

# A NEW THEORY OF NEUROSES

By D. H. Lawrence

THE SOCIAL BASIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS. *By Trigan Burrow. Harcourt, Brace. \$3.75.*

DR. TRIGANT BURROW is well known as an independent psychoanalyst through the essays and addresses he has published in pamphlet form from time to time. These have invariably shown the spark of original thought and discovery. The gist of all these essays now fuses into this important book, the latest addition to the International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method.

Dr. Burrow is that rare thing among psychiatrists, a humanly honest man. Not that practitioners are usually dishonest. They are intellectually honest, professionally honest, all that. But that other simple thing, human honesty, does not enter in, because it is primarily subjective; and subjective honesty, which means that a man is honest about his own inward experience, is perhaps the rarest thing, especially among professionals. Chiefly, of course, because men, and especially men with a theory, don't know anything about their own inward experiences.

Here Dr. Burrow is a rare and shining example. He set out, years ago as an enthusiastic psychoanalyst and follower of Freud, working according to the Freudian method, in America. And gradually, the sense that something was wrong, vitally wrong, both in the theory and in the practice of psychoanalysis, invaded him. Like any truly honest man, he turned and asked himself what it was that was wrong, with himself, with his methods and with the theory according to which he was working?

This book is the answer, a book for every man interested in the human consciousness to read carefully. Because Dr. Burrow's conclusions, sincere, almost naïve in their startled emotion, are far-reaching, and vital.

First, in his criticism of the Freudian method, Dr. Burrow found, in his clinical

experience, that he was always applying a *theory*. Patients came to be analysed, and the analyst was there to examine with open mind. But the mind could not be open, because the patient's neurosis, all the patient's experience, *had* to be fitted to the Freudian theory of the inevitable incest-motive.

And gradually Dr. Burrow realised that to fit life every time to a theory is in itself a mechanistic process, a process of unconscious repression, a process of image-substitution. All theory that has to be applied to life proves at last just another of these unconscious images which the repressed psyche uses as a substitute for life, and against which the psychoanalyst is fighting. The analyst wants to break all this image business so that life can flow freely. But it is useless to try to do so by replacing in the unconscious another image — this time, the image, the fixed motive, of the incest-complex.

Theory as theory is all right. But the moment you apply it to *life*, especially to the subjective life, the theory becomes mechanistic, a substitute for life, a factor in the vicious unconscious. So that while the Freudian theory of the unconscious and of the incest motive is valuable as a *description* of our psychological condition, the moment you begin to *apply* it, and make it master of the living situation, you have begun to substitute one mechanistic or unconscious illusion for another.

In short, the analyst is just as much fixed in his vicious unconscious as is his neurotic patient, and the will to apply a mechanical incest-theory to every neurotic experience is just as sure an evidence of neurosis, in Freud or in the practitioner, as any psychologist could ask.

So much for the criticism of the psycho-analytic method.

If then, Dr. Burrow asks himself, it is not sex-repression which is at the root of the

neurosis of modern life, what is it? For certainly, according to his finding, sex-repression is not the root of the evil.

The question is a big one and can have no single answer. A single answer would only be another "theory". But Dr. Burrow has struggled through years of mortified experience to come to some conclusion nearer the mark. And his finding is surely much deeper and more vital, and also, much less spectacular than Freud's.

The real trouble lies in the inward sense of "separateness" which dominates every man. At a certain point in his evolution, man became cognitively conscious: he bit the apple; he began to know. Up till that time his consciousness flowed unaware, as in the animals. Suddenly his consciousness split.

"It would appear that in his separateness man has inadvertently fallen a victim to the developmental exigencies of his own consciousness. Captivated by the phylogenetically new and unwonted spectacle of his own image, it would seem he has been irresistibly arrested before the mirror of his own likeness and that in the present self-conscious phase of his mental evolution he is still standing spell-bound before it. That such is the case with man is not remarkable. For the appearance of the phenomenon of consciousness marked a complete severance from all that was his past. Here was broken the chain of evolutionary events whose links extended back through the nebulous aeons of our remotest ancestry, and in the first moment of his consciousness man stood, for the first time, *alone*. It was in this moment that he was 'created', as the legend runs, 'in the image and likeness of God'. For breaking with the teleological traditions of his age-long biology, man now became suddenly *aware*."

Consciousness is self-consciousness. "That is, consciousness in its inception entails the fallacy of a *self as over against other selves*."

Suddenly aware of himself, and of other selves over against him, man is a prey to the division inside himself. Helplessly he must strive for more consciousness, which means, also, a more intensified aloneness or individuality: and at the same time he has a horror of his own aloneness, and a blind, dim yearning

for the old togetherness of the far past, what Dr. Burrow calls the preconscious state.

What man really wants, according to Dr. Burrow, is a sense of togetherness with his fellow men, which shall balance the secret but overmastering sense of separateness and aloneness which now dominates him. And therefore, instead of the Freudian method of personal analysis, in which the personality of the patient is pitted against the personality of the analyst in the old struggle for dominance, Dr. Burrow would substitute a method of group analysis, wherein the reactions were distributed over a group of people, and the intensely personal element eliminated as far as possible. For it is only in the intangible reaction of several people, or many people together, on one another that you can really get the loosening and breaking of the me-and-you tension and contest, the inevitable contest of two individualities brought into connection. What must be broken is the egocentric absolute of the individual. We are all such hopeless little absolutes to ourselves. And if we are sensitive, it hurts us, and we complain, we are called neurotic. If we are complacent, we enjoy our own petty absolutism, though we hide it and pretend to be quite meek and humble. But in secret, we are absolute and perfect to ourselves, and nobody could be better than we are. And this is called being normal.

Perhaps the most interesting part of Dr. Burrow's book is his examination of normality. As soon as man became aware of himself, he made a picture of himself. Then he began to live according to the picture. Mankind at large made a picture of itself, and every man had to conform to the picture, the ideal.

This is the great image or idol which dominates our civilization, and which we worship with mad blindness. The idolatry of self. Consciousness should be a flow from within outwards. The organic necessity of the human being should flow into spontaneous action and spontaneous awareness, consciousness.

But the moment man became aware of himself he made a picture of himself, and began to live from the picture: that is, from without inwards. This is truly the reversal of life.

And this is how we live. We spend all our time over the picture. All our education is but the elaborating of the picture. "A good little girl" — "a brave boy" — "a noble woman" — "a strong man" — "a productive society" — "a progressive humanity" — it is all the picture. It is all living from the outside to the inside. It is all the death of spontaneity. It is all, strictly, automatic. It is all the vicious unconscious which Freud postulated.

If we could once get into our heads — or if we once dare admit to one another — that we are *not* the picture, and the picture is not what we are, then we might lay a new hold on life. For the picture is really the death, and certainly the neurosis of us all. We have to live from the outside in, idolatrously. And the picture of ourselves, the picture of humanity which has been elaborated through some thousands of years, and which we are still adding to, is just a huge idol. It is not real. It is a horrible compulsion all over us.

Individuals rebel: and these are the neurotics, who show some sign of health. The mass, the great mass, goes on worshipping the idol, and behaving according to the picture: and this is the normal. Freud tried to force his patients back to the normal, and almost succeeded in shocking them into submission, with the incest-bogey. But the bogey is nothing compared to the actual idol.

As a matter of fact, the mass is more neurotic than the individual patient. This is Dr. Burrow's finding. The mass, the normals, never live a life of their own. They cannot. They live entirely according to the picture. And according to the picture, each one is a little absolute unto himself, there is none better than he. Each lives for his own self-interest. The "normal" activity is to push your own interest with every atom of energy you can command. It is "normal" to get on, to get ahead, at whatever cost. The man who does disinterested work is abnormal. Every Johnny must look out for himself: that is normal. Luckily for the world, there still is a minority of individuals who do disinterested work, and are made use of by the "normals". But the number is rapidly decreasing.

And then the normals betray their utter

abnormality in a crisis like the late war. There, there indeed the uneasy individual can look into the abysmal insanity of the normal masses. The same holds good of the bolshevist hysteria of to-day: it is hysteria, incipient social insanity. And the last great insanity of all, which is going to tear our civilization to pieces, the insanity of class hatred, is almost entirely a "normal" thing, and a "social" thing. It is a state of fear, of ghastly collective fear. And it is absolutely a mark of the normal. To say that class hatred *need not exist* is to show abnormality. And yet it is true. Between man and man, class hatred hardly exists. It is an insanity of the mass, rather than of the individual.

But it is part of the picture. The picture says it is horrible to be poor, and splendid to be rich, and in spite of all individual experience to the contrary we accept the terms of the picture, and thereby accept class war as inevitable.

Humanity, society, has a picture of itself, and lives accordingly. The individual likewise has a private picture of himself, which fits into the big picture. In this picture he is a little absolute and nobody could be better than he is. He must look after his own self-interest. And if he is a man, he must be very male. If she is a woman, she must be very female.

Even sex, to-day, is only part of the picture. Men and women alike, when they are being sexual, are only acting up. They are living according to the picture. If there is any dynamic, it is that of self-interest. The man "seeketh his own" in sex, and the woman seeketh her own: in the bad, egoistic sense in which St. Paul used the words. That is, the man seeks himself, the woman seeks herself, always and inevitably. It is inevitable, when you live according to the picture, that you seek only yourself in sex. Because the picture is your own image of yourself: your *idea* of yourself. If you are quite normal, you don't have any true self, which "seeketh not her own, is not puffed up". The true self, in sex, would seek a *meeting*, would seek to meet the other. This would be the true flow: what Dr. Burrow calls the "Societal consciousness" and what I would call the human consciousness, in

contrast to the social, or "image-consciousness".

But today, all is image consciousness. Sex does not exist, there is only sexuality. And sexuality is merely a greedy, blind self-seeking. Self-seeking is the real motive of sexuality. And therefore, since the thing sought is the same, the self, the mode of seeking is not very important. Heterosexual, homosexual, narcissistic, normal or incest, it is all the same thing. It is just sexuality, not sex. It is one of the universal forms of self-seeking. Every man, every woman just seeks his own self, her own self, in the sexual experience. It is the picture over again, whether in sexuality or self-sacrifice, greed or charity, the same thing, the self, the image, the idol: the image of me, and norm!

The true self is not aware that it is a self. A bird, as it sings, sings itself. But not according to a picture. It has no idea of itself.

And this is what the analyst must try to do: to liberate his patient from his own image, from his horror of his own isolation, and the horror of the "stoppage" of his real vital flow. To do it, it is no use rousing sex bogeys. A man is not neurasthenic or neurotic because he loves his mother. If he

desires his mother, it is because he is neurotic, and the desire is merely a symptom. The cause of the neurosis is further to seek.

And the cure? For myself, I believe Dr. Burrow is right: the cure would consist in bringing about a state of honesty and a certain trust among a *group* of people, or many people — if possible all the people in the world. For it is only when we can get a man to fall back into his true relation to other men and to women, that we can give him an opportunity to be himself. So long as men are inwardly dominated by their own isolation, their own absoluteness, which after all is but a picture or an idea, nothing is possible but insanity more or less pronounced. Men must get back into *touch*. And to do so they must forfeit the vanity and the *noli me tangere* of their own absoluteness: also they must utterly break the present great picture of a normal humanity: shatter that mirror in which we all live grimacing: and fall again into true relatedness.

I have tried more or less to give a *résumé* of Dr. Burrow's book. I feel that there is a certain impertinence in giving these *résumés*. But not more than in the affectation of "criticizing" and being superior. And it is a book one should read and assimilate, for it helps a man in his own inward life.

# AN AUTHENTIC BIOGRAPHY OF WOODROW WILSON

By Frank Parker Stockbridge

WOODROW WILSON: LIFE AND LETTERS. IN TWO VOLUMES. By Ray Stannard Baker. Doubleday, Page & Co. \$5.00

WOODROW WILSON kept no diaries, wrote no personal memoirs. But before his death there was begun and since his passing there has continued the collection, arrangement and publication of the source-material upon which every biographer, commentator and historian of the future must rely for an interpretation of the man in terms of his times and his reaction upon them. The gigantic task of systematically, painstakingly assembling every known or ascertainable fact about Woodrow Wilson, from his most remotely traceable ancestry to his last act in life, was intrusted to the one American man of letters whose qualities as author and journalist made him, in Mr. Wilson's opinion (with which this reviewer most heartily agrees) the best fitted man to perform it, Mr. Ray Stannard Baker.

On January 25, 1924, ten days before his death, Mr. Wilson wrote the last letter which he ever signed. Addressed to "My dear Baker", it began: "Every time you disclose your mind to me you increase my admiration and affection for you", and, referring to his personal correspondence and papers, said: "I would rather have your interpretation of them than that of anybody else I know".

Long before Woodrow Wilson's dramatic entrance upon the stage of practical politics, Ray Stannard Baker had made two distinct and enviable reputations in the field of letters. Under his own name he had become recognized as one of the most accurate and thorough analysts of the social movements of the times, a reporter who brought a penetrating vision and a lucidity of style to whatever he wrote, upon whatever topic. His sympathies and interests, moreover, were those of that notable group of journalists, of which

he was one, who seceded from the old McClure's Magazine and founded The American Magazine as a medium for the interpretation of the social and political unrest which was seething with increasing turbulence under the surface of things American in the first decade of the present century. And under the *nom de plume* of "David Grayson" a pseudonym carefully guarded for years, he had won a wide following of readers with that series of wholesome essays, "Adventures in Contentment" and its successors, essays which revealed their author as a person of keen sensibilities, warm sympathies and a clear understanding of the difference between sentiment and sentimentality.

A Progressive Republican, as we "come-outers" of 1910 styled ourselves, Baker met Woodrow Wilson early in that year, under circumstances which not only revealed to him the Princeton President's penetrating grasp of the problems of political reform, but brought him into that intimate personal contact which never failed to charm those favored with an invitation to step behind the curtain of reserve with which he guarded his sensitive shyness against the intrusions of those of whose like-mindedness with himself he was not assured. In spite of their mutual attraction, Mr. Baker records, he could not regard Mr. Wilson at that time as a potent political factor; even so astute a judge of men and affairs regarded him as "too academic" ever to make a deep impression upon the extremely practical methods of politics as it was played. But by 1912 Mr. Baker had succumbed to the logic of events and was casting his vote for Wilson for President. It was not until 1918, however, that the relationship between them was established which resulted in his becoming the privileged confidant and authorized interpreter of Woodrow Wilson to the world.