London) January, 1928, Vol. VIII, No. 31, pp. 35-50.

physiological tensions which underlie our normal standards of right and wrong.

For this element of rightness exists not only in the criminal and the neurotic, but there is evidence that every man at all times does what is "right." What one sees to be one's private advantage at the moment, whether it consist in committing an act or in refraining from it, is always governed by one's sense of right. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the condition is not isolated, local or sporadic, but that it is social. This situation clearly indicates the urgent need that society, as a social organism, prepare itself to take fresh inventory of its own processes. That which society has greatest need to face is precisely that which society is most strongly bent upon not facing. Society fails to face the fact that the two least understood classes of individuals within its structure, namely, the neurotic and the criminal, are precisely the classes who, of all people, are the most obstinately "right," and society fails to reckon with these two most right extremes because these two most right extremes are an expression of the secret "rightness" existing within the social processes of society itself.¹⁹

IV.

As in the court room, so throughout the structure of society generally there are then these two opposed extremes, these two mutually opposed and competitive forces of "right," and both are at all times equally right. These two forces do not reflect a "psychic duality of personality" either in the individual, as we have been taught, or in society; they represent a divisive element within the organism of man himself. The present conflict between law and order and the underworld forces of crime is a world-wide conflict and it expresses this basic condition of division within man's physiology as a species.²⁰ As with the individual, so with the community,

¹⁹Students of human behavior have quite generally overlooked the invariable concurrence in one and the same individual of both socially delinquent and insane trends. They have not recognized how many definitely insane persons there are who have never enacted a delusion, or how many persons of marked criminal trends who have never committed a crime. This is why so many insane persons today are occupying cells in prisons and why so many delinquents are confined in hospitals for the insane, and why, incidentally, so many of both these types of personality are moving about in our midst unsuspected of either trend. But the community, with its presumable quota of "normal" individuals, will not be competent to cope consistently with either insanity or crime until the community has recognized to what extent it combines in itself the germs of both these disorders.

²⁰"The Physiological Basis of Neurosis and Dream," *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1930, Vol. I, pp. 48-65.

it is futile to cry that one side is wrong. "Wrong" is only what the other side says. It is the reflex rejoinder of rightness in its obsessive effort to be righter still. The leaders in the industries of crime have as rigid a sense of right as the proponents of law and order. They too have their "given word" and covenants, their ideals of private gain and personal advantage. They too have their symbols and their codes, their corresponding ceremonials and pseudo-religious observances, and these rituals are no less pious nor ostentatious in *their* social group than these same insignia of rightness expressed by the leaders of our wider social communities. The inadequacy is not in the one group as contrasted with the other, but equally in the attitude of each. The reactions of both are external, mental, divisive. Each is "right" in contrast to the other who is "wrong." Both represent superficial behavior-adjustments which reflect an identical behavior-code of rightness. Both reflect a divisive social norm which in turn finds its expression in war and in general economic and industrial instability. Both, however, are secondary to a distortion of those basic physiological processes which regulate the attention and adaptation of man as a unitary organism.

Like the conflict in the court room, the conflict between these two equally competitive and equally moral behavior-expressions exists because each party is too obsessed with its own symbolic sense of "right" to permit the community-consciousness, which these two forces now dominate, to be aware of its own basic disturbance. Being thus unwittingly opposed to any investigation into the nature of the real disturbance, these two competitive interests cannot permit the processes responsible for the external symptoms of social conflict, now represented in insanity, crime and war, to be traced to their biological source within man's own structure.

If, therefore, what is called "criminal" may be traced to an element in human behavior that is inseparable from this physiologically spurious sensation reflected inter-individually in the sense of "what is right;" if, in short, this quality called criminal is inherent in the artificial social process constitutive of normal behavior, the elaborate systems for controlling human conduct which come under the head of educational training, legal psychology and criminology cannot hope on their present basis to achieve anything of real constructive value to the State or to the community.

When we consider some of the things we do to one another, as a community or nation, under the sponsorship of this social password "right," it should not be difficult, even from a quite objective

view-point (provided we ourselves are not too "right" about it), to realize the compulsive, pathological nature of this wide-spread system of self-vindication or rightness. Under its aegis we accept throughout the world systems of government which periodically send out young men by the hundreds of thousands to kill or maim one another. It is under the sponsorship of what is "right" that children are placed in factories where they must work for twelve hours a day, often engaged in supplementing the operation of machinery which subjects them to frequent and permanent injuries.²¹ We authorize a penal system under which an offender may be tortured and sometimes even beaten to death by his apprehenders before there is any opportunity of his being brought before the court, and we voice no concerted protest against a policy of legal diplomacy that secretly silences in the community any move toward the investigation of such violations. Under this same system prisoners are subjected to years of brutal treatment and abuse at the hands of prison guards specially chosen because of their record as hard-boiled disciplinarians. In our "right" notions as to the correct procedure for instilling a sense of what is "right" into the unfortunate delinquent, and in order to make sure that he shall adequately expiate his offense and "learn his lesson," we do not shrink from placing a man in solitary confinement for a period covering many years! What must be the slow agony of the gradual disintegrating influence upon the human organism resulting from the imposition upon it of such biologically abnormal conditions, none of us accustomed to walk in the free air can even dimly conceive. Only lately the newspapers reported two instances in which prisoners had experienced this form of persecution at the hands of our widely organized social Mafia for engendering in the community a sense of what is "right." One of them implored the court for a sentence of death or life imprisonment rather than risk being returned again to the horrors of solitary confinement as enforced in his own State from which there was a demand for him. Incidentally, the other prisoner in explaining to the court the actions which had led to his arrest, ventured to remark that "None of us is entirely sane," and added, "You yourself, your Honor, probably are not entirely sane!"²²

²¹Happily, since this was written, the manufacturers of cotton textiles and of other commodities have agreed to include in their codes formulated under the National Industrial Recovery Act a clause calling for the forthright elimination of Child Labor.

²²*New York Herald Tribune*, July 16, 1932, and *The New York Times*, November 29, 1932.

V.

While, as I have said, this is not an attempt to expound a scientific thesis, perhaps the foregoing brief word may be of encouragement to those sociological students who, having their ear to the ground, are not unaware of the relatively swift alterations which are taking place today within the structure of society from the point of view of *man's essential feeling-processes*. Anxious and socially "depressed" as we are in the moment, our need is the robust summoning of man's maturer powers of observation. Not comfort and the familiar shift from depression to its illusive opposite in the futile alternative of elation, but a square confronting of the deeper biological actualities that underlie the surface appearances. These actualities now wholly subjective and internal to man need to be made objective and demonstrable. Our accustomed external sense of right, our pet habits of thinking and feeling based upon what is *called* or *symbolized* as "right," notwithstanding their age-long impetus and their wide-spread social distribution, are but a subjective habituation and constitute no guide to the clear course of behavior-reconstruction that lies before us.

Man has always been enamored of the obvious, and in our deference to the obvious we are, in these times of world-strife, more than ever constrained by our limited and limiting habituations to overlook the possibility of a basic racial health. We tend to overlook the fact that life was not originally "mental," that for unreckoned ages man negotiated his world of experience without the interpolation of the cerebral symbol or of language. We forget that before the invention of this code of selective signs and symbols, through which a mentally segregated feature or part is made to stand as a sign for the whole, there existed for man as a total organism the total object and its relations. This process as a whole engaged the feeling of man's organism as a whole. Morality and division had not yet entered into and caused discord and dissension within the intrinsic feeling-life of man. Truth, as a *mental concept*, had not taken possession and usurped control of man's behavior.²³ In the process, however, of our mental or social evolution and in its gradual interpolation of this segregated part or divisive element, that is, with man's attainment of an external, symbolic knowledge of good and evil, or with his acquirement of a "sense of right," there has oc-

²³For evidence of the etymological synonymy between *sin* and *truth*, see paper by the author, "The Origin of the Incest-Awe," *The Psychoanalytic Review*, July, 1918, Vol. V, No. 3, p. 250.

curred a conflict at the very heart of man's feeling. It is this irreconcilable anomaly in the process of man's growth that is answerable for the deflection of his total and unified attention as a social organism and the consequent substitution of a *social image of rightness* for the integral functioning of man as an organized social unit.

Life with us now is so much more a matter of adjusting the symbols that *represent* conduct than an expression of the biological processes that *are* conduct. We are so much more concerned with problems of understanding than with problems of behavior—with problems that attempt to cope with behavior as a mental picture or concept rather than with behavior itself. But behavior is a problem of the total organism which no localized, picture-forming function or mental part of the organism is competent to resolve. Physiological unity and health are primary and basic to the race. The accident that has induced in man a divisive and competitive element and has split the feeling or interest of the integral social body into as many parts as there are individuals or groups of individuals composing the species is but a temporary *faux pas*—a lapse of development in the course of our growth as conscious creative organisms. However prevalent, however powerful socially the sense of right as a sense of purely personal, private, segregated interests, there is within the race an equally powerful, biological trend that makes for a healthy, whole and impartial adaptation among us. There is within man's physiological organism as a race a basic health or fitness that cannot be wholly extinguished—a health or fitness in contrast with which this external symbol called "right" with all its attending pathology may be recognized as a false and uneconomic substitution.

In closing, may I offer the suggestion that the social tension entailed in the aberrations of sensation symbolized as "right and wrong" and their demonstrable physiological basis are of significance not only to the field of medicine and biology but also in their bearing upon sociology, criminology, economics and the law. As long as we preserve as a presumably dependable measure of human conduct this illusive and variable sense of right that is now the basis of our social and political acquisitiveness, of our economic and industrial competition, of our personal and national greeds, it is not possible to bring to the regulation and adjustment of human affairs the scientific stability of a tested and controlled criterion. Until we have applied in the sphere of our human processes a technique of observation identical with that prevailing in the laboratories of structural biology else-

where, it is not possible for man to restore the basic health of function natural to his organism as an integral racial process.²⁴

²⁴Since this article was submitted for publication (September, 1932) the representatives of forty-six nations have gathered in London for the purpose of a World Economic Conference. From the reports of its proceedings, nothing could more faithfully reproduce the reflex pattern of social interreactions observable objectively under the controlled conditions of inquiry offered in the laboratory of phyloanalysis. Each representative inevitably voices only *his* point of view—the right or advantage of *his* nation or interest. So that, in reviewing the personal and social currents that prevail in such international parleys, evidence would seem to point to the existence of the same obstacle to an understanding among nations as exists among individuals. As we consider the underlying mood that characterizes our world conferences, it would seem that nations too, as well as individuals, however earnest and well-meaning, are inevitably balked in their efforts to reach an organic agreement among them. The impasse we found existing in the private advantage secretly preserved in the arbitrary right of the individual apparently exists also among aggregates of individuals and defeats no less their efforts to reach a sound and stabilized basis of intercommunication. Like tuberculosis or insanity, this ineptness of accord is an anomaly affecting the species in its innermost processes, and physiological processes which are internal to us can not be reached and altered by external argument or covenant.