

I

THE SEXUAL ABERRATIONS¹

The fact of sexual need in man and animal is expressed in biology by the assumption of a "sexual impulse." This impulse is made analogous to the impulse of taking nourishment, and to hunger. The sexual expression corresponding to hunger not being found colloquially, science uses the expression "libido."²

Popular conception assumes very different ideas concerning the nature and qualities of this sexual impulse. It is supposed to be absent during childhood and to commence about the time of and in connection with the maturing process of puberty; it is supposed that it manifests itself in irresistible attractions exerted by one sex upon the other, and that its aim is sexual union or at least such actions as would lead to union.

But we have every reason to see in these assumptions a very untrustworthy picture of reality. On closer examination they are found to abound in errors, inaccuracies and hasty conclusions.

If we introduce two terms and call the person from whom the sexual attraction emanates the sexual object, and the action towards which the impulse strives the sexual aim, then the scientifically examined experience shows us many deviations in refer-

¹The facts contained in the first "Contribution" have been gathered from the familiar publications of Krafft-Ebing, Moll, Moebius, Havelock Ellis, Schrenk-Notzing, Löwenfeld, Eulenberg, J. Bloch, and M. Hirschfeld, and from the later works published in the "Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen." As these publications also mention the other literature bearing on this subject I may forbear giving detailed references.

The conclusions reached through the investigation of sexual inverts are all based on the reports of J. Sadger and on my own experience.

²For general use the word "libido" is best translated by "craving." (Prof. James J. Putnam, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, Vol. IV, 6.)

ence to both sexual object and sexual aim, the relations of which to the accepted standard require thorough investigation.

I. DEVIATION IN REFERENCE TO THE SEXUAL OBJECT

The popular theory of the sexual impulse corresponds closely to the poetic fable of dividing the person into two halves—man and woman—who strive to become reunited through love. It is therefore very surprising to hear that there are men for whom the sexual object is not woman but man, and that there are women for whom it is not man but woman. Such persons are called contrary sexuals, or better, inverts; that is, these form the actualities of inversion. They exist in very considerable numbers, although their definite ascertainment is subject to difficulties.³

A. *Inversion*

The Behavior of Inverts.—The above-mentioned persons behave in many ways quite differently.

(a) They are absolutely inverted; *i. e.*, their sexual object must be always of the same sex, while the opposite sex can never be to them an object of sexual longing, but leaves them indifferent or may even evoke sexual repugnance. As men they are unable, on account of this repugnance, to perform the normal sexual act or miss all pleasure in its performance.

(b) They are amphigenously inverted (psychosexually hermaphroditic); *i. e.*, their sexual object may belong indifferently to either the same or to the other sex. The inversion lacks the character of exclusiveness.

(c) They are occasionally inverted; *i. e.*, under certain external conditions, chief among which are the inaccessibility of the normal sexual object and imitation, they are able to take as the sexual object a person of the same sex and thus find sexual gratification.

³ For the difficulties entailed in the attempt to ascertain the proportional number of inverts compare the work of M. Hirschfeld in the *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*, 1904.

The inverted also manifest a manifold behavior in their judgment about the peculiarities of their sexual impulse. Some take the inversion as a matter of course, just as the normal looking at his libido does, firmly demanding the same rights as the normal. Others, however, strive against the fact of their inversion and perceive in it a morbid compulsion.⁴

Other variations concern the relations of time. The characteristics of the inversion in any individual may date back as far as his memory goes, or they may become manifest to him at a definite period before or after puberty.⁵ The character is either retained throughout life, or it occasionally recedes or represents an episode on the road to normal development. A periodical fluctuation between the normal and the inverted sexual object has also been observed. Of special interest are those cases in which the libido changes, taking on the character of inversion after a painful experience with the normal sexual object.

These different categories of variation generally exist independently of one another. In the most extreme cases it can regularly be assumed that the inversion has existed at all times and that the person feels contented with his peculiar state.

Many authors will hesitate to gather into a unit all the cases enumerated here and will prefer to emphasize the exceptional rather than the customary groups, a view which corresponds with their preferred judgment of inversions. But no matter what divisions may be set up, it cannot be overlooked that all transi-

⁴Such a striving against the compulsion to inversion favors cures by suggestion or psychoanalysis.

⁵Many have justly emphasized the fact that the autobiographic statements of inverts, as to the time of the appearance of their tendency to inversion, are untrustworthy as they may have repressed from memory any evidences of heterosexual feelings.

Psychoanalysis has confirmed this suspicion in all cases of inversion accessible, and has decidedly changed their anamnesis by filling up the infantile amnesias.

tions are abundantly met with, so that as it were, the formation of series forcibly obtrudes itself.

Conception of Inversion.—The first attention bestowed upon inversion gave rise to the conception that it was a congenital sign of nervous degeneration. This harmonized with the fact that doctors first met it among the nervous, or among persons giving such an impression. There are two elements which should be considered independently in this conception: the congenitality, and the degeneration.

Degeneration.—This term *degeneration* is open to the objections which may be urged against the promiscuous use of this word in general. It has in fact become customary to designate all morbid manifestations not of traumatic or infectious origin as degenerative. Indeed, Magnan's classification of degenerates makes it conceivable that the highest general configuration of nervous accomplishment need not exclude the application of the concept of degeneration. Under the circumstances it is a question what use and what new content the meaning of "degeneration" still possesses. It would seem more appropriate not to speak of degeneration: (1) Where there are not many marked deviations from the normal; (2) where the capabilities and the capacity to exist do not in general appear markedly impaired.*

That the inverted are not degenerates in this qualified sense can be seen from the following facts:

1. The inversion is found among persons who otherwise show no marked deviation from the normal.
2. It is found also among persons whose capabilities are not

*With what reserve the diagnosis of degeneration should be made and what slight practical significance can be attributed to it can be gathered from the discussions of Moebius (Ueber Entartung; Grenzfragen des Nerven- und Seelenlebens, No. III, 1900). He says: "If we review the wide sphere of degeneration upon which we have here turned some light we can conclude without further ado that it is really of little value to diagnose degeneration."

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disturbed, who on the contrary are distinguished by especially high intellectual development and ethical culture.⁷

3. If one disregards the patients of one's own practice and strives to comprehend a wider field of experience, he will in two directions encounter facts which will prevent him from assuming inversions as a degenerative sign.

(a) It must be considered that inversion was a frequent manifestation among the ancient nations at the height of their culture. It was an institution endowed with important functions. (b) It is found to be unusually prevalent among savages and primitive races, whereas the term degeneration is generally limited to higher civilization (I. Bloch). Even among the most civilized nations of Europe, climate and race have a most powerful influence on the distribution of, and attitude toward, inversion.⁸

Innateness.—Only for the first and most extreme class of inverts, as can be imagined, has innateness been claimed, and this from their own assurance that at no time in their life has their sexual impulse followed a different course. The fact of the existence of two other classes, especially of the third, speaks against the assumption of its being congenital. Hence, the propensity of those holding this view to separate the group of absolute inverts from the others results in the abandonment of the general conception of inversion. Accordingly in a number of cases the inversion would be of a congenital character, while in others it might originate from other causes.

⁷We must agree with the spokesman of "Uranism" that some of the most prominent men known have been inverts and perhaps absolute inverts.

⁸In the conception of inversion the pathological features have been separated from the anthropological. For this credit is due to J. Bloch (*Beiträge zur Ätiologie der Psychopathia Sexualis*, 2 Teile, 1902-3) who has also brought into prominence the existence of inversion in the old civilized nations.

In contradistinction to this conception is that which assumes inversion to be an acquired character of the sexual impulse. It is based on the following facts. (1) In many inverts (even absolute ones) an early effective sexual impression can be demonstrated, as a result of which the homosexual inclination developed. (2) In many others outer favoring and inhibiting influences of life can be demonstrated, which in earlier or later life led to a fixation of the inversion—among which are exclusive relations with the same sex, companionship in war, detention in prison, dangers of hetero-sexual intercourse, celibacy, sexual weakness, etc. (3) Hypnotic suggestion may remove the inversion, which would be surprising in that of a congenital character.

In view of all this, the existence of congenital inversion can certainly be questioned. The objection may be made to it that a more accurate examination of those claimed to be congenitally inverted will probably show a determination of the direction of the libido by a definite experience of early childhood, which has not, indeed, been retained in the conscious memory of the person, but which can be brought back to memory by proper influences (Havelock Ellis). According to that author inversion can be designated only as a frequent variation of the sexual desire which may be determined by a number of external circumstances of life.

The apparent certainty thus reached is, however, overthrown by the retort that manifestly there are many persons who have experienced even in their early youth those very sexual influences, such as seduction, mutual onanism, without becoming inverts, or without constantly remaining so. Hence, one is forced to assume that the alternative between congenital and acquired inversion is either incomplete or does not cover the circumstances present in inversions.

Explanation of Inversion.—The nature of inversion is explained by neither the assumption that it is congenital or that it is acquired. In the first case, we need to be told what there is

in it of the congenital, unless we are satisfied with the roughest explanation, namely, that a person brings along a congenital sexual desire connected with a definite sexual object. In the second case it is a question whether the manifold accidental influences suffice to explain the acquisition unless there is something in the individual to meet them half way. The negation of this last factor is inadmissible according to our former conclusions.

The Relation of Bisexuality.—Since the time of Frank Lydston, Kiernan, and Chevalier, a new stream of thought has been introduced for the explanation of the possibility of sexual inversion. This contains a new contradiction to the popular belief which assumes that a human being is either a man or a woman. Science shows cases in which the sexual characteristic appears blurred and thus the sexual distinction is made difficult, especially on an anatomical basis. The genitals of such persons unite the male and female characteristics (hermaphroditism). In rare cases both parts of the sexual apparatus are well developed (true hermaphroditism), but usually both are stunted.*

The importance of these abnormalities lies in the fact that they unexpectedly facilitate the understanding of the normal formation. A certain degree of anatomical hermaphroditism really belongs to the normal. In no normally formed male or female are traces of the apparatus of the other sex lacking; these either continue functionless as rudimentary organs, or they are transformed for the purpose of assuming other functions.

The conception which we gather from this long known anatomical fact is the original predisposition to bisexuality, which in the course of development has changed to monosexuality, leaving slight remnants of the stunted sex.

* Compare the last detailed discussion of somatic hermaphroditism (Taruffi, *Hermaphroditismus und Zeugungunfähigkeit*, German edit. by R. Teuscher, 1903), and the works of Neugebauer in many volumes of the *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*.

It was natural to transfer this conception to the psychic sphere and to conceive the inversion in its aberrations as an expression of psychic hermaphroditism. In order to bring the question to a decision, it was only necessary to have one other circumstance, viz., a regular concurrence of the inversion with the psychic and somatic signs of hermaphroditism.

But the expectation thus formed was not realized. The relations between the assumed psychical and the demonstrable anatomical androgyny should never be conceived as being so close. There is frequently found in the inverted a diminution of the sexual impulse (H. Ellis) and a slight anatomical stunting of the organs. This, however, is found frequently but by no means regularly or preponderately. Thus we must recognize that inversion and somatic hermaphroditism are totally independent of each other.

Great value has also been placed on the so-called secondary and tertiary sex characteristics, and their aggregate occurrence in the inverted has been emphasized (H. Ellis). There is much truth in this but it should not be forgotten that the secondary and tertiary sex characteristics very frequently manifest themselves in the other sex, thus indicating androgyny without, however, involving changes in the sexual object in the sense of an inversion.

Psychic hermaphroditism would gain in substantiality if parallel with the inversion of the sexual object there should be at least a change in the other psychic qualities, such as in the impulses and distinguishing traits characteristic of the other sex. But such inversion of character can be expected with some regularity only in inverted women; in men the most perfect psychic manliness may be united with the inversion. If one firmly adheres to the hypothesis of a psychic hermaphroditism, one must add that in certain spheres its manifestations allow the recognition of only a very slight contrary determination. The same also holds true in the somatic androgyny. According to Halban, the

appearance of individual stunted organs and secondary sex character are quite independent of each other.¹⁰

A spokesman of the masculine inverts stated the bisexual theory in its crudest form in the following words: "It is a female brain in a male body." But we do not know the characteristics of a "female brain." The substitution of the anatomical for the psychological is as frivolous as it is unjustified. The attempted explanation by v. Krafft-Ebing seems to be more precisely formulated than that of Ulrich but does not essentially differ from it. v. Krafft-Ebing thinks that the bisexual predisposition gives to the individual male and female brain cells as well as somatic sexual organs. These centers develop first towards puberty mostly under the influence of the independent sex glands. We can, however, say the same of the male and female "centers" as of the male and female brains; and moreover, we do not even know whether we can assume for the sexual functions separate brain locations ("centers") such as we may assume for language.

After this discussion, two thoughts, as it were, remain; first, that a bisexual predisposition is to be presumed for the inversion also, only we do not know wherein it exists beyond the anatomical formations; and, second, that we are dealing with disturbances which are experienced by the sexual impulse during its development.¹¹

¹⁰ J. Halban, "Die Entstehung der Geschlechts Charaktere," Arch. für Gynäkologie, Bd. 70, 1903. See also there the literature on the subject.

¹¹ According to a report in Vol. 6 of the *Jahrbuch f. sexuelle Zwischenstufen*, E. Gley is supposed to have been the first to mention bisexuality as an explanation of inversion. He published a paper (*Les Aberrations de l'instinct Sexuel*) in the *Revue Philosophique* as early as January, 1884. It is moreover noteworthy that the majority of authors who trace the inversion to bisexuality assume this factor not only for the inverts but also for those who have developed normally, and justly interpret the inversion as a result of a disturbance in development. Among these authors are Chevalier (*Inversion Sexuelle*, 1893), and v. Krafft-Ebing ("Zur Erklärung der konträren Sexualempfindung," *Jahrbücher f. Psy-*