

## A Thesis Concerning the Fundamental Structure of the Mento-Emotional Processes in Children

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Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have before me today a very difficult task and one I feel I shall only very partially be able to fill. It is with considerable diffidence I approach it at all and am doing so because I feel that the work I and the group of others have been engaged in now for a number of years has reached the stage where it is imperative, for all the soundness of its future work that the very tentative conclusions which I have been forming in regard to the meaning of the phenomena that we are studying, would be submitted to such a gathering as this for expert criticism and advice.

We are all agreed that psychology today tacitly admits of two separate groups,- on the one hand those who are concerned with the study of the conscious faculties and whose endeavour is to arrive at an understanding of the norm: on the other, medical or clinical psychology whose material is the sick person and whose work is carried out in the atmosphere and circumstances of the consulting room.

The great difficulty with which we are faced is that the material gained in the consulting room does not admit of repetition or reproduction against control groupings, and is dependent for the vast majority of its conclusions upon material gathered by memory from interviews at which there were no witnesses. Research work upon memory of conversations shows vividly how riddled with inaccuracies and fallacies such memory reproduction must inevitably be. The whole situation is peculiar, because though this material of the clinician is not available for detailed and critical examination, yet upon its evidence is based the whole of the deductions concerning what is known as the unconscious; and it is daily found that this unconscious affects wider and wider fields of consciousness.

Perhaps in no field is this situation more unfortunate than in that of child psychology. Here an authoritative educational pamphlet has recently said:- "The

understanding of the child's psychic life is mainly the province of the handful of psychoanalysts . . . the psycho-analytic technique alone enables us to understand those unconscious mental processes which control the conscious flow of mental life with we wild as well as the adult".

If we come to examine this statement, we find it to be based wholly upon the results of therapy, and that there is no opportunity whatever for the examination of this data. It is not possible in any way to get to grips with this material, as it is with the material from which any other psychological deductions we made. No facts or figures as to number or type of cases treated are available for study, no independent estimate of those children, their qualities or types, by independent observers, no parallel investigations of the children from other angles, no means of discovering what the effect of the process of analysis does actually have upon the children either in the immediate or remote future. The symbols, type of play, etc. from which the deductions are made are also not available for study and comparison, and there is no opportunity or means for the observer to make contact with the process itself. Let us dispose at once of the answer that is always made to such an objection, which is the suggestion that the individual making it should submit himself to the process under consideration and then judge of this from the inside. This is no answer at all. It is impossible to evaluate it. Evaluation can only be made from without upon adequate data, and for this process, as we stand at present, all data is lacking.

The situation is therefore that either we must give up altogether to attempt to understand the child's unconscious life, or we must devise some other method of making contact with it. This is the more absolute in that both Adler and Jung regard the child as forming part of a total family situation, and as I was able to substantiate some years ago in personal conversation, are not interested in an attempt to conceive of the child itself as an individual phenomenon.

Now it is agreed that man has a conscious and an unconscious life and that for the young child the unconscious or the irrational factor predominates. The question before us is, therefore, - Are we going to try to lake contact with part of the child's mind and experience directly, that is, without the previous intervention of any dogma, such as the acceptance of the Freudian schemata - or of the analytical situation or not? And if the answer is in the affirmative, by what seems can this be accomplished? What would be the results of such an attempt when made?

I want now very briefly to put before you a description of such an attempt in which I and a group of allied workers have been engaged for the past eight years, and to offer for your criticism certain of the conclusions that very tentatively I have come to from this material.

Some nine years ago, having failed to make direct contact with the psycho-analytic material, the idea came to me that it might be possible to construct a direct approach to the disturbed child, and that moreover such an attempt might be made to serve two purposes; - the first was to make such an approach in itself and the second so to construct it that it would be a direct negative to all the prerequisites of the psycho-analytic approach and so act as a negative test of their validity.

Now the principles upon which psycho-analytic child analysis are built are too well known to need repetition. The work I am about to describe carefully eliminated every one of these principles.

That is to say, instead of being treated by an analyst himself trained in the Freudian technique and accepting wholly its validity, the work was done, uni is done, in' public, in' a group, with the frequent advent of visitors. No worker has received a psycho-analytic analysis or knows more of the theory than is common to the general reading public, though most workers have had none other form of personal dynamic psychological experience. No psycho-analytic interpretation is used and. no attempt is made by the worker to avoid the reality situation. Every attempt is made to reduce the transference factor to the irreducible minimum and children in the middle of treatment are often changed from worker to worker. Parallel observations from as many different points of view as possible are made on each child by workers having different forms of training and who do not themselves take part in the play treatment, and all are carefully recorded in case sheets. All observations of the children's play are recorded in detail as soon as possible after the afternoon itself and checked carefully by time sheets and parallel observations. All case sheets are open to observation by any properly accredited observer. Careful follow ups of the children have been made from time to time and repeat investigations of intelligence and general adaptation carried out. Intimate contact is kept with the schools throughout treatment and the school report taken, with the result of the intelligence test, into account, in making an estimate of educational progress.

Taken on its scientific side there were two goals to this work. The one to see whether without the analytic situation, the transference and the acceptance of psycho-analytic doctrine, direct contact could be made with the unconscious of the child, and the second, of what nature was this part of the mind' when contact had been made with it.

To these a third side must be added, which was, - Would the making of such a contact be beneficial to the child in his struggle to gain harmony with himself and if so, how?

Now supposing that we have no effect in negating all features of the psycho-analytic approach, taking the opinions quoted previously as they stand, such a treatment of children should:-

- a. Have no effect upon the children whatsoever.
- b. Have a definitely deleterious effect.
- c. Arouse anxieties which it is impossible by these method to relieve.

Either such handling should have no effect upon the patient and leave him where he was, or, if chance or some accidental factor should bring about temporary alleviation, this should disappear as soon as the transitory factor ceased to operate.

It is because I wanted to have time for the proper examination of these factors that I have let a period of 8 years since the beginning of the experiment elapse, before reporting upon it, in order that there might be time for the various factors to have operated adequately.

The subjects of the experiment have been children from 0 to 17 years, of both sexes, drawn, as far as the Institute children were concerned from the elementary schools and supplemented, as far as children seen in private are concerned, by children from the private and public-schools. They are children suffering from every form of disturbance of their emotional life and as far as possible the severe cases have been selected for treatment. The series includes cases of melancholy and isolation, so severe as to suggest psychosis, eczemas of twelve years standing, psycholepsy, manic states, persistent antisocial behaviour lasting from earliest childhood, phobias and word blindness.

I want today to attempt to present two things: - The general results of the experiment and certain deductions drawn from the work itself. I wish with your permission to take the second part first.

The primary difficulty, if contact is to be made, is to devise a means by which the child can make clear to us the nature of his own thought. Speech is no use to children and their technical limitations make drawings of very limited application. We set out, therefore, to design a piece of apparatus for the expression of this non—verbal thought.

The insulting technique covers a large number of means of approach, out of which today I am selecting one to put before you.

We call it the World.

The apparatus consists of a metal tray 27" by 18", painted blue inside and mounted upon a table (SLIDES PLEASE)

SLIDE I Share this tray. The use of two or three sorts of sand is combined with the tray and as much water as the child desires. The sands are; of various colours, silver sand, brown sand, etc. and can be used for various effects.

SLIDE II This is a View of the cabinet which stands beside the tray. It consists of trays which draw out to their full length and can remain' fully extended. Within these are small models of all the ordinary' objects that fill the ordinary world, such as:-

All sizes and varieties of trees and houses.

Churches.

Windmills, bridges, fences, and gates.

Market, Fair and Street furniture.

Motor vehicles of all We and descriptions.

Trains, trucks and engines.

Pony-traps, wagons, ploughs, etc.

Ships and lighthouses.

Aircraft, guns.

Wild and domestic animals.

Soldiers and savages.

People and children of all kinds and descriptions.

Some of these will be seen on the top of the cabinet. With these are combined scoops, wooden spoons, odd bits of wood and debris of all sorts as the children happen to desire them.

This apparatus is used with children of all ages from about 4 to 16 and 17. Slides will follow (three now and the rest later, to illustrate my thesis when I have exposed it), showing the kind of use made of then by children of all ages. No difference has been found in the acceptability of the material to children of elementary school or private school social environment.

The child when presented with the tray is shown the cabinet and its contents and asked to do with it whatever he likes. Younger children take to it immediately; to older

children it is explained that there are new things in one's head one cannot put into words and perhaps the use of this material may help them to make these things clear. It is particularly explained to them that reasonableness is not necessary and if they went to put things in upside down or without any particular sense they are at liberty to do so.

The taken on the construction of a world may be 20 minutes or 2 to 3 hours. 'Worlds' may be unitary and stationary in that the whole afternoon may be given up to the elaboration of a single scene; they may be vivid and moving suggesting a cinema film more than anything else for the rapidity of movement. The worlds of many weeks may show a continuous story, each successive afternoon's work being the development and continuation of the previous one.

The use to which children put this material is quite unexpected. It ranges from photographically accurate transcripts of known scenes of ordinary life through every possible modification of this, to the most complex and interwoven incoherence. I am going here to put on three slides to give some modification of these varieties. They are made by a child of 8, a boy, a boy of 15 at a public school and a girl of 16, - all highly intelligent children.

I have other slides of worlds, with drawings of some of the more complicated ones, so made as to show the detail, but I am reserving these to the end of the paper so that time may be spared and you may first have the thesis before you.

A few days' work with these children, once they have found the material, convinces the observer of two things; - This kind of mental functioning is entirely unrelated to reality but is not in the least unconscious .

I would submit that we have here, in this material, achieved the first of our tasks, in that we now have an access to the direct register of precognitive thought in the child which can be treated like any other laboratory scientific material in that it can be abstracted from the subject making it and removed for study and comparison apart from the children. Careful record is made of all these worlds enabling them to be set up again at will in the laboratory.

Now we are accustomed to thinking of the mind as consisting of two parts, the conscious and the unconscious. Let us for a moment see what these terms mean and how they came about.

Freud, starting his work and confronted by a human being" took for examination what he saw, the conscious mind, taken at that we as being coterminous with mind. As he

worked however, another structure began to appear which appeared to have none of the qualities of conscious mind and of which the conscious mind was unaware. It was inevitable and fitting that the term unconscious should be applied to this emergent force. This was found to be at its strongest in childhood.

But if we now turn the medal round and instead of beginning with the conscious, that is, by being confronted by the adult in whom consciousness and cognition are fully developed, and look backwards to the unconscious, we start with the infant in whom cognitive faculties are not yet developed and look forward to cognition. Then the reverse of the picture arises. The strange part of the mind, the fantasy part, is what confronts us. This is now the norm and the problem before us, instead of being 'How and why does the unconscious part of the mind come about?' - becomes, 'Here we have the fantasy part as the norm, how and why does the cognitive system arise?'.

In making his worlds the child is quite clearly aware of a great deal of what he expresses, but is unable to explain its meaning in words. This thought cannot be equated therefore, with the unconscious of adult life, and to call it unconscious is misleading'. Also, clearly, as the conscious or cognitive part in young children is so little developed, it is difficult to see how this can arise by repression out of the consciousness. Psychoanalysis has met this difficulty by calling it the Id, but that is only to dress it up in fancy dress and give the wearer an identity disc. To do so does not explain the underlying process. It is the task of science to examine its material and to examine it upon lines not of an ideology which is self-contained and peculiar to itself, but upon that which holds current in the world outside the dogma.

Once we allow ourselves to move into an ideology which is individual to its subject and has no affinities in the cognate branches of knowledge, we are off the earth and anything is possible, even elaborate cannibalistic fantasies in the recently born.

I suggest therefore that the terms conscious and unconscious, even in these circumstances misleading, particularly since consciousness, as Spearman has emphasised, is closely bound up with speech and the child he: no Speech men it begin's its mental Me. If there is anything all that our material has shown and shown conclusively, it is that to call a thing not conscious, i.e., outside the individual's awareness, because it is non-verbal, is an abuse of terms.

I wish to propose that we get rid of this difficulty, which is a linguistic one, and substitute the terms primary and secondary mental system for unconscious and conscious functioning.

The primary system of thought then, describes all mental functioning between the age of 0 and that when cognitive processes occupy a normal part of the mental field, and the secondary system of thought when all thought can be expressed in prose. The primary system then becomes coterminous with the unconscious and the secondary with cognition.

I should like, in putting forward this suggestion, to call to my aid all that Professor Rubin has so cogently said about the danger attaching to theories and the value of looking directly at the material before our eyes. It does seem to me of the very greatest importance in studying children that we should have names for the facts that we study that do not prejudge our conclusions, but which enable us to value phenomena on an even basis, leaving pronouncements as to their ultimate nature to be made after and not before investigation.

Having arrived at this point our next task is to examine the nature of this primary system, and to subject it to the same methods of examination as those we apply to the cognitive aspects of the mind. Are there any laws discoverable for this primary part of the mind: laws, that is, expressible in the terms we already have? Can we find in this region, in operation, any of the laws that govern the workings of the conscious mind, even if in rather different guises.

I believe the answer to be in the affirmative, and I wish to put before you some of these conclusions.

Now in conducting an investigation of this kind, one has to begin somewhere and I have chosen to begin with the Noegenetic laws of Spearman. Can these be shown to operate in the primary system or can they not? I believe they can.

You will remember that these principles run as follows:-

1. Any lived experience tends to evoke immediately a knowing of its own character and the experiencer.

II. The mentally presenting of any two or more characters tends to evoke immediately a knowing of relation between them.

III. The presenting of any character together with any relation tends to evoke immediately a knowing of the correlative character.

Can these be shown to run also in the primary system? Or can they not? I believe that they can.



Spearman's classification of the material to which the Met principle applies runs as follows:-

A) Sensory Experience. B) Visceral. C) Affections such as excitement, tranquillisation, tension and relaxation, pleasure and unpleasure. D) Coalition itself.

I want to take two of these, the sensory and the affective and examine them more closely.

To take the first, the Sensory. It is interesting to note that as far as the everyday application of this principle is concerned the qualities perceived are external to the experiencer and are moreover relatively fixed and relatively agreed upon. The camera is black, the knife is sharp, etc.

There is also a further characteristic of our habits along these lines which lies in a certain economy of distribution of perceived qualities in relation to external objects. Take for example the knife. Any given knife may be lightly bluish in colour, smooth and cold to the touch, have a faintly metallic smell, in use may well make a faint and characteristic sound, but only in exceptional circumstances of specially directed interest would we perceive these qualities in its connection.

For the whole, we tend to economise in emphasis and seeing a knife, to associate with it three things only, - Size; it is natural to say large or small knife, - nature: such as pen-knife or kitchen knife, - and the words sharp or blunt.

That is to say the qualities of the object normally perceived are associated with common practical experiences of the central qualities of the object, that is, experiences of the kind for which the object was created. We are capable of perceiving and manipulating the other qualities, but we do not do so.

Furthermore, the qualities which we perceive and use for the education of relation: and correlates are those agreed upon by the general opinion to be inherent in the stimulus object. The rest are errors.

I would like here to note that Spearman himself emphasises the very limited number or grades of experience perceptible by the adult.

Leaving sensory experience on one side for the moment, let us consider effect, and use the description of Dr. Wohlgemuth of the scent of heliotropine, given by Spearman.

Here is an abbreviated account:-

"Sensation, at first unpleasant. The Unpleasure persisted for a brief period at the same intensity. Then it increased suddenly. A moment later: I detected a pleasure component in the sensation... It seemed to me of an exciting attractor which was accompanied by fairly widespread organic sensations of a typical kind. I noticed particularly a slight catch in the breath which occurred at the moment of greatest pleasure. I think this might be described as 'thrilling', or slightly vibratory, in oil-noun... This high degree of pleasure persisted only for a very short time. The olfactory sensation itself became then much less pleasant and the organic sensations died down... This disappearance was accompanied by some disappointment and discontent."

Now there is here a very important and central fact. Dr. Wohlegemuth throughout his description is immediately able to separate his own sensations from the agent arousing them. He is aware throughout of a duality, of something exterior to himself, and that the sensations and emotions he feels are aroused in himself in response to that object. Clearly such an ability depends directly upon Dr. Wohlegemuth's previous experience, upon his capacity to separate the Me from the Not Me, and his knowledge that such things as scents exist.

Had these not been present, his account, given the same degree of introspective ability, would have been the same, but would have been a description of a series of affective states in which the agent was included in the state itself, as, "I was aware at first of a general sense of unpleasure, accompanied by and specialised in my nose, which changed to, etc."

To return then to the nature of the primary system, whereas the code of cognition of the secondary system depend upon certain accepted external qualities of the experience experienced, and tend to group themselves around functional values, I wish to suggest that the mental acts of the primary system are of a similar nature but purely subjective in nature and dependent solely upon subjective values of the experience.

To consider this rather further in detail:-

It has been pointed out that the qualities accepted for attention in the secondary system tend to be the practical qualities of the stimulus object and that even if the other qualities are perceived they are immediately subordinated to the practical qualities. That is, an immediate automatic classification into more important and less important qualities is made in the cognising mind. Moreover, some experience of the object must already have

occurred to enable a correct classification to be made. It is upon the capacity to make this classification that tests such as - 'Prison is to criminals as water is to ...' are based. To complete such a sentence correctly one must be able to sort the perceived qualities of each object.

In the primary system such a sorting also takes place, but its basis is not objective and practical but subjective and affective.

Mental work begins with birth and has the quality throughout life of seeming conclusive and self-evident to the author until uncontrovertibly challenged by external fact. Such challenge cannot occur in infancy, only in very modified form until well on in the third year. By that time there is a wide basis of interwoven belief and experience already present in the mind. It is easier to refer new experience to this than to fragmentary new objective experience.

A child has a sensory experience - the experience arouses in him an affect. Since he is as yet incapable of distinguishing between stimulus object and affect aroused, these two together are registered in his mind, but they are registered as a total affect, not as evidence of the existence of an external stimulus. They themselves together, the experience and the affect, indistinguishably one, make up the fundament from which the child later educes relations.

Furthermore, the child has no knowledge of the practical nature of the object producing the affect, he has also not as yet made his basic classifications - he does not know of 'scents' or 'sounds' , he only knows a series of total experiences. Those qualities of the stimulus object therefore, which arouse in him the most powerful, or the clearest (here questions of habituation, etc. arise) affect are to him the qualities of the object arousing the affect. These may be the same as the adult would automatically perceive, or they may be different.

There is no means for the external observer to know which quality of the perceived object has thus reached pre-eminence and has become joined to affect in the child's mind. For it to be 'cuttingness' for knife, one must have had that experience of the knife and found it important. To a child it may well be the bluishness or the coldness.

We have therefore, a situation in which in the child experience does tend to evoke immediately knowledge of its characters, but the nature or these characters is purely subjective.

There is, however, further characteristic of the first principle. This is the ability possessed by the cognitive system to detach a character once it has been perceived from the stimulus object and to perceive it not as the object but as a character of the object.

In the primary system the presenting of two or more characters evokes equally a knowing of the relation but does not include an ability to detach this relation from the characters. For example - in order to be able to say coldness is to stone as sharpness is to tool, one must be able not only to perceive the stone as cold but also to conceive of the coldness as to separate quality. Now if the qualities chosen are those which the adult would agree to as being characteristics of the objects indicated, there is no importance in the difference: the child in this case educes the relation of 'hot' between pie, and say, a bath - and the adult agrees; it does not become inconvenient to the adult that pie and a bath should have the relation of identity to the child, because the practical motion consequences are agreeable. This may by no means always be the case. - The child, however, though he is able to educe relations and does so all the time, does not separate the relations from the fundament, but works the equation backwards. Instead of using the relation as an illumination to the fundament, he uses the relation in order to bind two fundaments together and make of them one experience. Some of the results are agreeable, some disagreeable to the adult, i.e., some are comprehensible, some not.

The relation evoked between the two fundaments is also always of a subjective mind; that is to say, those fundaments are chosen which evoke in the experiencer a similar effect. Supposing the affect produced is similar or analogous to that produced in the adult, the result is harmonious; suppose, however, which is far more common, the relation is one which remains unsuspected by the adult, the result is confusing. For example, if a Child seeing slime on a pond and spinach on his plate evokes a relation 'green' by this perception, the slime and the spinach become actually identified; they are for him the same thing', and obviously so- but the identity is unperceivable by the adult.

The child then, in the primary system, follows the second principle, but with different fundaments and without being able to separate the relation from the fundament.

To take the third principle.

Here exactly the same follows as in the case of the first principle. The child does educe correlates, but they are according to the nature of the relation. For example, the child sees green slime on a pond and perceives the relations - green and horrid to touch. He then educes the correlate - spinach, and makes the appropriate reaction.

In every case the correlate educed is not the objective functional one of the secondary system, but the subjective affective one of the primary system.

We have, therefore, as the first analysis of the primary system, a series of relations and correlates evoked and combined in the same way as that in the secondary system, but upon a subjective and not an objective basis. These correlates and all the structure that arises from them are self-evident to the mind that produces them, and absolutely satisfying.

The essential nature of the secondary system is its "Realness", the reality principle of Freudian thought. This must not in any way be confused with the reality of philosophy as it is a purely conventional and practical reality. It is in fact no more than a current agreement, but an agreement upon which the business of practical living depends. A cognitive percept or concept is from this point of view a certain arrangement of aphasia on experience in such a way as to his individual experience.

If the hypothesis I have been putting before you is correct, then we have a structure in the child's mind alike and yet different from the structure in the adult mind.

Now the adult reacts in certain settled ways to his mental structure. Having perceived the relation of cutting and educed numbers of correlates to them, he expresses a general affect, 'I am afraid of ... things which cut'.

So does the child. He makes his structure of identities, differences, etc., and in the process of making it, powerful affects are aroused, such as Dr. Wohlegemuth describes the affects induced by heliotropine. These affects are absolute to the child, he would never question their absoluteness or enquire if other people also felt them. Because he feels them, to him they are, that is, they are characters of the universe.

He therefore reacts appropriately to his mental structure, shrinks from his mother wearing a fur coat because of the cat who scratches, bursts into tears and refuses to eat his spinach. The outside world then reacts to his action, and once again the affect induced in him becomes attached to the object from which it arises. Thus 'This hurts me', becomes 'That-is-a-hurting-me-thing-or-person': an absolute quality and an absolute experience.

From this there follows a most crucial and important characteristic of child thought. This involvement not only of affect with percept but of bodily sensation with all percept and with all ideation gives to a child's thought a quality different from that of adult thought, what we may call a multi-dimensional quality where adult thought may be conceived of as two-dimensional.

Thus to an adult for example, all surfaces maintained somehow in space at a level approximately between the knees and shoulders, upon which one can put things, are grouped together, and a unitary concept made of them, to which the word table becomes attached. It is immaterial to this grouping that may be the size or colour of the material of which the structure is made, how it smells, or what experience it gives to the tactile um. These differences can, if you wish, be grouped together later and come to be subsections of the group table. They do not affect the 'tableness' of any given table. Below the knees and above the waist level of an average man a different grouping comes into force and the structure becomes either a stool or a counter.

Here it is the simplest characters that are selected and they are chosen from a practical angle. If a structure has these three qualities, it enables you to 'do' with a table the things you would want to do with a table - all the other appeals to the senses of these structures are disregarded as for the moment irrelevant.

It is, however, clear that to be able to make a grouping of this kind two basic essentials are presupposed. You must have had something which you wished to rest at some level other than the floor, and secondly to have had experience not only that such a thing can be procured, but that it can be procured different versions of itself. These experiences are entirely outside the range of the young child. Your point of view is one he cannot have since he has none of these experiences. The smooth brown curved leg of one table may be to him cool and brown and smooth and shiny, qualities possessed by his mother's silk dress. They will then combine with the dress to form one block, - or the darkness and 'good-to-play-in-ness' of the space underneath may bring to mind the feeling of being curled up waiting to spring, in a landing cupboard or a space in the bushes, and join the table with that experience.

The process in a true noegenesis following accurate lines of identity, opposition, etc. and can be retraced accurately by an outside observer according to known fact if the lines are known. Herein lies its fundamental differences from the grouping by association upon which such analytic technique is based. The brown of the table leg does not 'suggest' the brown of mother's dress, it is identical with that brown, the smoothness with smoothness, etc., and would be the same for all observers if they happened to think of it.

Groupings made by association occur independently of absolute qualities and are traceable only by knowledge of the intimate history of the person concerned. Thus it might well happen that the child was looking at a table leg by chance at the moment that it heard its mother fall

down the stairs, or the cook step on the tail of the cat, and the horror evoked by either circumstance would spill over to the leg so that in the after life a faint distaste for polished walnut tables remained. In free allocation the links are individual to the subject and cannot be recovered except through the medium of his own history.

While, therefore, connections in cognitive thought are made in the an by logic and reason, and are therefore retraceable and recoverable, connection in' a child's mind can be made in any of its multi-dimensions, so that structures arise such as are illustrated 1n' the series of lantern 'worlds'.

If what has been said is true, then it would follow that if a child is to be able to reproduce its mental content, it must have material to do so which is incapable of setting out construction of this nature: material term which is not only multi-dimensional, but also capable of representing movement. Such a material is provided by the 'worlds' as set out and such of the rest of me equipment of our playrooms. If these structures be accepted as they stand and taken to pieces according to the laws set out above, they are found to yield their meaning, and moreover, this meaning to be a sort that would be absolutely inexpressible in words.

I would like here to draw your attention to a certain caution and to point out that such a study demands of the observer some cheerfulness of temperament and satisfaction with his own stoutness of heart, as there is much the is shocking in the content of the primary system both of children and ourselves. It is important to realise the grimness of much of the material. No approach to childhood is going to be fruitful which is going to shirk any of the evidence produced. It is perhaps worthy of consideration at least, whether we are not going to be able to do something fairly effective towards the prevention of the playing out of these ideas in the stuff, later of reality by the adequate facing and resolution of these impulses in the primary system of childhood.

How close is the parallel between certain aspects of man's behaviour under certain circumstances and the play of these children may perhaps be indicated by the following abstract form the plasticine play of a 9 1/2 year old boy from a pleasant family. In ordinary life he was the rather particularly sweet-tempered new boy a preparatory school.

“This is going to be a man. Look - he's going to be a cannibal. He's going to be a heathen: a heathen that bows to an idol. Look- I'm going to make him kneel.” - Here he makes one very long leg about twice the length of the body and half the thickness. “Look how long his leg is: he's got to learn to kneel because he's a cannibal. Look, he's kneeling to the ideal. He's the cannibal king.” Soldiers appear from nowhere and begin attacking the figure. - “He's the bad witch. He's the powerful bas one, Look, they're cutting at his.” He

then begins to slash the head of the figure repeatedly; then all down the front of the chest, interspersing remarks made by the figure. -“Look,” they say, “We’re going to cut you up”. Don't do that, I don't like it.” By the time this is said the face of the figure is half cut away. “Look how he's bleeding” - with ghoulish glee - “he doesn't like being out at all.” He is, however, completely cut to pieces, his head being cut to bits first and then the rest of his body, ending with the legs. During the whole time the figure goes on making remarks like, ‘Oh, I don't want to be cut up.’ The figure continues to speak after his head is cut off, and the boy speaking for him says “He doesn't like having his head cut off, he doesn't like having his arms cut off, etc.”

We now come to the question of the relation between the primary and the secondary system.

A child throughout his growing life as an individual, that is, from about his second year, is constantly coming up against the adult system of thought, the objective reality world. The main characteristics of this world as he meets it are the unchangeability and its coldness to his own emotions; (the chair-leg remains stuck however much he may hit himself against it, hate and curse it); and the fixedness of its meaning. As a child of my acquaintance said once despairingly to its mummy - a mummy who, like Madame Montessori, disapproved of fantasy - “Mummy, Mummy, must the chair always be a chair - can't it be a bear even on Sundays?” This exterior world is entirely unlike the world of his interior thinking.

The quintessence of this process is exemplified in language. Language is the flattened out, codified epitome of the cognitive experience of the race. At the beginning the acquisition of language is an acquisition of power. It is delightful, important, it brings the child into contact with his grown-ups. Very soon, however, he finds that for most of his most intimate things there are no words in the sounds offered him.

Some children meet this difficulty by making a language of their own; some by refusing to talk at all; some by trying to repress and forget their own experience and adopt wholesale the codified symbols of adult life. Whichever it is that happens it is now that the child meets a factor crucial to its whole experience. Rebecca West has written a set of masterly short stories illustrating the fact that the crucial meaning in adult relationships can so little be expressed in speech, that for lack of it notions; shipwreck supervenes. This is a common experience. For all of us expression in words of the deepest features of our emotional lives is quite impossible. Very much more strongly is this the case with the child. One needs to have experience of the kind of concepts produced by children in the specialised techniques of our playrooms to appreciate the depth and immensity of the gulf between



the content of the primary system of thought and that which is offered to the Child by ready made language. Similarly language ie poorly polarised, is objective, factual, limited, totally unable to convey anti-dimensional thought. The contrast between this life of ween-ape that is offered him and the interior life of his own arouses in the acute anxiety.

There remains the final and most important point.

Does such study of the child do harm to the children studied or does it leave them where it found them?

I have left so many years before bringing forward these conclusions because I wanted to know the answer to that question myself.

During the 8 years that the I.C.P. has been at work, my colleague and co-director Dr. Ethel Dukes and I have been unable to fin'd any child definitely the worse for treatment at the Institute. Very few unchanged and a very substantial number appear changed for the better. A recent follow-up of the cases has shown a minimum number of relapses. In certain cases it would appear that the basis of the neurotic character has been altered. In no case has anxiety been aroused with which it was impossible to cope.

It would seem that the barrier that has been erected by psycho-analysis to the intimate study and assistance of the interior life of children by other than those trained in this special technique cannot, on examination, be maintained.