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SELECTED PAPERS OF
KARL ABRAHAM M.D.



Karl Abraham, M.D., at the age of 35

SELECTED PAPERS OF
KARL ABRAHAM M.D.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR BY

ERNEST JONES

TRANSLATED BY

DOUGLAS BRYAN and

ALIX STRACHEY

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TRANSLATORS' NOTE

THE Papers and Essays translated in this volume include the whole of Abraham's more important psycho-analytic work, except his *Traum und Mythos*, which has already appeared in English, and his study on Amenhotep, for which room could not, unfortunately, be found.

With an occasional exception, where the continuity of the subject-matter seemed to require it, the chapters are arranged in chronological order.

The references in the foot-notes usually only give the title and date of first publication of the works referred to. In that case further information will be found at the end of the volume in the 'List of Books and Papers referred to'. In addition, a complete and numbered bibliography of Abraham's publications has been appended, and these works are referred to by their number, together with the initials A. B. (Abraham Bibliography).

D. B.

A. S.



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INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR ¹

THERE can be no doubt that of all the blows the science of psycho-analysis has yet suffered the death of Karl Abraham is much the most cruel and severe. We have once before lost by death a President of a Branch Society, and we miss a number of other valued workers whose names will always live in our memory. Blows of another sort have several times affected the psycho-analytical movement, one of which even brought with it the loss, by another way than death, of a President of the International Psycho-Analytical Association. But, with all due respect to the memory of our other dead colleagues, none of them meant to psycho-analysis what Karl Abraham did; for he was at once a master of its theory and practice, a pioneering contributor to our growing knowledge, a leader and organizer of the rarest order, as well as a loyal friend and colleague to all. Some of the reasons why the loss we have just sustained is so great will appear from the following record of his life and activities.

The main *events of Abraham's life*, considered externally, are as follows. He was born in Bremen on May 3, 1877, so that he was forty-eight when he died. He came of an old Jewish family that had long been resident in the Hanseatic towns of North Germany; there was an older brother, but no sister. He attended the high school at home until 1896, when he entered on the medical curriculum.

In his later school years Abraham developed an intense fondness for comparative linguistics and philology. Had he had the opportunity he would have preferred to devote himself entirely to such studies, and his interest in them persisted all his life. He certainly possessed an unusual

¹ Published in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, April 1926.

talent in this direction. Besides his mother tongue he could speak English, Spanish, Italian, and some Rhæto-Romanic; he analysed patients in the first two of these, and his paper at the International Congress of Psychology in Oxford was delivered (unwritten) in English. He also had a respectable knowledge of Danish, Dutch and French, being doubtless accustomed to hearing something of the two former languages in his childhood. He was thoroughly at home in the classics and eagerly seized the opportunity of his children's school studies to revive his familiarity with them. No one who was present at the Hague Congress in 1920 will forget the astonishment with which we heard him deliver a speech in a Latin that had to be brought up to date for the occasion.

He pursued his medical studies at Würzburg (a town for which he retained a great affection, hence perhaps the choice of it for the first German Psycho-Analytical Congress), Berlin, and Freiburg-im-Breisgau. He obtained his state doctorate in 1901 from the last-named university.

During these studies his principal interest was in biology, a fact which had a profound influence on his later work and general scientific outlook. It was while he was at Freiburg that he first became acquainted with Switzerland, the country which ever after he loved above all others. He liked the Swiss people and mode of life, but it was certainly the high mountains, which contrasted so much with his home scenery, that constituted the principal attraction. As soon as he had the chance he became an enthusiastic alpinist and made a number of first-class climbs. Like Segantini, who had died just before Abraham's first visit to Switzerland and in whose personality he was so deeply interested, he preferred the Upper Engadine to all other places on earth, and he returned there time and again. His last holiday, the convalescence from which we all hoped so much, was spent there in the summer of 1925, and he was able to carry out fairly arduous climbs even at that time. He had long cherished the desire to build a villa in that locality (near Sils Maria), and the last letter he ever wrote was a business one connected with this project.

While at Freiburg he conceived the wish to obtain a post at Burghölzli, partly so as to be in his beloved Switzerland, partly because he had been impressed by Professor Bleuler's work in psychiatry and esteemed it higher than that of any other psychiatrist. He had, however, to wait a few years before this wish could be gratified, and so in April, 1901, he accepted the post of assistant at the Berlin Municipal Asylum at Dalldorf. For his chief here, Professor Liepmann, he always preserved the greatest respect, and two scientific contributions dating from this time were in Liepmann's special field, that of aphasia and apraxia. He worked for nearly four years at Dalldorf, thus laying a sound foundation in clinical psychiatry; but in December, 1904, he was made happy by obtaining an appointment at Burghölzli, with the title of Assistant at the University Psychiatric Clinic of Zürich. Here his attention was soon turned in a more definitely psychological direction, and through Bleuler and Jung he became acquainted with Freud's works. His first contribution to psycho-analysis dates from this period, a paper (9)¹ read before an annual meeting of the German Psychiatric Society at Frankfurt. By a sad coincidence his last appearance in public was in a suburb of the same town eighteen years later, when he presided over the Ninth International Psycho-Analytical Congress.

About this time also occurred an event which was the main reason for the happiness and delight in life so characteristic of the man, and which was largely responsible for the energy and whole-hearted enjoyment with which he was able to devote himself to his work. Obtaining the appointment at Zürich coincided with his becoming engaged; and, as his position there steadily improved, he was able to marry, in January, 1906. His choice of helpmeet was supremely fortunate, for he found a partner who shared his life to the full and possessed a capacity for happiness equal to his own. A daughter was born at Zürich at the end of 1906, and a son a few years later in Berlin.

Abraham's own hope was to be able to work permanently

¹ Such numbers, in brackets, refer to the appended bibliography.

in Switzerland, but experience soon showed him that the chances of a regular psychiatric career there were very remote for a foreigner, so that he had to look elsewhere. His decision to leave was doubtless hastened by the uncomfortable atmosphere resulting from the tension between Bleuler and Jung. He therefore resigned his post in November, 1907. In the same month he met Professor Freud for the first time, on a visit he paid to him in Vienna; the last time the two met was in the August of 1924 on the Semmering. The conversations that then took place bore early fruit in an important paper (11), to which we shall have occasion to recur. The personal relations thus established ripened into a friendship which remained unclouded till the end. Abraham was one of a small group who regularly visited Professor Freud during the holiday season; on one occasion he organized a tour in which they took part in a region, the Harz, which he knew well.

In December, 1907, Abraham settled in Berlin and began a private psychiatric practice. He was helped somewhat at first by Professor Oppenheim, a relative by marriage, and he worked for a time at Oppenheim's neurological clinic; but their divergent attitude towards Freud's theories soon brought about a distance between the two men. Of more lasting assistance was that rendered by Dr. Wilhelm Fliess, whom Abraham got to know a few years later and for whom he conceived a great regard; it was Fliess who was mainly responsible for his treatment during his last illness.

Abraham was thus the first true psycho-analyst in Germany; for one can hardly call such the few men, Muthmann, Warda, etc., who had gone only a little way with Freud's theories. He immediately began, by means of private gatherings and lectures in his own house, to interest other physicians in the work. Of those whom he managed to interest at that time, however, only one, Dr. Koerber, has persevered to the present day. He also tried for a few years to present the subject at meetings of the various medical societies, where he displayed great courage and pertinacity in facing alone bitter and even fierce opposition. In spite of these qualities, however, and his characteristic

hopefulness, even Abraham had ultimately to recognize the futility of such an undertaking. But the clouds began to lift. In the autumn of 1909 Dr. Eitingon, who had also worked at Burghölzli, joined him in Berlin, and from that time on Abraham had a colleague after his own heart.

The International Psycho-Analytical Association was formally established in March, 1910, and the Berlin Psycho-Analytical Society was founded in the same month. It was the first branch of the International Association to be constituted, the Vienna and Zürich branches following in April and June respectively; both these cities had of course informal groups for years before Berlin. Of the nine original members (which included Dr. Warda, the first physician independently to give support to Freud's theories) only two still remain in the Society, Drs. Eitingon and Koerber. Something will be said later about what Abraham meant to the Berlin Society, but a few simple facts may be related at this point. He held the Presidency of the Society from its foundation until his death. He gave freely and of his best to the Society; its interests always stood first with him. He was unremitting in his attendance, in leadership and criticism. Nearly all his chief works were communicated first of all to the Society. In all he read no fewer than forty-six communications to it in the fifteen years of his Presidency, in several of which he was unavailable owing to either war or illness; twelve communications were delivered in a single year (1923). His capacities in the training and teaching of analysts found scope also outside the activities of the Society. He conducted a number of training analyses, and among his most distinguished pupils may be mentioned Helene Deutsch, Edward Glover, James Glover, Melanie Klein, Sándor Radó, and Theodor Reik. Obvious disadvantages presented themselves, however, in local workers being analysed by the President of the Society, and it was a relief to Abraham when this difficulty was brilliantly solved by Dr. Hanns Sachs being invited to Berlin in 1920 and being given an official appointment in connection with this side of the work. On the other hand, Abraham freely devoted himself

to delivering courses of lectures, and he rendered invaluable services in Berlin in this respect. The first course given under the auspices of the Society was a four weeks' one delivered in March, 1911; from then on he played a prominent part in every series arranged by the Society and later by the Lehrinstitut. Abraham was also active, though in a very minor way as compared with Eitingon, in founding and supporting the Berlin Polyclinic. From its inception in 1920 he was a prominent member of the Commission for the Education of Psycho-Analysts. In this field he was active in selecting suitable candidates, in training selected ones, particularly from abroad, and in general helpfulness in matters of organization. His time was of course too much in demand for him to engage in actual daily work at the Polyclinic itself.

Similarly Abraham's relation to the International Association was throughout a close one. He was one of the five or six who have attended every Congress so far held. The first Congress, in April, 1908, though actually organized by Dr. Jung, was mainly Austro-Hungarian in *personnel*; Abraham was one of the three 'foreigners' to speak at it (the other two being Jung and the present writer). He read a paper at every Congress except the last one, where he was deterred by ill-health together with the duties of presiding; this is a record equalled only by Professor Freud and Dr. Ferenczi. The eight papers in question are among the most valuable of his contributions to psycho-analysis, and we shall presently mention them all when considering his scientific work. At and after the Munich Congress, in 1913, Abraham led the opposition against Jung, and after the latter resigned, the Advisory Council of the Association appointed Abraham to act as provisional President until the next Congress could be held. He made all the preparations for one to take place in Dresden in the September of 1914, and did in fact preside in this provisional capacity when it finally met in Budapest in the September of 1918. At the Seventh Congress, in 1922, he was made Secretary of the International Association, and at the Eighth, in 1924, he was finally elected, amid great applause, to the position

of President. At the Ninth Congress, held the year after, he was unanimously re-elected.

Abraham was on the editorial staff of the *Zentralblatt* and *Zeitschrift* from the beginnings of these journals, and in 1919 was one of the editors of the latter. His activity here, however, was confined to matters of general policy and to contributing original papers and reviews. When Dr. Jung resigned the editorship of the *Jahrbuch* he was succeeded by Drs. Abraham and Hitschmann, who produced Band VI. in 1914. They would doubtless have continued in this capacity had it not been decided to discontinue the *Jahrbuch*.

Almost throughout the course of the war Abraham served at Allenstein, in East Prussia, where he was chief physician to the psychiatric station of the Twentieth Army Corps. The experience there gained enabled him to contribute to the psychology of war neurosis (57), and two of his most valuable other papers (52, 54) also date from this period. The war left him with a disastrous legacy of ill-health which quite possibly was the ultimate cause of his death. Toward the end of his service he contracted a severe dysentery which it cost him a great effort to throw off. Even afterwards he suffered from recurrent attacks, of which the last was in the spring of 1924. His health then appeared to be perfectly restored. In May, 1925, he accidentally inhaled a small foreign body; it was presumably infected, for within a fortnight he underwent an alarming attack of septic broncho-pneumonia that very nearly proved fatal. This left a local bronchiectasis which never entirely disappeared. A convalescence of several weeks in the Engadine was followed by the strain of presiding at the Homburg Congress, which was evidently too much for him. In the autumn, however, he appeared to be better, and even made tentative efforts to resume his work. But the condition got worse, obscure complications set in, and in November he had to enter a hospital. A fortnight later he underwent a serious operation which did not have the hoped-for effect. He gradually sank, and finally succumbed on Christmas Day, 1925. Throughout

his long and painful illness he never evinced any doubts about the outcome, and he was full of optimistic plans to the very end. His tenacity of life, strength of will, and power of bodily recuperation were all of a most extraordinary order and astounded the physicians in charge. Several times it seemed impossible that a human being could survive the appalling stress that the affliction imposed on his body, but his will and courage refused to surrender until he ceased to breathe.

* * * * *

In order to obtain a fresh and unitary view of Abraham's *scientific works* I have just re-read the whole of them and will record my impressions of them here. In a personal appraisal of this general nature it will be understood that no attempt will be made to abstract or review the works themselves in any detail. The observations that will be offered may be divided under the headings of quantity, quality, and content.

Abraham was not a voluminous writer and the actual amount of what he wrote is less than one might expect from one's sense of their significance. His printed publications, excluding merely verbal communications, consist of four small books, containing altogether less than 300 pages, and forty-nine other papers amounting to about 400 pages; in addition there will be at least one posthumous paper. Very many of these were only a page or two long, and only five exceeded twenty pages.

The fact just mentioned is doubtless to be correlated with what was perhaps the most salient feature of all Abraham's writings, namely, a remarkable conciseness. Abraham never wasted a word in saying what he had to; every sentence was pregnant with meaning, and this meaning was expressed with completely unambiguous lucidity. He had an intense feeling for the concrete; he kept close to his clinical data and never indulged in remote hypotheses. These qualities, together with an unusual degree of objectivity, were also of great value in reviewing the work of

others. The collective reviews he wrote (15, 16, 51, 73) were models of what such things should be and are of permanent value in rapidly orienting the student of psycho-analysis; the same qualities are to be observed in the numerous reviews he wrote for the *Zentralblatt* and *Zeitschrift*, which are not listed in the bibliography. Abraham was a master of exposition and especially excelled in the difficult art of presenting case-histories. It is well known how hard it is to enter into a report of someone else's cases, which is apt to be so incomplete as to be useless or else so long and confused as to be boring. Abraham's smooth and easy style, combined with his feeling for the essential, enabled him to initiate the reader into the gist of a case in a page or two, and the clinical data with which he fortified his conclusions were always as interesting as they were instructive. Few writers on psycho-analysis have equalled him in the gift of clear and attractive style, a gift all the more valuable in dealing with such a complicated subject-matter.

Coming now to the nature and content of Abraham's writings, we should constantly bear in mind, in estimating their significance, the date at which they were written. It is a testimonial to the general accuracy of his work that so much of it has become incorporated into our daily knowledge as to make it not easy to appreciate the novelty it once had. His writings fall in a general way into four groups. There are first those pioneering works to which reference has just been made; among them may be mentioned those on the psychology of dementia præcox (11), the sexual aspects of alcoholism (12), the influence of incestuous fixations in the choice of a mate (13), and his book on dreams and myths (14). Secondly, there is a number of neat and finished studies, classics which we can always re-read with enjoyment and instruction; such are his essays on hysterical dream phantasies (17), Segantini (30), Amenhotep (34), the transformations of scopophilia (43), ejaculatio præcox (54), war neuroses (57), and the castration complex in women (67). Thirdly, we have his most original works, which constitute a valuable and permanent addition to our knowledge; prominent among these one would place his

investigations into the pregenital stage of development (52) with his two books on the evolution of the libido (105) and character formation (106) respectively. The fourth and last group would comprise a large number of shorter papers always containing data that illustrated, confirmed or expanded our knowledge of psycho-analytical theory and practice.

In reviewing Abraham's writings as a whole one is especially struck with the remarkable many-sidedness of them. They cover the whole field of psycho-analysis and there are few parts of that vast field which they do not illuminate. Even on the aspects of psycho-analysis on which he wrote least, *e.g.* homosexuality, dream interpretation, and education, enough is implied in his other works to show that he was thoroughly conversant with the problems involved. The variety of his writings makes it expedient to divide them into different groups, and for the present purpose five main headings have been chosen.

1. *Childhood* (including Infantile Sexuality). Abraham's first two papers on psycho-analysis dealt with infantile traumata (9, 10), and from the first he was concerned to point out the dynamic aspects of the individual's reaction to the trauma. He showed how the repeated experiencing of sexual assaults constitutes with some children a regular form of their sexual activity, an aspect of the subject quite ignored by criminologists, and indeed by psychologists. In the same connection, with special reference to the traumatic neuroses, he dealt with unconscious impulses directed against the self (injury or death), a theme which recurs many times in his works. These impulses, which we should now describe in terms of hostility against the ego or against some renounced object which has been incorporated into the ego, he attributed at that time to unconscious masochism.

We pass now from his first writings to some of his last, which may well be called his most important ones. I refer to his work on the pregenital stage of libidinal development. Already in 1913 the title of a communication to the Berlin Society (41) tells us that he was preoccupied with the inter-

relation of the nutritional and sexual instincts, and in 1916 he published one of the two most brilliant contributions he ever made to psycho-analysis (52). With the aid of an astonishing case material, containing examples of infantile oral habits persisting to an age when their erotic nature could be put beyond doubt by direct introspection, he confirmed to the full Freud's conclusions about oral erotism. Adopting Freud's terms 'pregenital' and 'cannibalistic', he greatly enriched our knowledge of this phase in development, particularly as regards the phenomena in later life derived from it. Notable in the latter connection are the important relationships he established between oral erotism on the one hand and sleep and speech on the other. Many disturbances in eating were traced to a similar source. He distinguished between the cases where a disjunction has been effected between the two forms of mouth activity (nutritional and erotic), which are at first so closely united, and those where the union has persisted; and he pointed out that adult thumb-suckers, etc., belong to the former class, *i.e.* are in a more advanced stage of development than the person afflicted with neurotic disturbances of the eating function. The clinical parts of this paper, on manic-depressive insanity, will be mentioned in a later connection.

The continuation of this work, which took the form of a book published only last year (105), contains such a wealth of thought and investigation that no summary could do it justice. It is Abraham's weightiest contribution to psycho-analysis. In it he subdivides the three main stages in libidinal development into six: oral (1, sucking; 2, biting); anal-sadistic (1, destructive and expulsive; 2, mastering and retaining); genital (1, partial love or phallic; 2, adult). None of these subdivisions was entirely original on his part, but the detailed and explicit way in which he analysed them and showed the precise relation of one to the other constitutes a masterly piece of work which must always rank highly in psycho-analytical literature. In conjunction with van Ophuijsen he clarified the problems of the infant's relation to its object on the alimentary level (incorporation,

expulsion, etc.), and threw a flood of light on the obscure problems of pregenital sexual life altogether.

Among other contributions to the study of childhood may be mentioned his papers on the part played by grandparents in infantile phantasy (40), the effects of overheard coitus (42; see also 43, Sect. ii.), the narcissistic attitude of infants towards excretory processes (63), and a series of pretty observations on infantile sexual theories (83, 94, 110); Nos. 38, 85, and 93 also belong to this group.

2. *Sexuality*. Abraham's interest in pregenital development was paralleled by that in the component instincts out of which adult sexuality is evolved. In an early paper on a case of foot and corset fetishism (18), he showed how the ophresiolagniac, scopolagniac and sadistic impulses could undergo a complicated process of intertwining and displacement so as to produce a manifest perversion.

His lengthiest single paper was concerned with the restrictions and transformations that the scopophilic impulse may undergo (43). Using a rich case material on which to found his conclusions, he dealt with the various forms of anxiety in regard to the visual function, other disturbances of this function, and neurotic affections of the visual organ itself. He traced the neurotic dread of light to displacements from an ambivalent attitude towards the parental genitalia, particularly the paternal ones; one case of hysteria and two of dementia præcox were described in this connection and the therapeutic results recorded. Further themes in the same paper are ophthalmic pain and other neurotic eye symptoms, the symbolic significance of darkness (which will be described presently), phobias relating to ghosts and the sun, and a number of problems belonging to applied psycho-analysis which will be mentioned in their appropriate connection.

A clever paper written in the middle of the war solved many problems relating to ejaculatio præcox (54). Again illustrating his points throughout from his ample clinical experience, he demonstrated how this symptom results from a failure in the evolution of urethral erotism. It is not, however, simply a fixation on this form of erotism, for it does

not occur in masturbation, but depends on some feature in the object relationship. The cowardice characteristic of the condition, and the dread of hurting women, indicate repressed sadism. Such patients have a narcissistic over-estimation of the penis as being the urinary organ; they wish to exhibit urination in front of the woman, and because of her supposed contempt for the performance they react in a hostile manner by the impulse to pollute her. Disappointed love in respect of the mother, and consequently hostility towards her, furnish the key to the situation, as so often with the problems Abraham studied.

Another extremely valuable paper is concerned with the obverse of this attitude, *i.e.* with the hostility of women towards men as displayed in what Abraham termed the female castration complex (67). This contribution, which is extremely rich and suggestive, constitutes the basis of our knowledge of an obscure topic and has already opened the way to important later investigations. After discussing the various ways in which the girl may react to the belief that she has been castrated, the replacement of the wish for a penis by that for a child (confirmed by Freud's latest contribution on the subject at the Homburg Congress), and so on, Abraham distinguished two neurotic types, which are, however, evidently not to be too sharply separated. They result respectively from repression of the wish to take over the man's part in a positive direction and of the wish to avenge themselves by castrating the man; he called them the wish-fulfilling and the revenge types respectively. He contrasted these neuroses with the more positive expressions in character formation, the former corresponding with female homosexuality and the latter with the archaic sadistic reaction. The motivating impulse in the second type is to bite off the man's penis, or at least to diminish his potency by disappointing him with frigidity and in other complicated hostile ways that will bring him into a position of contempt. This attitude logically culminates in a strong depreciation of the penis, and of men in general. Abraham showed the connection of the complex with various neurotic symptoms, such as vaginismus, enuresis,

conjunctivitis neurotica, etc., and also pointed out the numerous ways in which it may influence women in their object choice. Last, but not least, he showed how such women can transmit their complex-conditioned reactions to their children.

Abraham's contributions in the sphere of love relationships in the usual sense are less extensive. In one of his first papers (13) he showed how marriages among relatives are often the expression of an incestuous fixation, a fact of importance in connection with the transmission of neurotic tendencies. In this connection he also pointed out (at the same time as Ferenczi) the part played by such fixations in the ætiology of psychical impotence and frigidity. Another manifestation of this fixation he saw in the undue tendency to monogamy. Some years later he published a pendant to this study in which he discussed the obverse manifestation of neurotic exogamy (45). Incestuous fixation was the theme of several other papers (*e.g.* 20, 22, 23, 53, 97, 98, 107, 112), and was of course extensively taken into account in all his analytic work.

Other papers on purely sexual topics are two on sadism (21 and 33), one on the ear passage as an erotogenic zone (46), two on anal erotism (48 and 70) which will be mentioned later, and a number of shorter ones (66, 86, 88, 89, 103).

3. *Clinical Subjects.* As was to be expected from a clinician of Abraham's rank, his contributions in this sphere are of special importance. The first one of note marked a turning-point in our knowledge of the psychology of dementia præcox (11) and the differentiation between neuroses and psychoses in general. It is a matter for wonderment that a professional psychiatrist such as he was never returned to this subject later; presumably it was because his interest in this field was concentrated in the attempt to unravel another psychosis. Jealous colleagues in Zürich unjustly accused him of not sufficiently acknowledging his indebtedness to Jung in connection with this paper, but events showed clearly that Jung never accepted the main idea of the paper, which, as Abraham himself

avowed, emanated from a conversation with Freud (his first one). The main idea in question was the suggestion that disturbances of the ego functions could be purely secondary to disturbances in the sphere of the libido, in which event it might be possible to apply Freud's libido theory to the elucidation of dementia præcox. After discussing the relation between sublimation and transference, Abraham pointed out that the capacity for both these processes is diminished in dementia præcox, and that the so-called dementia is simply the result of this state of affairs. In it the libido is withdrawn from objects—the opposite of hysteria, where there is an exaggerated object cathexis—and applied to the self. To this he traced the delusions of persecution and megalomania, the latter being an expression of auto-erotic sexual overestimation (of what later became termed narcissism). In contradistinction from hysteria, the psycho-sexual peculiarity of dementia præcox lies in an inhibited development at the auto-erotic level, with consequently a tendency to regress to this level.

Abraham's most systematic, and probably his most important, contribution to psychopathology consists in his three works on manic-depressive insanity. The brilliance of Freud's essay in the same field, and the striking manner in which he found the central key to the problems, have doubtless obscured some of the credit which Abraham deserved, as genius always does when brought side by side with talent; and this was probably heightened by a purely accidental circumstance: *Trauer und Melancholie*, that is to say, was written at a time when no reference could be made in it to some valuable contributions which Abraham had recently made (52), although, owing to war conditions, it was not actually published until a year later than the latter. No works of Abraham's reveal his scientific characteristics, as regards both his capacities and his limitations, better than these on manic-depressive insanity. It was also the study which evidently fascinated him more than any other, although it is probable, as indeed is hinted by the titles of two out of the three works, that he was more interested in the light the disease throws on certain early stages

of libidinal development than in the clinical problems as such.

In his first paper on the subject (*Ansätze, etc.*, 26), which was read at the Weimar Congress in 1911, Abraham started from the assumption that depression must bear a relation to grief similar to that of anxiety to fear, and he came to the conclusion that the despair about life is the result of a renunciation of the sexual goal. He narrated six cases, in all of which he found both clinical and psychological features very much akin to those of the obsessional neurosis. Thus, the patients showed many characteristics of the latter condition in the so-called free interval, and in both conditions there is a mutual paralysis of the love and hate instincts. In manic-depressive insanity the libido shows predominantly an attitude of hatred. It is as though the patient said: "I cannot love because of my hate; the result is that I am hated and so I am depressed and hate back" (return of the repressed sadism). The sense of guilt and sin corresponds with repressed hate. The delusion of poverty is an expression of the same fact (money = love). In mania the complexes overcome the inhibitions and the patient reverts to the care-free state of childhood. He related the beneficial effects of his therapeutic endeavours and regarded them as justifying the hope that it would fall to psycho-analysis to free psychiatry from the nightmare of therapeutic nihilism.

His treatment of these clinical problems is more incidental in the second contribution (*Untersuchungen über die früheste prägenitale Entwicklungsstufe der Libido*, 52), but none the less important. He here clearly recognized the oral fixation in melancholia and was able to explain a number of clinical features on that basis. Thus the refusal of food is due to regression to the old connection between eating and oral erotism, as is also the dread of starvation. He was further able to formulate the distinction between manic-depressive insanity and the closely allied obsessional neurosis in terms of pregenital libidinal organization. In the latter condition, with its anal-sadistic fixation, the attitude towards the object is one of mastering, whereas in the former condition it is one of annihilating through swallowing (late oral stage). The

most striking feature of melancholia, the intense self-reproaches and self-depreciation, Abraham regarded as self-punishment induced by horror at the repressed cannibalistic impulses. In this he was partly right, for a certain number of these do emanate in this way from a guilty conscience, but he failed to make the much more important observation, which Freud said was 'not at all hard to perceive', to the effect that these reproaches are chiefly directed against the image of the lost love-object which has been erected within the ego. In a later paper he described his difficulty in understanding the point when he first read it in Freud's essay, and gave some personal explanation for his inhibition; it is not likely, however, that the explanation was a complete one. For a man of his rigid ethical standards it was evidently easier to grasp the fact that a person could inflict on himself severe suffering as a punishment for having had hostile wishes directed against a love-object than to believe that such a person was still torturing the image of that object.

His third and most complete study of the problem (105) took full cognizance of Freud's epoch-making essay, and Abraham was able to confirm all Freud's conclusions in detail and even to amplify some of them. He identified the incorporating of the object to which Freud had called attention with the swallowing impulse dating from the oral stage, and in this connection he developed some interesting considerations about the process of introjection in general. The facts that in the free interval the melancholiac can advance to an obsessional (*i.e.* anal-sadistic) level, and further, that an essential difference between the two conditions is that the melancholiac gives up his object relationship whereas the obsessional neurotic retains his (Freud), brought him to the conclusion that the anal-sadistic phase must have two sub-stages (see above). He suggested that the line of demarcation between these two sub-stages may be of great practical importance in psychiatry as indicating the point where true object-relationship sets in, thus pointing to one of the main distinctions between neurosis and psychosis. The ætiology of manic-depressive insanity he sought in a con-

stitutionally strong oral erotism, with a special fixation at this level induced by severe disappointments in relation to the mother; he distinguished between disappointments of this kind that occur before, during, and after the Oedipus stage. The melancholiac's hatred is predominantly directed against the mother, but in a later passage Abraham pointed out that some of this originally referred to the father, there being in this disorder an unusual tendency to invert the Oedipus complex. This feature, and the ambivalence concerning both parents lead to complicated forms of introjection, and he could distinguish between reproaches emanating from either introjected love-object against the self and those directed by the self against the image of the object; the latter are, of course, the principal and more characteristic ones.

Abraham drew an interesting parallel between melancholia and the processes of archaic grief as elucidated by Róheim. He further threw much light on the obscure matter of the curious course run by manic-depressive insanity. He regarded the incorporating of the object in the oral phase as being partly determined by an endeavour to preserve it from annihilation and considered that then, after the sadistic attack had worn itself out, the image of the love-object is once more expelled—by the anal route. He drew a picture of what he called the 'primal depression' of infancy, the precursor of later melancholia, and suggested that patients affected with mania not preceded by melancholia were still engaged in shaking off this primal depression and the heightened sexual desire that follows the working through of grief, particularly as seen in primitive ceremonies.

In an early work on hysterical dream states (17) Abraham brought this syndrome, described by Löwenfeld, into relation with Freud's work on hysterical attacks and traced the genesis of them to masturbation phantasies which have undergone repression. Such patients linger in the stage of preliminary pleasure because end pleasure is associated with anxiety. He narrated six cases of the kind. In one of them he was able to trace the symptom of macropsia to a regression to childhood. His study of the condition fur-

nished a link between allo- and hetero-suggestion, inasmuch as the attacks could be shown to occur either quite spontaneously or in the presence of people by whom the patients felt themselves to be hypnotically influenced. Several of Abraham's short papers were on the subject of phantasy life, and his pretty analysis of the father-saving type of phantasy (76) is specially worthy of remembrance in this connection.

Abraham published two papers on locomotor anxiety (39 and 44), a condition of which he had suffered slight symptoms himself in early life. He showed that the sexual origin of the anxiety could be demonstrated by re-converting it therapeutically, when the same patients took an unusual pleasure in locomotor acts (both active and passive). In the same paper (44) he threw light on the common symptom of 'dread of dread' by connecting it with repression of 'fore-pleasure'.

His war experience enabled him to confirm independently the view that had been put forward by the present writer concerning the narcissistic origin of the so-called 'war-shock' cases (57), as did also Ferenczi shortly afterwards. Criticism is often made of the supposedly subjective nature of psycho-analytic work, but this may be quoted as an experimental demonstration of the contrary. When faced with entirely novel problems observers in different countries, quite cut off from one another by war conditions, investigated them and came to substantially the same conclusions.

In a discussion on Ferenczi's work on tic, Abraham threw out the interesting suggestion that the condition represents a conversion symptom on the anal-sadistic level to be contrasted with the symptoms of conversion-hysteria developed on the phallic level (72).

Abraham's contributions on the subject of therapeutics were few, but important. The chief one was certainly his study of a special and difficult type of reaction characteristic of some patients (58). They are mostly obsessional neurotics who show a high degree of narcissistic defiance and who tend to avoid transference by identifying themselves with the analyst. They insist on conducting their analysis themselves,

a tendency which Abraham connected with anal-sadistic reactions. Forbidden masturbation plays an important part in the ætiology of such cases. Abraham discussed helpfully the special therapeutic technique needed to deal with this difficult type. His paper on psycho-analytic treatment in advanced years (62) may be summed up in the dictum that the prognosis depends more on the age of the neurosis (*i.e.* the age of the patient at which the neurosis became severe) than on the actual age of the patient. Special measures are necessary, however, in these older cases, such as more active pressure and help on the part of the analyst. In this connection may also be mentioned the clear way in which he illustrated the value of Freud's advice not to encourage patients to write down their dreams before analysis (37). Finally, Abraham's work on the treatment of psychotic patients is the best we yet possess, and he must certainly be regarded as a pioneer in this difficult field. He showed a rare degree of scepticism and critical honesty in recording his results (26, 105), and he suggested useful criteria (*e.g.* transitory symptoms) for determining what proportion of a given change in mental state could be ascribed to the actual therapeutic endeavours of the physician. He demonstrated that manic-depressive insanity can, in favourable cases, be radically affected by psycho-analysis, and he was very hopeful of further progress along these lines.

Abraham took a special interest in the problems of alcoholism and drug habits. Almost the only papers he wrote in pre-analytical days, apart from those evidently inspired by his teacher's interests, were on the effects of drug-taking (3 and 4). His early paper on the relations between alcoholism and sexuality (12) showed the essential nature of the connection between the two and was the foundation of all our later knowledge on the subject. Indeed the only important later contribution that has been made on this matter has dealt with the inherent relation between alcoholism and homosexuality, a connection which, curiously enough, Abraham pointed out only in regard to women. He missed also the homosexual basis of alcoholic delusions of jealousy, ascribing these only to the displace-

ment of guilt on to the mate. He showed, however, that the motive of drinking was temporarily to heighten sexual potency by undoing repressions and sublimations and releasing especially the component impulses, and further that alcohol betrays its user later by diminishing his potency. He also revealed the unconscious identification of alcohol with semen, and of syringe with phallus. The connection between morphinism and repressed sexuality was insisted on in the same contribution, as also in later passages (17, S. 14 ; 52, S. 84), where the oral basis of both smoking and morphinism was pointed out.

The numerous short communications on clinical subjects (24, 31, 32, 36, 49, 55, 68, 71, 90, 91, 104, 111) mostly contain notable observations and suggestions. One may remark that Abraham's interest in the obsessional neurosis seems to have been greater than that in hysteria. A clinical paper on Coué's teachings (115), not available at the moment of writing, is being prepared from notes left by Abraham, and will be published at the same time as this obituary.

4. *General Topics.* By far the most important work of a general nature that Abraham contributed to psycho-analysis was his investigation of characterology. Two of the three studies were published separately, and then all three united in a single volume (106). In his essay on the anal character Abraham expanded the extensive work that had been done on this subject and added a number of fresh observations of considerable clinical and characterological value. We may especially note the two types he distinguished of excessive docility and defiance respectively, both of which may be present in the same person. He showed also how the two types react in the analytic situation: the latter one produces a resistance very similar to the characteristic one he had described in another connection (58, see above), whereas the former one, on the other hand, insists on the analyst doing the whole work himself; in both cases the result is a refusal to enter upon free associations. The details of regression from the genital to the anal level were also dealt with in an illuminating way.

The second essay, on the contributions made by oral erotism to character-formation, was one of Abraham's most original contributions to psycho-analysis. The indirect effects of oral erotism in later life are in great part produced through the connection between it and anal erotism, and here Abraham showed how primordial is the triangular relationship between the functions of acquiring, possessing and expending, the economy of which varies greatly among different persons. Direct gratification of oral erotism is of course permitted to a considerable extent in the adult, so that sublimation is less extensive than it is with some other erotogenic zones. The most typical form of sublimation seems to be the character trait of optimism, one which Abraham himself possessed in a high degree; it contrasts with the seriousness and pessimism of certain anal types, particularly those associated with early disappointments of oral gratification. If this disappointment occurs during the second—biting—phase of the oral stage, then the later love will be characterized by great ambivalency due to the cannibalistic and hostile attitude towards the mother persisting. Abraham threw a great deal of light on the genesis and interrelation of other traits concerned with oral-erotic displacements, notably greed, envy, thrift, avarice, and impatience.

The third essay in this series dealt with the 'genital character', and so was concerned with the problems of normality. Abraham disclaimed any attempt to set up absolute standards in this respect, and indeed insisted at length on the impossibility of doing so, but he nevertheless gave us a very valuable point of view by inquiring which of the pregenital features are the last to be relinquished. He found that the most severe way of testing genital normality was to ascertain the extent to which the subject has overcome his narcissism and the attitude of ambivalency that runs through most of the earlier stages. In his discussion of the importance of aim-deflected feelings of genital origin for a satisfactory relationship with the outer world, Abraham dwelt on the supreme necessity of love in childhood and the injurious effects that may result from the child receiving too little of this essential pabulum.

In the same connection may perhaps be mentioned Abraham's attempts to solve the problems of grief (105). This also he considered to have an important connection with oral attitudes. Whereas Freud lays stress on the gradual and painful tearing of oneself away from the loved object under the demands of reality, Abraham paid more attention to the incorporation of the image of this object, and he regarded this as being carried out by the oral mechanism. (It is doubtful, however, whether this is a regular process in the 'grief-work'.)

As a general contribution to psycho-analysis should also be mentioned the numerous social implications that belong to Abraham's work on the female castration complex (67, see above). These will be of very great importance sociologically in the future, and when they are more fully worked out the part that Abraham played in indicating them will not be forgotten.

Abraham's contributions to our knowledge of individual symbolisms were fairly extensive, and they have now for the most part been incorporated in the general body of science. Among them may be noted: house and garden as symbols of the mother, new house as that of the strange woman or baby (25 and 96); snake as a symbol of the *father's* penis, with the fear of death as a manifestation of dread of the father (32); spider as a symbol of the feared mother (80); his beautiful analysis of the forked road in connection with the Oedipus saga, as well as of the number three (76 and 82); and darkness (or anything mysterious and obscure) as a symbol of the mother's womb (including bowel) (43).

Abraham confirmed Stekel's observation about the significance of personal names (28), though he added little new on the point. He also made several contributions to the psychopathology of every-day life, both throughout his clinical writings and in a few special notes (*e.g.* 78, 79, etc.).

5. *Applied Psycho-Analysis.* Abraham's first work in this field was of historical importance (14), for it opened the way for much of the later research that has been carried out in the application of psycho-analysis to mythology, by Otto

Rank, Theodor Reik, and others. It was of course mainly inspired by the Oedipus analysis in the *Traumdeutung*. Justifying the attempt to correlate dreams and myths on the ground that they are both products of human phantasy, he showed the far-reaching connections between the two. With both the essence of the phantasy is a wish-fulfilment and the wishes in both cases are unconscious and infantile. The egocentricity of the individual in the one corresponds with the egocentricity of the people in the other. The phenomena of censorship, repression and the formation of neologisms are common to both, as are the mechanisms of condensation, displacement, and secondary elaboration. He illustrated these conclusions by presenting some dream analyses side by side with a most interesting study of the Prometheus myth and the legend of the divine drinks; incidentally the sexual nature of the latter, soma, nectar and ambrosia, was clearly pointed out. Making good use of his philological knowledge, Abraham pointed out the resemblances between the etymological and the psycho-analytic points of view and showed how our knowledge of symbolism could be derived from investigation of the one field as well as from the other. His final conclusion was that 'myths are relics from the infantile mental life of the people, and dreams constitute the myths of the individual'. The universal validity of determinism in mental life was also insisted on. The book is written with extraordinary skill, and illustrates Abraham's lucidity and simplicity at their best. Although the contents are now fully assimilated in analytical circles, it is still a pleasure to re-read it and enjoy the powers of exposition which Abraham possessed in so high a degree.

Abraham's next work in this field also took book form, an interesting study of the Swiss painter Segantini (30). It was almost the first time that an attempt was made to analyse the personality of a painter and to correlate in detail the painter's unconscious trends with his choice of theme, composition, and mode of presentation. He demonstrated the enormous influence the painter's mother exercised on both his life and his work, and he was able to

trace in detail the ambivalent attitude of love and hate the painter bore to her; once more we have a study of the 'evil mother'. The closing pages of this book contain a remarkable foreshadowing of Freud's conception of the death instinct in its investigation of the unconscious motives leading to self-destruction. Abraham's interest in this study was evidently with the psychology of the artist rather than in the psychology of art itself, but in a later paper (100), unfortunately never printed, he took up the question of the tendencies in modern art as seen from a psycho-analytic point of view.

Abraham's analysis of Amenhotep IV. (Echnaton) (34) is not only of great interest in itself, but is noteworthy as being the first occasion when it was shown how a knowledge of psycho-analysis could contribute to the elucidation of purely historical problems. To attempt the psycho-analysis of someone who died some twenty-three centuries ago may have seemed a desperate undertaking, but Abraham's painstaking study had nothing of the hypothetical about it, and the conclusions he reached will be hard ever to impugn. Echnaton, 'the first great man in the spiritual realm to be recorded by history', was a forerunner of the Christian teachers of the doctrine of love and an ethical revolutionary who reserved his hate for his father only. Abraham was able to show how all Echnaton's innovations, iconoclasms and reforms could be directly traced to the effects of his Oedipus complex.

Abraham's wide education and general knowledge were turned to good account in many of his psycho-analytical studies. In his detailed investigation of scopophilia (43, see above) he expounded his general conclusions with the help of a mass of mythological and folk-loristic material. His equating of beliefs and fears concerning the sun and ghosts respectively was a noteworthy achievement in this paper, and in it he also clearly indicated the ambivalence of the motives that led to man displacing the father on to the heavens (exaltation and relegation to a distance). In the same paper he made a practical contribution to our knowledge of sublimation in science, philosophy and

religion by showing how chafing solicitude for the solving of questions that cannot be answered, such as those to do with the aim of life, the length of life, and the outcome of life after death, is largely the result of unconscious displacement from questions that may not or dare not be answered.

The same wide range of knowledge comes to expression in a number of shorter papers in the field of applied psycho-analysis, such as those on the significance of the 'day of atonement' rites (64), the note on the Russian sect of yoni worshippers (25), the clever analysis of the details in the Oedipus legend (76 and 82), and many others (29, 56, 59, 64, 69, 84). The last paper ever published by Abraham (95), a most interesting study of a rogue he had come across, was a thoughtful contribution to one of the chief problems in criminology.

Summary. In attempting to summarize in a few words the essential characteristics of Abraham's written work, one would select the features of many-sidedness, one which speaks for itself in the review just made, and the high general average of excellence he maintained in his writings; hardly anything he wrote was of merely ephemeral value, and his work throughout was marked by the valuable qualities of sobriety, cautious scepticism and good judgement.

This evenness in quality may perhaps be correlated with an important feature of Abraham's mode of thought, namely, his consistently biological outlook. This gave a stable background to all his work and furnished a criterion by which the inherent probability or validity of any general conclusion could be measured. One may be permitted the reflection that of all the many ways in which Abraham will be missed in psycho-analysis, the one that may well have the weightiest consequences for the future will be in connection with this very feature. Psycho-analysis has not even yet come to the most decisive turning-point in its development, although it has successfully survived important preliminary ones. That will come, and very likely within the next twenty years, when the question of incor-

porating psycho-analysis into the general body of science seriously arises. There the most severe test for the young science will present itself, for much will depend on the alternatives of whether it will be absorbed by a process of partial acceptance and continual attenuation, or whether it will display sufficient vitality to preserve its essential qualities and impart them to the other branches of science with which it will come into contact. Just in this task which lies before us Abraham's characteristic qualities would undoubtedly have been of peculiar value, for he possessed a breadth and sanity of outlook over science and life as a whole combined in a rare degree with a single-minded vision of the depths of psycho-analytic truths.

On studying his original contributions one is struck by the preponderance of themes dealing with the pregenital stages of development, including auto-erotism and the component instincts, and with the element of repressed hate, especially in regard to the mother. The latter theme recurs again and again in his works and far outweighs in extent his contributions in the sphere of love, transference, and akin problems. It is similarly remarkable that such a first-class clinician, a man with whom the clinical point of view was always the dominant one, contributed less to our knowledge of purely clinical problems, such as problems of the transference neuroses or even the psychoses (in spite of his work on manic-depressive insanity, which was the outstanding one in this field), than to genetic problems of libidinal development. It is likely that he will be remembered longer for his contributions in the genetic than for those in the clinical field.

If one had to select Abraham's most important single piece of work, though never forgetting the variety of his valuable contributions to all aspects of psycho-analysis, it would probably be that on oral erotism. Here he described in full its various manifestations, traced clearly its internal development and its evolution into succeeding libidinal phases, worked out its relation to both love and hate, demonstrated its clinical importance in respect of alcoholism, drug-taking, and especially manic-depressive insanity, and

—last but not least—gave us a revealing picture of the significant part it plays in the formation of character. Perhaps the most outstanding lesson in psychology we owe to Abraham is the vast importance of the suckling period and the fateful consequences that antagonism aroused to the mother during this period may have for later life.

* * * * *

It remains to say something about Karl Abraham's personality, about his personal value to psycho-analysis. We have attempted to present an objective estimate of what Abraham's scientific writings have meant and mean for the development of our knowledge, but his value to psycho-analysis greatly transcended even this. The nature of it may be hinted at by a single consideration: just as he was the central fulcrum through which the advance of psycho-analysis operated in Berlin, and in Germany altogether, so his influence insensibly made Berlin in many important respects the centre of the whole international psycho-analytical movement. To understand the secret of this achievement is to know Abraham. For the dominating position he attained in psycho-analysis was not in the smallest degree the result of any personal ambition or striving; it proceeded altogether from the automatic consequence of his intrinsic worth, and therein lay the greatness of the man.

Some men are born to be leaders. It is in their nature to command others. Abraham was not such a man. To the very end, as he remarked to me at the Homburg Congress, he found it strange that he should occupy a prominent position; it was, as he said, foreign to his nature, and it was not easy for him to apprehend and accept the evident fact. His influence over his fellows and the important part he played sprang not from any desire for eminence, but from more solid qualities, from a surpassing worth that could not but be recognized. What were those qualities?

This question can be answered only by resolving an antinomy. Prominent among Abraham's character traits

were a refreshing youthfulness and a sanguine optimism. Now these are not traits that usually inspire implicit reliance, nor do they generally go with such qualities as cautious scepticism and calm, sober judgement on which we laid stress when considering Abraham's scientific work. Nevertheless both descriptions are profoundly true. To comprehend this paradox is to hold the key to Abraham's personality.

Even in the qualities that gave Abraham his great personal and social charm there were hints of stouter ones which formed the basis of his character. He was singularly youthful, and even boyish at moments when the circumstances were appropriate; though he could be decidedly witty at times, a quiet fun, often very shrewd, was his more characteristic form of humour. This gave his personality, so winning to women and attractive to men, a freshness and vigour that always made him a stimulating companion or colleague. His demeanour was invariably cheerful, courteous and friendly. But these qualities were not to be presumed on. Behind them was a firmness impervious to the blandishments of man or woman. He could afford to be easy and pliant in his intercourse with others, just because he had himself so completely in hand; knowing that he could not be unduly influenced from either within or without, he was confident in any situation. This complete confidence was ultimately rooted in self-mastery.

The same is true of one of his most characteristic traits, what his friends called his incurable optimism. He was always hopeful, however irksome or sinister the prospect, and his buoyancy, together with the confidence that went with it, often contributed materially to bringing about a more successful issue than at first seemed possible. As a rule this optimism was very nicely balanced with a keen sense of reality, so that its effect was purely invigorating, but once or twice in his life it played him false, marring what was otherwise a perfection of stability.

Abraham's capacity for reserve was to be discerned in the quiet punctiliousness of his manner. Probably, however, few even of his friends knew how deep this was.

They only felt that somewhere there was a barrier beyond which one might not penetrate. For the purposes of life Abraham had compassed a peculiarly stable mental organization, but the very depths were not to be plumbed, perhaps even by himself.

No one could know Abraham well without realizing that he was one of those men who are endowed with quite exceptional powers of sublimation, and that he had attained an unusually advanced measure of emotional and instinctual development. It is not chance that it was he who taught us what is perhaps the best criterion of full mental development: the overcoming of narcissism and of ambivalence. For we shall not know many men who would emerge as he did when tried by this severe test.

Abraham had been able to transmute his egocentric trends in a very remarkable degree, with the result that he could devote himself quite single-heartedly to the one goal of his life, namely, the advancement of psycho-analysis. With a solitary exception, the nature of which was such as to prove the rule, it was impossible to detect in him a trace of any personal ambition whatever; the exception was a rather odd desire to become a Docent at the University of Berlin, and this was itself obviously bound up with the prestige of psycho-analysis. His colleagues in Berlin will best know how completely he identified himself with the interests of the Society there—from the moment he founded it, in March 1910, to the time of his last attendance, on May 9 of last year. His rare gifts as a teacher, investigator and lecturer were indispensable to the development of the Society, but of still greater value were his qualities as a leader, of which we have still to speak.

His transmutation of purely personal interest, together with his native shrewdness of mind, gave Abraham an unusual capacity for viewing problems, personalities, and events in a detached and objective way. This to a great extent accounts for the marked sobriety of his judgement, but it had a further value. It gave him a social ease and friendliness of manner that made it possible for him to approach his fellows with unusual directness, so that no one would well

take amiss whatever he might have to say. Any criticisms he might wish to make were at once transferred from any personal basis to a purely objective one, and this attitude rarely failed in its effect of allaying emotion and conducing to a reasoned consideration of the matter. Courteously firm and, when his mind was made up, inflexible, he was never in the smallest way overbearing; his quiet decisiveness was in itself authoritative. He was a delightful colleague to work with, as I had ample opportunity to observe when we were associated together in the Central Executive of the Association as well as in many other connections. He was always accessible to any ideas presented to him, and one could count on their not being refracted by any subjective elements; an answer to any proposal would be clear, concise, and concrete. All these qualities made him an admirable referee in matters of personal or scientific disputation. A great part, therefore, of both his sanity of judgement and his sagacity in human relationships proceeded from his capacity for impersonal objectivity.

Ambivalence was entirely foreign to Abraham's nature, both intellectually and emotionally. He seemed to be altogether devoid of hate. He sometimes disliked certain individuals, usually on the impersonal ground of regarding their activities as harmful to the cause of psycho-analysis; but even so I have never known of his hating anyone. He was even at times curiously oblivious to the strength of hostile emotions in other people; I have seen him cheerfully reasoning with someone who was glowering with anger and resentment, apparently blandly ignoring the emotion and full of hope that a quiet exposition would change the situation. In controversy, even when heated, he would be unbending, but his temper never frayed. Abraham could please charmingly, help gladly and generously, love devotedly; he could withstand stubbornly and fight valiantly; but he could not hate. Consequently, though he occasionally excited criticism and opposition, he never provoked hatred: he had his opponents, and of course jealous rivals, but he had no enemies.

Abraham's profound sense of confidence was thus

founded in the stability of his own mind. With his evenly balanced mental organization and his securely firm self-control, one inclining slightly even towards austerity, he could freely give rein to his innate tendencies, knowing they would carry him only the ways he desired. When we say that Abraham was a *normally developed* member of society, we are using words which, though cold to the uninitiated, are rich with significance for all psycho-analysts.

We can now see how inevitable it was that Abraham should be a leader in psycho-analysis, and why he was so successful in that position. His tireless energy and his demeanour of intrepid confidence, always fresh and unperturbed, were bracing to others and inspired them with the assurance necessary for accomplishing difficult tasks. His shrewd perspicacity enabled him to criticize in a peculiarly cool way any inaccuracies or exuberances and to exercise a steadying influence on the divagations of fancy. His constantly benevolent and at the same time impersonal attitude made it possible to convey such criticisms without wounding or disheartening the person affected. His brightness and friendliness, aided by his general optimism, inclined him always to make prominent the best features of a colleague's work and, when commenting on it, insensibly to modify the weak features so as to present the work in the most favourable light. The result was that he always got the best out of his colleagues and pupils. And all the while it was plain to them that in Abraham they had a rallying point, a touchstone of objectivity, to which they rarely applied in vain.

This last feature leads us to what were, in my opinion, the most salient of all Abraham's valuable qualities—his fearlessness and his integrity. That he displayed a tenacious courage when ringed round with hostility in his lonely pioneering days is generally known, though it needs a similar experience fully to appreciate what that means. But few know that there were even more striking evidences of his courageous disregard for painful consequences; at more than one important juncture in his life I have known him risk the friendship of those very near to him by pursuing a

course which seemed to him the only right one, even when he knew it was one that could readily lend itself to serious misinterpretation.

For integrity with Abraham came before everything else. Honesty of purpose was so built into his nature that he invariably and unhesitatingly did what he felt to be the only right thing, and he never swerved from his course. This high degree of integrity produced on those around him such a sense of certainty and security that they came to rely on him as on a rock. Amid the turmoils of personal emotions and the clash of discordant tendencies Abraham stood always firm, a central steadiness in the shifting eddies around. And this was his greatest value to psychoanalysis. Karl Abraham was in truth *un preux chevalier* of Science, *sans peur et sans reproche*.

ERNEST JONES.



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CHAPTER I

THE EXPERIENCING OF SEXUAL TRAUMAS AS A FORM OF SEXUAL ACTIVITY (1907)¹

FREUD'S original theory of the ætiology of hysteria has undergone important alterations in the course of time. As he himself has pointed out,² however, two important points remain unchanged in it, namely, sexuality and infantilism, the significance of which he has investigated more and more deeply.

Among other things, the problem of sexual traumas in youth has been affected by the alterations that the general theory of sexuality and of the neuroses has undergone. For some time Freud regarded those traumas as the ultimate source of hysterical phenomena, and assumed that they were discoverable in all cases of hysteria. But he has not been able to maintain this view in its original form. In the paper referred to he assigns a secondary rôle to sexual traumas in youth and assumes the presence of an abnormal psycho-sexual constitution as the primary cause of a neurosis. This view accords with the fact that not all children who experience a sexual trauma suffer later on from hysteria. According to Freud, children who are disposed to hysteria react in an abnormal manner to sexual impressions of all kinds in consequence of their abnormal disposition. I recently showed that infantile sexual traumas occurred in the psychoses³ as well; and I put forward the view that the trauma could not be regarded as the cause of the disease,

¹ [No. 10, A. B.]

² 'My Views on the Part played by Sexuality in the Ætiology of the Neuroses (1905).

³ [Cf. No. 9, A. B.]

but that it exercised an influence on the form taken by it. I agreed with Freud's assumption of an abnormal psycho-sexual constitution in the patient.

Nevertheless this assumption only takes us one step forward, and stops before a second, more important difficulty. It certainly explains why a sexual trauma in childhood is of such great significance in the history of many individuals. On the other hand, the problem remains why so many neurotic and psychotic persons can produce a sexual trauma in the anamnesis of their childhood. If we can solve this problem we shall gain some information at least as to the nature of the abnormal constitution which we have assumed to exist.

In this paper I intend to go more closely into these questions. I shall more particularly try to establish the view that in a great number of cases the trauma was desired by the child unconsciously, and that we have to recognize it as a form of infantile sexual activity.

Anyone who is interested in the psychology of children will have observed that whereas one child will resist temptation or seduction another will easily yield to it. There are children who will hardly oppose any resistance to the invitation of an unknown person to follow him; others who react in an opposite way in the same circumstances. Presents and sweets, or the mere expectation of them, influence children very differently. Further, there are children who quite definitely provoke adults in a sexual manner. With regard to this the reports of cases brought against persons charged with immoral conduct towards children are very instructive. In two cases in which a senile dement had assaulted a child I happen to know that the child had behaved in a provocative way; and in a number of other cases I had good grounds for suspecting a similar state of affairs. Even among brothers and sisters one finds striking differences in this respect. I know of many cases of this kind. In a family of several sisters, for instance, one allowed herself to be enticed by a strange person to go with him; and on another occasion, when playing with an older boy, she followed him into a distant room and allowed

him to kiss her. Her two sisters showed the opposite tendency. This girl, of whom many similar episodes could be related, exhibited neurotic traits even in childhood and later became ill with pronounced hysteria. This example is not exceptional but typical. For the present we may say quite generally that certain children respond more readily than others to sexual or other kinds of seduction, and we may make use of this fact so as to classify sexual traumas, diverse as they are, into two groups. We can distinguish sexual traumas which take the child unawares from those which it has itself provoked or which are due to temptation or seduction, or which it could at any rate have foreseen and avoided. In the first group there are no grounds for assuming a compliance on the part of the child; in the second we cannot avoid assuming that there was a compliance of this sort. But the cases do not all belong to one or other of these two groups. If a sexual assault takes place unexpectedly, the person attacked may either defend itself actively and in earnest, or it may submit to the attack. In the latter case we again find a response, *i.e.* a yielding on the part of the person attacked. We might say that the person succumbs to a '*vis haud ingrata*'—to use an expression of Roman law.

The subject of '*vis haud ingrata*' has always attracted the attention of legislators, especially where it enters into the regulations for the punishment of sexual crimes. The Mosaic law, for instance, has taken it most carefully into account. In *Deuteronomy* xxii. 23-27 we read:

' 23. If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;

' 24. Then shall ye bring them both out unto the gate of that city and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.

' 25. But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die:

' 26. But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there

is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter:

' 27. For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her.'

I will also refer to the excellent little story out of *Don Quixote*, which Freud¹ has quoted:

A woman brought a man before the judge and accused him of having robbed her of her honour by force. Sancho indemnified her with a purse full of money which he took from the accused; but after she had gone he gave the man permission to follow her and take back the purse from her. Both came back struggling with each other; and the woman boasted that the villain had been unable to seize the purse from her. Thereupon Sancho said: 'Had you fought to keep your virtue half as valiantly as you did to keep your purse, this man could not have robbed you of it'.

It is true that these examples refer to adults; but we shall find later on that in this respect there is no difference between children and grown-up people.

The Mosaic law makes the punishment of the girl dependent upon whether she had called for help or not, that is to say, upon whether she had done all she possibly could to prevent the occurrence. I have examined the cases which I have previously published² with reference to this point, and find that in all of them the trauma could have been prevented. The children could have called for help, run away, or offered resistance instead of yielding to the seduction. And I was able to establish the same thing in a number of other cases.

What confirms us in our assumption of compliance on the part of the child is not only its conduct while the assault is in preparation and while it is actually going on, but after it has happened. In pointing out that hysterics are suffering from 'reminiscences', Breuer and Freud have already called attention to the fact that as children they did not tell their relatives about the sexual trauma at the time, but kept

¹ *Zur Psychopathologie des Alltagslebens*, Zweite Auflage, S. 87.

² [No. 9, A.B.]

it secret; and that they did so not only while the impression of it was fresh in their minds, but that they repressed it into the unconscious so that they could not voluntarily recall it. I have found¹ similar conduct in children who later suffered from dementia præcox; though at the time I did not investigate the problem further.

It is a remarkable thing that a child who has experienced a sexual trauma should keep it secret from its parents in spite of the emotion associated with it. For a child who has been, say, chased and beaten by another one will come and complain to its mother. The objection will probably be raised that conventional prudishness prevents the child from speaking about it, since it has naturally been brought up to avoid talking about anything relating to sex. This objection, however, does not hold. To begin with, a child is not troubled by considerations of conventionality under the stress of violent emotion. And then not all children by any means behave in this way when they have had a sexual experience.

I will give two examples to illustrate this difference. The first is this.—A water-pipe had to be attended to in the cellar of a house. A workman came and asked for the key of the cellar. A woman who was living in the house told him to go down the stairs and said that she would send him the key. He went down and the woman's little daughter brought him the key. The man went into the cellar and came out again shortly afterwards. The child was waiting on the dimly lighted stairs in order to take back the key. Before she knew what was happening the man attempted an indecent act. The child ran terrified up the stairs and immediately told her mother what had happened. The man was followed and arrested.

A case that I have previously published will serve as the second example. A girl of nine years old was enticed by a neighbour into a wood. She followed him quite willingly. He then attempted to rape her. It was only when he had almost or quite attained his purpose that the child succeeded in getting free. She hurried home, but said nothing about

¹ *Loc. cit.*

what had happened; nor did she ever speak about it afterwards to her family.

The conduct of these two children after the trauma is quite opposite. Why is this? Let us first compare the conduct of children on other occasions. A child, for example, who has hurt itself in a game which it has been forbidden to play will suppress the pain, and will not go to its mother for comfort as it would normally do. The reason is clear: the child had yielded to the attraction of doing something forbidden, and it now has the feeling that the accident is its own fault.

This sense of guilt in children is extraordinarily sensitive. The following story from the childhood of a lady is an interesting illustration of the problem under discussion. She was out one day picking flowers with a friend, when a strange man came up and spoke to them, asking them to go with him, and saying that he would show them where more beautiful flowers were to be found. They went a little way with him. Presently she began to have scruples about going further with the stranger and suddenly turned round and ran off. Her friend did likewise. Now although nothing had taken place between the man and the children except that they had walked a certain distance together, the lady definitely remembered having felt a great dislike of speaking about the affair at home at the time. She kept it absolutely secret from her family, and never even spoke about it to her friend afterwards. The child's silence can only be explained by a sense of guilt. She evidently had a more or less definite feeling that the guilt was not only on the side of the seducer, but also on the side of the person who lets himself be seduced.

The same explanation obviously fits the two examples given before. The one child was taken completely by surprise and found herself in a situation which she had not sought. It was her mother who had sent her into the cellar. No one could reproach her, and therefore she immediately found words in which to tell her mother what had happened. The other child, on the contrary, had allowed herself to be seduced. She had followed the neighbour into the wood