

VI.—CRITICAL NOTICES.

Papers on Psycho-Analysis. By ERNEST JONES, M.D., M.R.C.P. (Lond.). Revised and enlarged edition. Baillière, Tindall & Cox. Pp. x, 715.

THIS work is a much enlarged edition of an earlier book by the same author. It consists of papers divided under the headings of General, On Dreams, On Treatment, Clinical, and On Education and Child-Study. The author is a Freudian of the strictest sect; he dedicates his book to the master, and takes several opportunities to anathematise Jung for his later heresies, whilst recognising the value of Jung's earlier work.

If Freud's theories are to be fairly criticised we must carefully separate five different questions. (i) Are repression, distortion, and the shifting of 'affect' from one object to another, genuine and important factors in mental life? (ii) Does repression occur almost wholly with regard to sexual matters? (iii) What is the precise 'cash-value' of the Freudian technical terms, such as the unconscious and the censor? Evidently there is an element of mythology in them, and we have to ask how far the phraseology used may have led Freudians beyond what the observed facts will justify. (iv) How far does a given doctor's analysis of a given case seem to be justified by the facts which he records. (v) Is it desirable on practical grounds that psycho-analysis should be commonly used for dealing with nervous diseases?

The fourth and fifth questions seem to me to be philosophically unimportant; yet I am much afraid that a negative answer to the fifth, and a feeling of disgust at the conclusions and doubt as to the adequacy of the arguments in connexion with the fourth, have caused many philosophers to reject the whole Freudian theory. Dr. Jones deals with both these points in some measure. He admits that the fragments given of actual analysis are very scrappy. They certainly are; and the conclusions arrived at in particular cases seem, on the data offered, to be much on a level with Serjeant Buzfuz's proof of the erotic significance of chops and tomato-sauce. [Indeed the Serjeant's contention that a warming-pan is an erotic symbol is certainly not in the least further fetched than Dr. Jones's *obiter dictum* that people cling to a gold-standard because gold is a well-known symbol for excrement, 'the material from which most of our sense of possession in infantile times was derived' (p. 172).] Dr. Jones, however, has two excuses. To give a complete analysis would be too long and tedious. And a person who has never done

any psycho-analysis and is not used to the extraordinarily flimsy connexions which satisfy the unconscious cannot estimate the probability of a given analysis being correct. I think we must in fairness grant the second contention. An outsider cannot estimate the probability of special arguments in an entirely unfamiliar region; the same difficulty meets one constantly in considering other men's experiments in psychical research; and one can see from one's own how many points there are which legitimately affect one's judgment of probability and yet cannot be stated satisfactorily to others. At the same time psycho-analysts ought to remember that the flimsiness of the connexions which satisfy the unconscious cuts both ways. If it ought to make us chary of denying their conclusions; it ought to make them equally chary of asserting their analysis to be the only possible one in a given case.

The question whether the moral effects of psycho-analysis are likely to be good or bad is not important to us in any sense except that, as Dr. Jones justly points out, the way in which many people reject the whole Freudian psychology because they think its conclusions disgusting and its practice dangerous is a fine example of Freud's own doctrine that consciousness is largely occupied in providing imposing arguments to satisfy and mask unconscious wishes. We can therefore turn to the remaining three questions.

(i) Dr. Jones's book, my own introspection and observation, and the accounts which I hear from medical friends treating cases of shell-shock, leave me with no doubt as to the extreme frequency and importance of repression in mental life. The shifting of affect is also an easily observable phenomenon. In my last year at school I had on certain occasions to read the lesson for the day. I always hated the prospect of this, which filled me with acute nervousness. On the morning of the day I would awake with a diffused feeling of uneasiness, and this would persist when the thought of reading the lesson was not before my mind, so that I would sometimes catch myself for a moment wondering what was the cause of the curious feeling in my stomach. I can therefore well believe that emotions can become separated from a consciousness of their objects and float loose for a time, either to appear as bodily symptoms or to be directed to consciously cognised objects.

As I can verify all the characteristic Freudian mechanisms in a mild form in my own mind and am told of their existence in acute forms in soldiers by observers whom I have every reason to trust, I feel no doubt of the substantial correctness of this part of Freud's theory. To this evidence must be added the important fact, well brought out by Dr. Jones, that Freud's theory provides an explanation of numbers of odd occurrences in ordinary life, such as slips of the tongue or pen, which we ordinarily treat as due to 'chance'. Leibniz, who seems to have foreseen everything, was never tired of pointing out that the appearance of indeterminism in the mind is due to our failure to notice subconscious links in chains of causation which are partly conscious. As usual, Leibniz was right; and

he would doubtless have welcomed Freud's work with as much enthusiasm as he would have shown for Frege's.

(ii) Dr. Jones treats in some detail the view that what is suppressed is nearly always ultimately sexual matter. His position is that Freud uses the word 'sexual' in a much wider sense than most people, and that, in this sense, his statement is correct. He does not give any very precise definition of Freud's usage, and leaves us to infer it from an analogy to the elements in chemistry, and from the statement that Freud applies 'the term "sexual" to mental processes which, like shame, derive their origin from the sexual instinct'. Now psycho-analysis, according to him, shows that a great many processes which do not seem to be so derived really do have this origin. This may be true; but it is clear that the question at issue here between Freud and his opponents is one of fact and not of terminology. Freud's extension of the word 'sexual' is only justified if he *can* make out that the processes to which he does, and his opponents do not apply it originate in processes which are sexual in the narrower sense which his opponents employ. And this, I take it, is what they deny.

As to the question of fact, I think the Freudians are right in ascribing much greater sexual interests to quite young children than ordinary people would admit. Freud's description of the young child as '*polymorph pervers*' seems to me literally correct, if we interpret him to mean that most children have in various degrees the desires which, when developed at the expense of others, constitute recognised perversions. But I should substitute for Dr. Jones's extension of the word 'sexual' the following: A process in a child may be called 'sexual' if processes in adults which *develop from it* as their chief source, and in a continuous way, are sexual in the narrower sense. I thus take the converse of Dr. Jones's definition, and add two limitations. Dr. Jones is never tired of pointing out that ordinary psychologists constantly take as *the* cause of a mental event some trivial but striking conscious factor in its causation. He is right; but Freudians are not wholly guiltless of a similar fallacy. Dr. Jones derives 'a passion for lucidity of thought' (together with some hundreds of other mental characteristics of the most diverse kinds), 'from infantile analerotic' emotions. I daresay the one has sometimes something to do with the other; but the connexion is so slight and the other factors which produce a passion for lucidity of thought must so enormously exceed the single factor of infantile interest in the process of excretion that it is ridiculous to speak of deriving the former from the latter. Psycho-analysts seriously prejudice their own very good claims by this kind of nonsense, which they might well reserve for Pemberton-Billing trials and similar legal knockabout farces.¹

¹ One is sometimes reminded by Dr. Jones of the young man in Mallock's *New Republic*, who had in his portmanteau twenty-seven (I think) theories of the origin of the Idea of God, each more degraded than the last.

I am still rather sceptical as to the prevalence of the famous 'Oedipus Complex'; not because it shocks me, but partly because I can detect no trace of it in memory whilst I can remember other equally disreputable infantile wishes (from the adult point of view), and partly because it seems to imply much more definitely directed sexual desires in very young children than there is otherwise evidence for. If the incest-motive towards parents be so very common in young children, why is it practically always repressed at such an early age? The wickedness of incest is not, I believe, a common subject of conversation and admonition in the nursery.

Subject to these limitations I think we may accept the Freudian view. It is clear that hardly any of our early wishes are subject to such strong social repression as sexual ones, and it is therefore not surprising that, if there be anything in the theory at all, repressions of this kind are found to be at the root of a large proportion of nervous disorders.

(iii) The third point is psychologically the most important. I must first remark that there seems to be a distinct inconsistency in Dr. Jones's book as to the characteristics of the unconscious. Throughout the greater part of it the unconscious itself is supposed to be radically illogical, and to move by means of the most trivial and superficial connexions. But in the chapter on Dreams a different view is presented. Here it is constantly insisted that the latent content (*i.e.*, the unconscious thought) underlying a dream is logical and coherent, and that the incoherence of the dream is due to distortions made in the latent thought with a view to 'passing the censor'.

The next question is: What do we learn from the Freudian results as to the existence of unconscious states of mind and the material of which they are formed? The unconscious is actually defined by Dr. Jones simply as what we cannot become aware of by acts of voluntary introspection. It is thus *defined* (a) negatively, and (b) by a relation to possible acts of introspection.

Now our inability to cognise these states by introspection might, *a priori*, be due to one of three causes. (a) It might be simply because they do not exist to be introspected; or (b) because, although they exist, they are so radically different from ordinary states of mind that it would be as inappropriate to expect us to be able to introspect them as to introspect the atoms in a benzene nucleus; or (c) because, although they exist and are of the same general character as conscious states, they have either some peculiar property or some peculiar relation to the rest of our minds which prevents us from directing acts of introspection upon them. Dr. Jones at one place early in his book adopts a highly agnostic attitude, but it is pretty clear from his language at all other places that he proceeds on the assumption—conscious or unconscious—that the facts imply the second form of the third alternative. The unconscious is supposed to consist of the same sort of stuff as the conscious and to coexist with it. But it has a relation to the part of our mind which introspects different from that which our conscious states have, and

this relation prevents us from directing introspective attention on it. Now the question is : Do the facts justify this inference ?

Before we can deal with these questions it must be noticed that there is another view about the relation of the conscious and the unconscious which hovers throughout the book and does not seem to have any close connexion with the definition quoted above of unconscious states. On the theory which we have just now ascribed to Dr. Jones, and which fits in best with his definition of the unconscious the real object of repression is, not the unconscious states of mind, but acts of introspection. What happens in repression, on this theory, is simply that attention is diverted forcibly from certain states of mind. But Dr. Jones almost everywhere speaks as if the repression were exercised on the states of mind themselves, as if they constantly bobbed up and were thrust down by the censor. This *may* be merely a picturesque way of describing a diversion of attention ; but, if it be taken literally, it implies a quite different theory of the unconscious, of which two remarks must be made. (a) It has no obvious connexion with the explicit definition of the unconscious which Dr. Jones offers ; and (b) It *assumes* the coexistence of the unconscious with conscious states of mind. Let us call this the Threshold Theory, and the other the Introspection Theory, and let us begin with the Introspection Theory.

Introspection Theory.—The coexistence of unconscious states with conscious ones seems to be inferred from two facts. (a) Certain bodily symptoms, certain irrational fears, and other conscious states which are inexplicable so long as we confine ourselves to their conscious or pre-conscious antecedents and concomitants persist and develop over a space of time. (b) By an appropriate method of psycho-analysis we can become aware of states of which we could not otherwise become aware. These seem to explain the otherwise inexplicable bodily symptoms or conscious states. It is assumed as self-evident that if they did not exist during the period over which the symptoms have lasted they could not explain these symptoms. Further, when the process of analysis has been carried out, the states of which we become for the first time aware seem to be of the same general nature as ordinary conscious states. Lastly their value as links in an explanatory chain depends on assuming that they are substantially analogous to conscious states. An inexplicable conscious fear directed towards closed spaces is explained by an originally quite rational fear of (say) being buried in a dug-out. The thought of the dug-out has become unconscious ; it is assumed to *persist* in order to explain the persistence of the conscious fear of closed spaces, and to explain the fact that on psycho-analysis we do become aware of it ; it is assumed to *resemble* in structure a conscious fear of a consciously cognised object in order to explain the irrational conscious fear of closed spaces.

Now all this inference depends on suppressed premises which are open to criticism. (a) It is not necessarily true that, because an effect persists and develops, its cause must persist too. (b) Even if

we accept this metaphysical axiom about causation all that is necessary is that *something* should persist. This something might (i) cause the symptom or the conscious state, and (ii) in co-operation with the process of psycho-analysis cause a memory of the incident which originally started the trouble. The fact that under certain circumstances you remember an incident X at most proves that *something* Y persists in the mind which, together with these circumstances, produce a memory of X. It has no tendency to prove that the persistent Y is itself a cognition of X. The metaphysical dogma assumed here is that cause must resemble effect. (c) The language used about the transference of affect, and the distortion of the unconscious by the censor goes far beyond the observable facts, unless it be taken as a mere metaphor, and is hardly self-consistent. Suppose the unconscious state could be proved to be a fear of an unconsciously cognised object O. Suppose that the conscious state which it causes is a fear of a consciously cognised object Ω . The doctrine of the transference of affect, taken literally, asserts that the fear factor ϕ in a complex $\phi \rightarrow O$ can be split off and directed to Ω to form the complex $\phi \rightarrow \Omega$. Now I should like to know (a) what is the criterion of identity used? How do you know that the ϕ factor in $\phi \rightarrow \Omega$ is *the same as* the ϕ factor in $\phi \rightarrow O$? (b) If the transference of affect be taken literally it contradicts the view that the unconscious state is a *fear*. If $\phi \rightarrow O$ in the unconscious be literally broken up and its affect transferred to a consciously cognised object Ω , what exists in the unconscious is not a *fear* of O but an unconscious *cognition* of O. Now psycho-analysis makes the patient aware of a *fear* of O. Hence, if we take the transference of affect literally, it is impossible that the state of which psycho-analysis makes us aware can be the same state as persists in the unconscious. The theory, as offered, tries to make the best of both worlds. By talking of the transference of affect as if affect could be moved about and identified it implies the persistence in the unconscious of states to which it can be joined and from which it can be separated. By talking of the states that we *discover* on psycho-analysis it implies that these are the states that have existed all along in unconsciousness. But it fails to notice that the two lines of argument destroy each other, since they lead to radically different unconscious states.

Two alternative theories would seem to be possible. (i) A given affect is either wholly conscious or wholly unconscious, and there is no sense in talking of its being transferred from an unconsciously cognised to a consciously cognised object. But a conscious affect may be directed at the same time to two objects, one consciously cognised and the other unconsciously cognised. Transference would then mean, not the *substitution* of a consciously cognised object for an unconsciously cognised one, but the *addition* of a consciously cognised object to the unconsciously cognised one to which the affect is already directed. (ii) A milder theory is simply that when a past emotional experience can no longer be recalled except by psycho-analysis the trace that it leaves tends to cause a

conscious emotional experience of the same general quality directed to some consciously cognised object. The metaphysical dogma involved in passing beyond this view is the assumption that because A is a remote cause of B, and A and B contain qualitatively similar factors ϕ_a and ϕ_b , therefore B is made by removing ϕ_a from A and connecting it with some new factor.

Very similar criticisms apply to the doctrine that the manifest content of a dream is a distorted form of the latent content. Does the latent content coexist with the dream? If so, how can it be distorted? Or do you simply mean that the latent and the manifest content coexist, that the former is an important factor in the causation of the latter, and that the latter resembles the former in many important respects? The latter is the utmost that can be got out of the observed facts.

I think there is a very common but far from plausible assumption about ordinary memory underlying much of the psycho-analytic terminology. A memory is *prima facie* simply a cognition whose object exists at an earlier moment than itself. The object in general is not, on the face of it, mental at all, *e.g.*, when I remember the late Master of Trinity the object is a deceased human being who neither was nor is a state of my mind. Now when people talk of memories being 'stored-up' in the mind they always seem to forget this fact and to speak as if *remembered objects* were stored up. I imagine that all that is really stored up is some kind of trace which, in conjunction with some present stimulus, causes me to have a cognition whose object is the past event, person, or place. On this interpretation of memory the view that what is stored up resembles my conscious cognition of the object loses all plausibility. Even if it be essential to memory to be aware of an image which in fact resembles the object remembered, and even if images be mind-dependent, it remains certain that this *de facto* resemblance will not account for memory. It is not enough that the image should in fact resemble the object to be remembered; it must be *known* to do this. And there is no reason whatever to suppose that what is stored up is these images; for this is neither necessary nor sufficient to account for the simplest case of direct memory.

Thus I am inclined to think that the Introspective Theory, when carried to its logical conclusion, leads to a very different view from that with which we started. The unconscious and preconscious would consist of traces which we have no reason to suppose resemble any state of mind; for this reason they cannot be introspected. Some of these traces can co-operate with volitions to give memories of objects cognised in the past. Others cannot do this, and will only give rise to memories under the special stimulus of psycho-analysis. The former constitute the pre-conscious, the latter the unconscious. Repression is thus, not the forcible diversion of *introspection* from certain *states of mind*, but the forcible diversion of *memory* from certain *objects* which have been cognised in the past and have left traces.

Threshold Theory.—The view that unconscious states try to

'rise up' into consciousness and are 'pressed down' is, of course, metaphorical. But the metaphor does express certain observable facts which it is easy to indicate and difficult to analyse. An example is the curious way in which one seems to know a name that one is trying vainly to recall, and can tell perhaps how many syllables it has or that it does not begin with some suggested letter. I think that the threshold theory regards such experiences as being on the borderline of the conscious and the unconscious, and as giving an indication of what the unconscious may be like. I cannot attempt to analyse such experiences here and now; but I am inclined to think that a complete theory of the phenomena with which Freudians deal needs factors both from the Introspection Theory and from the Threshold Theory. I seem to be able to detect repressions in my own mental life, and they always seem to involve (i) a diversion of attention from certain objects, and (ii) at the same time a vague cognition of those objects in the sense of the Threshold Theory.

I must close this too long review by saying that Dr. Jones's book (in spite of some exaggerations, incident to his enthusiasm for his subject, which may 'evoke a smile in the young or a blush in the fair') seems to me to form an excellent introduction to psychoanalysis, and that it has persuaded me that no psychologist can safely neglect the Freudian school, whether he likes their conclusions or not.

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Greek Political Theory: Plato and His Predecessors. By ERNEST BARKER. London, 1918. Methuen & Co., Ltd. Pp. xiii, 403.

THOUGH Mr. Barker's work is, in a way, an expansion of part of a volume published as long ago as 1906, the process of revision and expansion has been so thorough that no apology need be made for treating the result as to all intents and purposes a new book. As such I hope I may be allowed to give it a very hearty welcome. I do not think it any exaggeration to say that Mr. Barker has written by far the best work yet in existence on the social and political side of Plato's philosophy, and that every reader will wait impatiently for the companion volume dealing with Aristotle and his successors. It is to be hoped that "the position of national affairs" will not delay the completion of Mr. Barker's labour of love very long. The great positive merit of Mr. Barker's treatment of his subject is that he has at last given us a work on Plato in which the *Laws*, far the most splendid and fruitful of all ancient contributions to the study of conduct, education, and social organisation, is adequately recognised and utilised as it deserves to be. The silly notion that Plato's *Laws* is a second-rate work, exhibiting symptoms of senile aberration which make it almost negligible to the student of Platonic philosophy, if it still survives anywhere, ought to receive its *coup de*