

Personal Psychopathology, by H. Sullivan

a. Quotes:

- "The current culture adaptive of man to man is sadly deficient, far indeed behind the development of our technologies and the accumulation of material advantages." - Author (pg. 3)

b. General Notes:

- Chapter 1 - The Totality of Organism and Situation (pg. 1)
 - "Psychopathology is a field of thought in which processes of living, of actual, mundane persons, in and within more or less commonplace social situations are studied with some considerable emphasis on the side of the inefficient and harmful. It is thus a division of psychobiology, the division concerned with the evil rather than the good of human life. As we are all much more simply human than otherwise, so psychopathology deals chiefly with matters of common experience, but with matters the personal significance of which is in each case veiled from the person concerned in each unfortunate complex of social living. It does not deal with diseases in the sense of medical entities like scarlet fever, but instead with processes of living that are unusually inefficient, productive of strain and unhappiness, and contributory to failures of the individual as a self-respecting unit. While there are few indeed who have no self-esteem, and many whose self-regard is pathologically exaggerated, there are numbers of our contemporaries in the case of whom the maintenance of some measure of self-respect is a never-ending task, and one entailing great cost not only in personal effort but also in interferences with the comfort and success of others. It may be said that whenever the maintenance of self-esteem becomes an end instead of a consequent of life, the individual concerned is mentally sick and a subject for psychopathological study, finally to be understood by the same formulae that we must work out for understanding the "neurotic" and the "insane." (pg. 1-2)
 - "There is an essential inaccessibility about any personality other than one's own. Years of intimacy with another does not put the most devoted friend in a position such that he can predict every act of the other one. No amount of effort at self-revelation conveys the whole unique totality of one's personality. There is always an ample residuum that escapes analysis and communication. There is usually a good deal that seems to have been communicated in the best of faith, which, none the less, is fictitious. The attempt has been valid, but the result is not only incomplete but inexact. No one can hope fully to understand another. One is very fortunate if he approaches an understanding of himself." (pg. 5)
 - "**It is the magical power of the formulated mores that must be called in question.** Just as the unthinking acceptance of personal prejudice has to be broken down before a man can be led toward self-appreciation, so also the inviolate durability of emotionally-toned customs has to be shattered before the group can advance rapidly to new levels of achievement by way of a clearer understanding of its problems. Hallowed beliefs, enshrined prejudices, and sanctified customs are more apt to be chains fixing people to their barbarous ancestors than distinctions that elevate them to something possessed of fairly human value. **The durability of a custom is a function of the necessity that gave it birth;** but it is also - in so far as it implies a low velocity of change - an index of its potentialities for evil. Some primitive folk ascribe the Lightning to an angry god, while many of our contemporaries confuse antiquity with venerability, if not with transcendental origin. The conservative attitude, which, to paraphrase Disraeli, perpetuates in us the errors of our grandparents, and the bohemian attitude which tolerates nothing that is not new-both are archaic. The new may well be worse in its effects on us than the old. The fact of change throughout the universe is the nuclear conception that must be grasped. Nothing is timeless, and this is peculiarly true in the most active area of the world, the living. Everything human changes inevitably. **Change has to be accepted as one of the given characteristics of reality.** Attitudes intolerant to the new or to the old are morbid, and only a broad tolerance fits one to deal with people as they are. Man has enough inherent distaste for any marked novelty to insure him from disastrous innovation-except when he is rendered mentally sick by artificial stabilities to which he is required to conform. Our growing appreciation of the nature of man and the social processes fermenting in and through him must make us ever more skeptical toward any finality in human formulations, and increasingly cautious about emotional extravagance in regard to beliefs and customs." (pg. 8-9)
 - "Certain parts of each organism are arranged in such manner as to facilitate the communal existence in and within the environment. To these regions we refer as zones of interaction: for example, the respiratory apparatus of man, the lung cells being the zone of interaction for the gaseous interchange. We speak of functional activity within the organism-environment complex as making up the processes of life, and thus complete the rudimentary sketch of the fundamental categories of biological factors. Processes and the interrelations of processes; of these the world is composed, and with these psychobiology and psychopathology are concerned. Throughout, as in general biology, the three groups of factors mentioned above have constantly to be kept in mind: communal existence, now not alone in and within an environment physicochemical in nature, as ordinarily conceived, but in and within an environment including, as important elements, other people and those monuments and ghosts of other selves, the institutions, traditions, mores, and economic and social situations, that go to make up culture, however simple. And secondly, organization, now not alone of the physicochemical universe, but also of the entities of this expanded world including other selves and culture. And lastly, functional activity, again inclusive of the incredibly complex groups of processes making up other people, and the interwoven suspending and enmeshing fabric of culture. The zones of interaction to which we must give chief attention are not simple - and none the less marvelous - cellular membranes that maintain a wonderful one-way traffic. They are such complex psychophysical appurtenances, for example, as the organs of the special senses, the apparatus of speech, and the syncretistic-analytic dynamisms making up the prehension and intelligent perception of the "outer" world. The person, then, is an extremely complex bundle of processes and their relations, organized from units of the physicochemical, the social, and the cultural worlds, in communal existence through functional activity in and within these three spheres. We make use of the term mind to subsume those aspects of the life-process that represent total actions of the person in and within the total situations in which he has his being. The mental life is composed of total activities, in contradistinction to local action; of manifestations of the individual as a person in communal relationship in and within total situations, rather than of events in which but a part of his organism is affected by the impinging on it of some externally or internally conditioned circumstance." (pg. 13-14)
 - "Since the total situation concerns all the actually relevant factors, and since these unwitting processes may at times possess extreme relevance, the analysis of a total situation is not by any means a matter simply of objective inspection. Total activity refers, then, to that which the whole person does." (pg. 17)
 - "Life processes are series of events inseparably interwoven with events of other sorts: with "inorganic events, with events of subhuman living things, and, particularly in the mental field, with events of other human lives, contemporary or existing from the historic period. It appears that the situation that includes each individual and everything else relevant to him at a particular time has implicit in it a 'demand,' so to say, for certain processes in and within the situation. This demand of the total complex is a demand in much the same sense that a magnet demands movement of its armature demands certain processes. These "demanded" (and forthcoming) processes are the processes of living which, in the mental field, we call actions toward adjustment (biological adaptation)." (pg. 20)
 - "The goal, however, of the nonadjustive activity—a bundle of processes—is the neutralization of other processes making for change in the situation. They are directed toward a preservation of the status quo, toward a stabilization in the shifting flux of life which is as truly impossible as its achievement would be undesirable to mankind at large. The nonadjustive situation includes then a distinguishing impossibility, in contrast to all other situations. Actions toward adjustment, then, do not include the preservation but always the change of a situation." (pg. 21)

- Chapter 2 - The Growth of Personality (pg. 26)
 - "Certainly, people spend the greater part of their waking life in fantasy; periods characterized by adjustive thinking are fairly frequent, though often brief; and actual incidents of creative-inductive thinking are a decided rarity." (pg. 31)
- Chapter 3 - Dynamisms of Difficulty (pg. 46)
 - "Personality is to be taken to refer to that relatively enduring pattern of life-processes which comes to characterize each human individual. This characterization is in itself temporal and dynamic; it is but a relatively enduring group of consistent manifestations found in the series of total situations of which the particular individual is a part. These manifestations are in an important degree the "reactions of other individuals" to the subject-individual. By this locution, I wish, through an appeal to conventional speech, to stress the factors of other persons that enter importantly into the formation of the dynamic pattern to which we refer as personality. Personality is the relatively enduring configuration of life-processes characterizing all of the person's total activity pertaining to such other persons, real or fantastic, as become from time to time relevant factors in his total situations." (pg. 47)
- Chapter 4 - The Chronology of Difficulty (pg. 88)
 - See text
- Chapter 5 - The Juvenile Era (pg. 126)
 - See text
- Chapter 6 - Preadolescence (pg. 157)
 - See text
- *****didn't finish book....complete waste of time. Author's thoughts are a convoluted stream of digressions which emphasize the social-physical aspect of personal relationships, never seriously addressing / enumerating the psyche / psychological theory*****

c. Further Readings:

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