

REMARKS UPON DR. CORIAT'S PAPER "STAMMERING AS A PSYCHONEUROSIS"¹

A CRITICISM

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I have frequently wondered whether those of us who oppose the dissemination of the Freudian theories, at least as they are being and have been applied to the psychoneuroses and to psychopathology in general, have solved the problem as we should have solved it or fought the fight as we should have fought it. It has not infrequently seemed to me that our plan of battle, our campaign, the battle we have in a way waged, was not as consistently planned and as well organized as it should have been and as the occasion really demanded. There were many lines of attack open for us. We could, if we so wished, have made generalized and wholesale attacks upon all that Freudism stood for regardless of whether, in certain principles, it was right or wrong. This some have actually done. Although this method is not in my opinion fair or scientific, yet, so reckless and so uncritical have been many of the Freudians, and the foremost Freudians at that, in their declarations and conclusions, that I can readily see how one may be prompted to resort to unmitigated ridicule and general condemnation of the entire system, the standpoints and the conclusions that have been made the bulwark of the Freudian movement. Others have adopted a different method of dealing with the situation. They have entirely ignored the Freudian school and all that it stands for, and have permitted the members of this school to go to ever greater and greater extremes and excesses, with the more extensive elaboration of their system, so that eventually the error of their ways would be apparent to all, since the final conclusions to which they would be led would be openly

¹Dr. Isador H. Coriat's paper with this title appeared in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, Volume IX, No. 6, February-March, 1915.

fallacious and give proof positive that the foundation, the psychology upon which as a basis the Freudian system of interpretation and analysis has been erected, was defective to such an extent that it would crumble into disintegrated portions under the heavy load of the unsupported superstructure. This method has by no manner of means been unsuccessful.

A third standpoint to be assumed is that in which replies to or criticisms of individual articles, rather than criticisms of a general nature and applicable to the Freudian psychology or method or conclusions *in toto*, is adopted as the proper method of dealing with the situation with which we found ourselves with the advent and spread of the Freudian movement. This last-mentioned method is probably the most desirable of the three methods which have been here mentioned.

And it is the method which I shall follow in this criticism of Dr. Coriat's paper, because, among other reasons, I believe it is the fairest to all concerned.

It is not my purpose to take up for discussion the various statements, made by Dr. Coriat, with which I disagree, but rather to consider only the question of the correctness or incorrectness of the general thesis which he has presented.

The reasons for my entering into a criticism of this particular article by Dr. Coriat may be stated as follows: In the first place I am interested in the general problems of psychopathology, and of the psychoneuroses in particular. In the second place I am somewhat unusually interested in the problem of stuttering.² This latter interest has two main sources of origin: (1) I am deeply interested in the question of stuttering because of my general interest in neurology and psychiatry, including the speech disorders, under which heading stuttering finds its place; (2) I have myself, from earliest childhood, suffered from this affection and so find myself naturally much interested in the subject.

It is not out of place, it seems to me, to at once answer one of the stock arguments which certain Freudians have been in the habit of offering as a reply to those who criticized

²In this paper I shall use the terms "stammering" and "stuttering" interchangeably.

their theories and conclusions. I refer to the argument or rather the insistence that those who oppose the spread of the Freudian ideas are themselves unconscious illustrations of the truth and accuracy and general applicability of the Freudian dicta. In this argument they accuse their opponents of unconsciously indulging in or being victims of a defense mechanism, as a means of self-justification and self-rationalization, based on repression, sexuality, etc., in order that their hidden, unconscious, repressed, forgotten desires, tendencies and inclinations may not be brought to the surface and consciously acknowledged. In other words, in my particular case (my present criticism of Dr. Coriat's paper), I could, perhaps, be accused, by those Freudians who are in the habit of resorting to this charge as their own method of self-justification and self-rationalization, as the path of least resistance and as a loophole through which they can escape from meeting the situation presented to them by a frank self-examination and acknowledgment of error or by a fair and satisfactory response—I could be accused, I repeat, of showing, by the very fact of my criticism, that all that Dr. Coriat stated concerning the origin and nature of stammering was true.

In replying to this oft-repeated and oft-resurrected assertion, I need not be detained for any great length of time from proceeding to the consideration of those facts which are the real purpose of this paper. I need only say, in parentheses, that it does seem to me that there surely are a few anti-Freudians (and I may here include myself) who are perhaps, who knows, capable of that degree of unprejudiced self-criticism and intensive self-analysis which is necessary for the purposes of making ourselves eligible for candidacy as critics of the Freudian theories and dogmata. I may go further and gently suggest that it even seems to me that there may be some others of us who are capable of as great a degree of such self-criticism and self-analysis as, and it may even be of a greater degree than, many of those who have been making this claim. I am content to leave this point to the sound judgment and good sense of the average reader of these pages.

The second point that I should bring out in this con-

nection is as follows: That which is of fundamental importance and of basic significance in the life of the psychoneurotic or the stutterer, that which is the fundamental and essential motive force which controls the psychoneurotic and the stutterer is also true, but in greater or less degree, for all of those who are not within the confines of this group.³ And as a further statement I must assert that whatever is deemed to be the essential and primary cause for stuttering must also be applicable, in the same way but in different degree, to all the other manifestations of speech disorder such as the slips of the tongue, and many other of the psychopathologic acts of everyday life. Consequently, if the Freudian theories of sexuality are directly applicable to the problem of stuttering, it follows that they must likewise be applicable to all the other disturbances of speech just referred to. For, if followed out to the very end, we shall find that the possible mental content and mental mechanisms are the same for all psychopathologic acts, whether of everyday life or distinctly abnormal and outside the pale of our average range. If sexuality lies at the bottom of stuttering, it must be at the root of all other psychopathologic acts, of whatever nature, of whatever degree and wherever and whenever found. I cannot devote the time in this place to enter into an elaborate discussion to prove the truth of this thesis. But I can gain my point more easily and more directly in another way. Although Freud and his followers have not stated, in just so many words, that the psychopathologic acts of everyday life have the same hidden mental content that the psychoneuroses have (although it is my contention that this conclusion is but a natural extension of their sexual theories concerning the psychoneuroses), yet we do find that Freud and the Freudian school in general apply their sexual theories to the whole group of the psychoneuroses. Now, since stuttering is a psychoneurotic disorder of a certain special type, it is understood that they must believe that stuttering, as a matter of course, comes within the rubric of their generalization. As a matter of fact, if their sexual

³Freud himself agrees that his sexual theories apply to all mankind and that the psychoneurotic differs from others in not being able to successfully and completely repress or sublimate the undesirable sexual trends.

theories were at first applied only to stuttering, as they were originally applied to hysteria, it would mean that, by a process of reasoning, the Freudian school would have to apply their dicta to all of the psychoneuroses. This was, in truth, just what did occur, beginning with hysteria. And it is seen that the same thing would have happened had they begun with stuttering. I contend, further, but I shall not endeavor in this place to prove the correctness of my contention, that what is absolutely and without exception, fundamentally and essentially true of the psychoneuroses is likewise true, in different degree, of the psychopathologic acts of every day life. This would be the conclusion to which I would be forced if I started with any one of the psychoneuroses, whether it be hysteria or stuttering. One can thus see that my statement that if Freud's theories are true for stuttering they must of necessity be true for all psychopathologic acts of whatever sort is quite true.⁴ I could go much further and prove that if Freud's theories were the primary and basic explanation for stuttering they must be applicable to all manifestations of human mental energy, which to me would mean that they are no less true of all vital energy, human or otherwise. In other words, the solitary application of Freud's conception to the problem of stuttering would lead us, by logical steps, to the ultimate conclusion that the vital energy was sexual—a conclusion with which Jung will not agree. And let us not forget, too, that the term "sexual" would here be used in a psychological sense, so that, in fact, Freud's theories of sexuality as the explanation of stuttering would lead us, step by step, to a psychosexual conception of the universe. And is this not exactly what the Freudian school has assumed?

I fear that I have not made myself as clear as I should and as I should like to, but at the risk of being misunderstood, or of not carrying the reader with me in my argument, I shall not enter into any further discussion of this aspect—the wider meanings of Dr. Coriat's paper.

As can be judged from the above remarks, it was no surprise to me to see such a paper on stuttering as Dr.

⁴Freud himself agrees psycho-pathologic acts of everyday life are the formes frustes of the psychoneuroses and that this shows that we are all slightly nervous.

Coriat's. To be sure it was tacitly understood, by those who could read between the lines, that this must be the belief of the Freudian school, since their conclusions were said to be true of all the psychoneuroses.

I had also known that a few Freudians abroad had arrived at conclusions similar to those presented by Dr. Coriat, but since, so far as I knew, no paper along this line had appeared in the English or American journals, I did not give the subject any serious or special consideration and had not the slightest idea of refuting the statements. When, however, Dr. Coriat's paper appeared, I concluded that it was not out of place for me at this time to enter into a criticism of these views.

I have felt on many occasions that too many of the statements made by members of the Freudian school have been left unchallenged, with the result that the views promulgated have received quite widespread dissemination; so much so that many believe that the sensational and unsupported views which have come to their ears are accepted as the untarnished truth by most or all psychopathologists, and were a definitely proven and generally accepted part of psychopathology. It is therefore not at all surprising to find so many workers in other fields of medicine who believe that the terms "psychopathology" and "Freudian psychoanalysis" are synonymous, one and the same thing.

This also is one of the motives which prompts me to write these lines.

I am furthermore impelled by the purely scientific desire for truth and accuracy, as applied in particular to the problem of stuttering.

And last, but by no means least, I see a serious danger to the community in the uncritical acceptance and the widespread dissemination of the views promulgated by the Freudian school.

Let me assure Dr. Coriat that I regret very much that I find myself compelled to take the field against him or rather his paper in this connection, and that no personalities enter into the question at issue, but that it is a purely scientific problem, which demands the freest discussion, from all sides. Each of us is entitled to his personal opinions in this

matter. The question of sincerity and honesty of purpose is not at all breathed. It is purely a matter of "What is the truth?"

And it shall be my object in the following brief discussion not to give my personal views upon this subject, nor even to dissect each and every statement in Dr. Coriat's paper with which I find myself at issue, but merely to show wherein Dr. Coriat is in most serious error.

I shall confine myself to the question of the application to stammering of the sexual theories so rampant in Freudism. Besides, I shall avail myself of the privilege of giving, in Dr. Coriat's own words, the gist of his theory or concept.

"The attempt to repress from consciousness into the unconscious certain trends of thought or emotions, usually of a sexual nature, is the chief mechanism in stammering." This is the only place in the article where Dr. Coriat expresses any doubt as to the universal validity of his theory for all cases of stuttering. But I consider this merely as a slip of the tongue or pen, because in the other portions of the paper the conclusion concerning the sexual basis of stammering is unqualifiedly made general, and I find that even on the very next page, at the conclusion of the paragraph of which the sentence just quoted is the beginning, there occurs the statement that "the fear in stammering is a deflection of the repressed sexual impulse or wish." With this beginning Dr. Coriat proceeds to explain: "Thus the repressed thought, because of fear of betrayal, comes in conflict with the wish to speak and not to betray (the secret through words⁵). Hence, the hesitation in speech arises and as the repressed thoughts gradually are forced into the unconscious, there finally develops the defective speech automatism, either stammering or a spastic aphonia. This arises in childhood after the child has learned to speak."

Moreover, "the hesitation of stammerers on certain words or letters is due to disturbing complexes. The stammering does not cause the inhibition, it is the inhibition which is at the bottom of the stammering."

"Two types of stimuli lead to stammering, either inter-

⁵Words in parentheses mine but taken from Dr. Coriat's paper, for explanatory purposes.

nal conflicts, or external instigators which throw these conflicts into activity. The internal conflicts are either conscious or unconscious fear of betrayal (and therefore a wish to retain a secret), and this mental attitude leads to the dread of speaking, a genuine conversion of morbid anxiety into defective speech. . . . The external stimuli act like dream instigators, for instance the fear of speaking to relatives or to intimate friends may be based upon the fear that the unconscious wishes may be discovered and this stimulates the unconscious anxiety, whereas with strangers, speech is free, because the dread of discovery is absent."

"Thus," says Dr. Coriat, "the beginning of stammering in early childhood . . . is caused by the action of unconscious repressed thoughts upon the speech mechanism, the repressed thought obtruding itself in speech."

In brief it is contended by Dr. Coriat that the stammering arises as a defense or compensation mechanism, the object of which is to keep from consciousness certain painful memories and undesirable thoughts, in order that they may not be betrayed in speech. In fact, as Dr. Coriat says, "all stammering, with its hesitation, its fear, its disturbing emotions, is a kind of an association test in everyday life and not a phonetic disturbance. It is a situation phobia, the same as phobias of open or closed places."

Consequently, according to this view, stammering is purposeful and intentional and not accidental. This purposiveness is psychological and individualistic. It is resorted to by the individual for very definite, intimate, personal reasons. It is due to unconscious, repressed hidden complexes which crowd or press between the words of syllables, as Stekel puts it, and which produce the inner resistance which inhibit the free flow of speech.

It is asserted that these hidden, repressed, unconscious thoughts are related to the sexual impulse or wish.

Dr. Coriat enumerates the types of repressed complexes in childhood which may bring about stammering as follows: "1. Repression of sexual acts or secrets and the fear of betrayal. 2. Typical Oedipus complexes, with a fear of betrayal of the hate for the father, and a consequent embarrassment of speech in his presence. 3. Masochistic

phantasies, wondering and imitating how it would sound to talk with the tongue cut out. 4. The fear of pronouncing or saying certain sexual and, therefore, tabooed words, and thus betraying what the child thinks, his hidden thoughts.

. . . The stammering may then arise as a wish to say or think certain tabooed words and the wish encounters a prohibition from within. These words may relate to certain anal, urinary or sexual functions which are recognized by the child as unclean, and thus forbidden to pronounce. 5. As a manifestation of anal eroticism, that is, holding the feces so that he could talk while trying to conceal the act.

. . Talking at these times would be difficult, because talking would take away the muscular tension for withholding the feces."

At another place Dr. Coriat assures us that "the dreams of stammerers are interesting because these dreams reveal their wishes to talk freely, their resistances and transferences and, also, their reversions to childhood when the stammering arose as an embarrassment complex or as a gainer of time to conceal their sexual thoughts or libido."

I have presented Dr. Coriat's views so fully and quoted him so much at length in order that there may not be any question of the absolute accuracy of my statements.

What does this mean to the one who has followed the trail of the Freudian movement? The meaning is plain. It is like the handwriting on the wall. Dr. Coriat has permitted himself to be deluded by the Freudian sexual theories and their application to the psychoneuroses, and in this special instance to stammering.

What does this imply? It implies that Dr. Coriat accepts the Freudian theories *en masse*. Hence, to discuss this subject in a thorough way I should have to take up for discussion the various aspects of Freudian psychoanalysis. This would include a consideration of the method employed, the psychology, the attitude or standpoint assumed, the "art of interpretation" developed, and the real meanings, in their wider and more extended sense, of various unsupported, unfounded, dogmatic and untrue conclusions of a theoretical and practical nature. This cannot, it is obvious, be expected in this place. Attempts of a certain sort in this

direction have been made by me in previous communications.⁶ In the not very distant future I shall endeavor more successfully to cope with some of the problems mentioned.

With respect to the general problem of sexuality I may say that I have recently⁷ taken up, for separate dissection, the conception of sexuality assumed by Freud and his followers. The present paper should, I feel, be read in connection with this particular paper, since it will, in a way, clear the field of many of the misunderstandings in interpretation. Everything depends upon what one means by "sexuality" or "sexual impulse" or "sexual tendency." Unless a mutual understanding is arrived at on this subject of sexuality, little advance toward the dissipation of conflicting views of Freudians and anti-Freudians can ever be had. And permit me to mention in this place that it is the Freudians themselves and not their opponents who are most to blame. Until the Freudian school decidedly and once for all gives up its false and distorted viewpoint of man's sexual impulse and of human mental life, little progress of a worth-while nature can be made by them.⁸

Starting out, then, with certain concepts or theories which are basically wrong and can be summed up by stating that they assume an individualistic, psychosexual conception of life and interpretation of vital phenomena, and with a psychology and a sexology which is radically wrong in its sweeping and dogmatic conclusions, Dr. Coriat, who has obviously accepted these theories as actualities, else he could not have arrived at the ideas concerning stammering which he presents in his paper, builds up or accepts an imaginatively constructed theory which he applies in full force to the problem of stuttering, and into which he crowds the phenomena of a physical and mental order which are manifest in this intermittent, special psychoneurotic disorder. As a natural consequence all the faults of Freudism have been

⁶See, for example, the *Psychoanalytic Review*, January 1915 and the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, June-September, 1914.

⁷"A Critical Review of the Conception of Sexuality Assumed by the Freudian School." *Medical Record*, March 27, 1915.

⁸Owing to the fixed, systematized theories of the Freudian school, I believe that little co-operation can be expected from it. We can only prevent the dissemination of their dangerous sexual theories.

transported to the elucidation of the genesis, nature and evolution of stammering. And this means that the theories of universally acting psychical repression, of the unconscious, of the endopsychic censor, of the significance of resistance and amnesia, of the employment of highly complicated and phantastic symbolism, of the manifestations of sexuality and so forth have been made use of in a high-handed, uncalled for, unnecessary and unscientific manner to prove the truth of the thesis with which the author set out upon his journey.

It is no wonder that in such a fashion and with such concepts the conclusions above cited were arrived at. Indeed, work along this line was unnecessary, except in a purposively corroborative way, if the theories of Freud in the case of the whole group of psychoneuroses is once seized upon and accepted as the basic truth. The problem for Dr. Coriat is to prove the truth of Freud's conceptions as laid down in his psychology and sexology, upon which his psychopathology is built.

I must stoutly protest against an evasion of the real issues by the leaders of the Freudian movement. Let them retrace their steps and first prove the truth, soundness and validity of their psychological and sexual theories and cease pressing on to pastures new, as Dr. Coriat has done here in the case of stuttering. If they are not prepared to do this, or are unwilling so to do, I do not believe that they are entitled to continue to inflict upon others views which have little real foundation in fact, which are unproven, unfounded, purely speculative, imaginative, pure figments of the imagination, a delusion and a snare. I have elsewhere⁹ given credit to Freud and his co-workers where I think they deserve it. But that should not deter me from protesting against their evasion of the issues, their befogging of the problems involved, their failure to prove their case or to offer satisfactory replies to criticism which is given in a fair and frank fashion.

The method of burying one's head in sand, after the

⁹"A Plea for a Broader Standpoint in Psychoanalysis." *Psychoanalytic Review*, January, 1915.

manner of the ostrich, and the refusal to see that which is pointed out or which stares one clearly in the face, cannot go far to establish one's case or as a method of defense. And the same thing applies to that oft-repeated and tiresome retort: "You do not (or perhaps you cannot) understand our theories and viewpoints." Or that other evasive accusation, rather than reply: "Your lack of understanding is of itself proof positive that our theories are absolutely correct in every detail." Or "Your attack or criticism just completely and undoubtedly proves our case. You are prompted by those very mental mechanisms and by that self-same mental content—meaning all the time the sexual content and sexual mechanisms—which we have been trying to explain to you so that you might understand us."

In response to this I should like to ask the Freudian school what it means by "censor," "wish," "unconscious," "sexual," and other similar and constantly used terms which form the stronghold of their defenses. I have shown,¹⁰ at least to my own satisfaction, that the conception of sexuality is not at all clear to any of the Freudian school, including Freud himself. This should by no means be so. Surely the terms which are constantly used and are the *sine qua non* of their theories should have a definite meaning of some sort, at least to the Freudians themselves. Mystical and metaphysical implications should not continue to find a sheltering place in the province of psychopathology. They should be uprooted and driven forth from the dark and hidden recesses into the light and open highways.

These statements have a direct application to the paper which I have undertaken to criticize. It is all very well and very commendable to come forward with new theories. They are entertaining, interesting and make one think, even if they are not at all true. But it should be definitely and plainly stated that we are dealing with theories and not with facts, that the theories will be considered theories until they are proven to be facts, and that if they are disproven, they should be thrown into the rubbish heap or discarded, or else they should be modified to meet with the facts and actual conditions—as they are and not as they ought in our opinion

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

to be or as we should like them or as we imagine them to be.

Here we are confronted with a problem (stammering) which has been the subject of much study and discussion by many men. Theories have been carefully and guardedly formulated by most workers in this field. Many of them were, it is true, in error in their conclusions or viewpoints. They were, as it were, on the wrong trail.

Here is a problem of the greatest interest and of the greatest importance—one which should demand the most careful research and the most positive deliberation and consideration, with prolonged and intensive study and observation of cases, combined with self-scrutiny and self-analysis and self-knowledge (which means a keen insight into human nature and the human mind in its manifold workings). Here is a serious, concrete problem of great practical importance. Its solution and elucidation means much. And he who comes forward with an explanation of this problem should be expected to give conclusive proof of his conception and for his conclusion. And we should, justly and as a matter of course, expect and demand it.

And what proof has Dr. Coriat given us for his conclusions? Here and there scattered through his paper one finds a few conclusions or explanations of a concrete nature, but they are his interpretations of the facts and not the facts. No real, in fact not a vestige of proof is offered. The few dreams which he presents do not, to the inquiring and demanding reader, show anything which permit of the conclusions which Dr. Coriat draws with reference to their meaning or significance. He seems to have interpreted (rather than analyzed) them in typical Freudian fashion. And, furthermore, even if his interpretations of the few dreams which he presents and which were taken from different cases were true, of what significance would that be? What right would we thus have of drawing conclusions which apply to all cases of stuttering (and, as mentioned earlier in this paper, to many other related states of a normal and abnormal nature)? Not the slightest.

Not a single case has been presented in proof of the conclusions drawn in the paper. Surely this is not what we have been accustomed to expect in other fields of medicine, especially when the conception newly put forth is entirely

novel, sensational, revolutionary, contrary to all former beliefs, and based on theories and conclusions which have been for some time and still are a centre of storm, of wordy argumentation, and even of insult and abuse—at any rate *sub judice*.

Has the science and practice of psychopathology come to the stage when theories of any sort can be given to the reading public as fact, and no actual proof therefor presented?

I venture to say that in no other department of medicine or in fact in no other aspect of life would scientific men tolerate such presentation and promulgation, despite opposition and disproof and with no tangible or definite evidence or proof. Nor would men come forward to offer revolutionary, let alone dangerous theories, for general consumption, with so little proof, as is being laid on the platter for psychopathologists.

I find no evidence offered by Dr. Coriat to bolster up the conclusions of his paper.

In response to a question asked by one of those who discussed his paper in which he was requested to explain how he knew that stammering begins by concealing something, Dr. Coriat stated: "I have had an opportunity of examining a number of stammerers and subjecting them to a complete psychoanalysis, studying all the paradoxical mental reactions and in nearly every case this concealment of some sexual secret of childhood came up. It is easy to establish a certain relationship between the speech embarrassment and the concealed sexuality."

There is, as is seen, no other proof for this theory (that is all that one call it) of Dr. Coriat and the Freudian school in general, than his or their say-so. Those who are acquainted with the method of arriving at conclusions adopted by the Freudian school will demand more than this as proof of either the "concealment" of some "sexual secret" of childhood (and where lives there a man or woman that has not sexual memories, not necessarily secrets, of some sort or other, related to the period of puberty or antedating it by a certain varying period?) or the establishment of a relationship other than co-existence or coincidence, between the speech

embarrassment and the "concealed sexuality" (just as if even proof of the existence of this relationship was sufficient testimony of the causative operating influence of the latter).

I could discuss Dr. Coriat's paper from many angles, and in each case show that its conclusions were not only unsupported but impossible.¹¹ But in the above remarks I have presented sufficient evidence, I believe, to carry out the objects of this criticism.

The reader should not lose sight of the cold but important fact that the application of Freud's sexual theories to stammering in children is, in my humble opinion, fraught with the greatest danger. I cannot do otherwise than look upon this as positively anti-social. It would, it is my belief, be a glaring and ripe source of danger to the community and to society in general for these ideas to be spread broadcast. Freud himself has shown that the child, before puberty, with his more or less undifferentiated sexual impulse, may be swept along into any one or more of the sexual aberrations or to intrafamilial sexuality. These goals exist only as *possibilities* and should not, I contend, be referred to as predispositions or tendencies (almost as if they were instincts). The direction of the child's thought along this line before or at or after puberty may prove disastrous in one or more of many different ways.

Think of hinting at or talking about or harping upon matters of this sort to children, let alone to adults of the usual sort! It would be nothing less than a crime to society, to the family and to the growing child. In this respect I look upon the application of the Freudian theories as a distinct and glaring danger to the individual, to the family and to the community.

Efforts to stem the tide from flowing in this direction should be unfettered. It means much for humanity.

Even hinting (to the children) in a remote way about the various aspects of sexuality described by the Freudian school should not find its place and has no place in treating stammering *per se* in children.

¹¹The ideas in the paper are, in fact, absurd. If definite, practical, clinical issues were not involved matters might be different. But the situation is serious, yes, dangerously antisocial, since the practical application of these theories to human beings is the point of greatest interest.

Think of the effect of continual conversation and thinking of this sort upon a child at or before puberty, or at adolescence, or even upon an individual in adult life! His thoughts are continually drifted to his urogenital organs and the sexual possibilities of all sorts of human relationships, intrafamilial as well as extrafamilial.

The Freudians may object to any statements to the effect that they tell their patients about these sexual theories. I find Jones,¹² for instance, declares that Freud "deliberately withholds from his patients all knowledge of psychoanalyses except what they discover for themselves." Even granting this, the patient doesn't have to wait long or think much before he does discover for himself just what the Freudians mean.

But Freud¹³ himself contradicts this statement by Jones when he says: "*If with my patients I emphasize the frequency of the Oedipus dream—of having sexual intercourse with one's own mother—I get the answer: 'I cannot remember such a dream.'* Immediately afterwards, however, there arises recollection of another disguised and indifferent dream, which has been dreamed repeatedly by the patient, and the analysis shows it to be a dream of this same content—that is, another Oedipus dream."

Then again, listen to Brill:¹⁴ "With reference to the question of determining that a person is homosexual.

"A patient came to me who was said to have nothing the matter with his sexual life, but who had convulsions. *I had seen him not more than three times when I said to him: 'You are homosexual,' and I explained what I meant.* He told me that while at college he never indulged in sexual acts, and that for this reason he used to wrestle, during which he would have ejaculation, and he selected his partners. Unquestionably from the beginning of his existence he was homosexual, although he was able to have sexual intercourse with his wife, but he was compelled to marry when quite young; he was 'prodded into it,' as he said. He came to me

¹²Ernest Jones: Professor Janet on Psychoanalysis; A Rejoinder. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Feb.-Mar., 1915, p. 407.

¹³Brill's translation of Freud's Interpretation, p. 242. Italics mine.

¹⁴The Conception of Homosexuality, Journal of American Medical Association, August 2, 1913. See Brill's discussion on pages 339-340. Italics mine.

to be treated for neurosis, but the neurosis was simply the result of homosexual lack of gratification.

"We should be particularly careful not to suggest anything. I never tell a patient that he is homosexual. *Be reasonably sure that he is homosexual and you need not hesitate to tell him so.*"

It all depends on what one means by "reasonably sure" or what kind of and how much evidence one requires or demands to be "reasonably sure."

Furthermore the mass of popular Freudian literature is not by any means hidden from the patient.

In conclusion I may remind the members of the Freudian school that it behooves them to undergo that same self-analysis and self-scrutiny which they justly advise others to have. If they do this in a truly critical and impartial way they will find that the opposition which they have met has not been without foundation. They will find that there are serious and all-pervading flaws in their psychology and sexology, and that this is responsible for their one-sided and distorted analyses and interpretations. Most of the trouble will be found in the method of interpretation, flowing out of their attitude. They will find that they have been advocating a system of theories and conclusions which have been followed as a religion, a cult, a creed. And they will correct the errors which are so patent to so many of the rest of us.

It is or should be evident to him who reads between the lines and surveys this question as from a mountain top, that there is not the slightest proof, not one jot of testimony in support of the ideas which Dr. Coriat has given us in his paper.

As a final word I cannot refrain from remarking that it will be a sad day for humanity and for society when psychoneurotics of whatever sort, stammerers, normal individuals with their psychopathologic acts of everyday life, and all the rest of us, particularly children, shall be subjected to Freudian psychoanalyses, with the numerous sexual theories and sexual implications with regard to everything of vital or human concern, as seen especially in family and social relations. A study of the origin, nature and evolution of these is not only not out of place, but on the other hand finds a

distinct place of honor for purely scientific purposes. Theories, however unfounded and untrue, may, not inappropriately, be offered for this purpose. But we come upon a decidedly different situation when we have to deal in a practical sort of way with individuals, particularly children, who are the objects of the experimental application of full-blown theories. Especially is this so in the case of sexual theories.

Propagation of such views concerning the origin and nature of stammering as are presented to us in Dr. Coriat's paper should be sternly discountenanced. Nay more, they should be unflinchingly denied and even severely condemned. I, for one, protest vigorously against the propagation of such views, especially when they represent nothing more than an inflated theory.

The writer wishes to assure Dr. Coriat and the reader that his remarks are intended in a thoroughly impersonal sort of way. He is concerned only with the problems involved. Personalities do not at all enter into the proposition. He hopes that his criticism will be accepted in the same spirit in which it is given. If, to the reader, it may seem at times that the writer has spoken too strongly, he can only say in defense that he has seized upon this occasion as the time and the place to so express himself briefly, frankly but without malice. The situation more than demands such outspoken expression of opinion.