

PSYCHOPATHY, Part II

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The Therapeutic Approach

A generally recognized difficulty in treating the psychopath is the endlessly repetitive nature of the problems he presents. This is most frustrating for the therapist, for if he responds with impatience, anger or judgment about the incessantly repetitive nature of the material that the psychopath presents, he will be confronted by disbelief and doubt. The patient will feel that, while he is giving his best and dredging up his soul, the therapist wants something from him; in other words, the therapist has an agenda, a stake, an objective. This is, of course, a product of the paranoid projection of the patient, which is reinforced if the therapist is impatient. I believe that this may be one of the central causes of the extraordinary difficulty therapists have experienced in working with psychopaths; and although, to my knowledge, there is no explanation for this repetitive phenomenon, I would like to express what my intuitive feeling is about its causes and origins.

Many authors have noted the inability of the psychopath to learn from experience. This seems to be most commonly observed among criminals and socially maladapted people who are hospitalized or otherwise institutionalized. However, in the neurotics who form part of the general population and who can come under the heading of psychopath, as the term is used in this paper, the same phenomenon applies. Indeed, the neurotic cannot learn from the experiences of life, either the negative or the positive—and this seems to be caused by a deep impairment of the personality. It seems that they mistrust the positive life experiences and internalize and re-create the negative ones endlessly.

Often the question is raised as to why some people need ever increasing amounts of money or power or food or worldly goods. The absurdity of accumulating these "things" after certain levels are reached that would normally satisfy any requirements of most people is quite frightening and has often been observed, wondered

at, and questioned. I have personally had the opportunity to interact with and observe several such men and have seen that a common denominator is a high level of anxiety that is perceived as pleasurable excitement. And well it may be. But there are usually glaring imbalances in their lives. A common one is their inability to establish and sustain a gratifying relationship. Another is their inability to accept the satisfactions that would normally derive from their own creative acts. For instance, a man might accumulate a fortune large enough for him and his children to live in opulence. Nevertheless, this quantity of money is not sufficient and the man continues to accumulate ever more, relentlessly driving himself into a heart attack, high blood pressure, etc. Some of course do it simply because they love it, but usually they also lead quite balanced lives. The irrationality of such a need for accumulation goes beyond simple greed or ambition. I believe it is rooted in this deeply centralized split in the personality where the sense of self value and self worth is only acquired through achievement, never through a sense of self. The same holds true for relationships where we frequently see a man and a woman who are in apparently satisfying and gratifying relationships and yet remain dissatisfied, searching for ever increasing thrills—and eventually destroying what they had. This is not so mystifying if one accepts that the personality is truly not in contact with the benefits and the pleasures that can, in reality, be derived from substantial relationships.

All of the above are examples of profound dissatisfaction with what *is*, in the here and now — Reality.

Since we have postulated psychopathy as greatly exaggerated willfulness, the need for control can be seen as a counterphobic overcompensation. Controlling others defends against being truly seen by others and is a projection of the fear of loss of control by the self over the self. Technically, projecting control points to a lack of self-control—a truism in psychopathy. The self looks upon itself with fear and dislike, basically because the self doesn't really know the self. In Jungian terms, the shadow remains unknown—but to such an extent that the self, knowing that the shadow exists but unable to contact it, hates and fears it. Add to this the unpredictability of the parental situation, and profound self-doubt becomes the logical outcome. This self-doubt is a key element that the

defenses protect; it leads to such an exaggerated need for acceptance both from the self and others that anything that is perceived as an obstacle to gaining this acceptance is ruthlessly eliminated. Denial, projection and rationalization are used to justify the ruthless acting out and self-indulgence that are both cause and effect of the underlying worthlessness, and which are (erroneously) seen as "solutions." In reality they may, at best, be pseudo-solutions; that is, a solution offering temporary relief without any real change.

This must be carefully considered in the initial stages of therapy, which should be heavily weighted toward establishing a solid, strong therapeutical alliance. This is a delicate matter, for it involves gaining the patient's trust—a difficult and *always* fragile matter. Coddling the patient and ignoring the sometimes gross distortions will lead to mistrust, while confrontation will do the same thing. A balance has to be struck, where the patient feels the therapist is aware, reliable, interested, knowledgeable—all of which involves confrontation—while at the same time the person must not be frightened away. The patient must trust the therapist both as a human being and as an expert who cannot easily be misled or tricked, something that the patient is an expert at. It is vital to remember that primary identification centers around secrets, which are surrounded and protected by a myriad of lies. The network of lies reaches such proportions that the individual himself loses track of what was lie and what truth. This lying became so habitual in infancy (and was, at that time, a necessary and adaptive response to the constant violations from the parents), that the inner voice which discriminates right from wrong, lie from truth, was at least partially stilled through constant suppression. Now the person cannot differentiate clearly, so that the confusion from which he so desperately pulled away exists in his own psyche, perpetuating, and perhaps furthering, the need for the psychopathy. Lying easily is such an ingrained, almost reflexive reaction for the psychopath—who considers it "expedient"—that the voice of conscience became, over the years, silent. It could not, under these conditions, oppose a highly developed will.

Sadly, the person reaches the point of lying to himself, without really being aware of it. This is because the psychopath feels that not getting his way, not gratifying his willfulness, means total annihilation, humiliation and worthlessness. The person feels real

terror that this may happen, for his entire self-value is based on the success of the will. Failure of the will is equated with failure of the entire personality. This, in turn, presupposes a double illusion: (1) that the world, life, reality, other people can ever accommodate such a situation (wherein all is subject to the individual's will); and (2) that the personality contains little, if anything, besides the will. It also ignores the fact that should the will's demands be met, the will inevitably must escalate the demand so that new, fresh, additional verification of its power can take place—and so on ad infinitum, or until reality breaks through.

This seems to confirm the hypothesis (previously described) of the split between the negative and positive aspects of the self, with the emphasis on the negative. Therefore, when the therapist confronts an issue he must remember that the patient lacks the inner sense that verifies or refutes any confrontation, and that the patient must sometimes accept the therapist's position essentially on trust. This is, indeed, difficult for *any* individual, but much more so for the psychopath who lacks basic trust as a primary characteristic to begin with.

Thus, the therapeutic difficulty lies in establishing trust, while at the same time helping the person see another viewpoint, one that may differ radically from what the person has experienced in the past. Put another way, trust in the therapist is the cornerstone of the therapeutic alliance, and with a psychopath, establishing trust involves putting limits on a rampant will, limits that by definition will be opposed by the patient. Yet the lack of adequate, reliable, stable limits is exactly what cause psychopathy in the first place, so support without confrontation is equally reenacting the childhood dynamic.

The Psychopath's Double Bind

The person is caught between two equally unacceptable solutions. One is to continue the indulgence of the will, which leads to a growing separation from reality. The other is to turn inward and face the enormous chaos, self-doubt, and worthlessness. The person must take this second alternative without an objective sense of self, without a balanced perspective that sees the negative but is also clearly aware of the better parts of the personality, which are

creative, loving, kind, giving. Remember, primary identification anchored around negative feelings that, in childhood, became the nuclei around which the personality organized. Thus, when the person turns inward, what is seen is accumulated guilt, rage, hatred, secrecy, revenge—the negative aspects of the personality, which are essentially disconnected from its own positive traits, so that the person feels "all bad."

Such a realization is, of course, completely unacceptable to the human psyche. Therapy, therefore, requires a constant consolidation of the positive while constantly confronting the negative. It is almost as if a search for and exposure of the negative must be jointly initiated *with the patient as an ally*. The therapist must support any positive expression from the patient, not the least of which is the revelation of each part of the negative aspects of the patient's life or, even more important, psyche. For revealing his secrets and his negative thoughts, intents or fantasies is seen by the patient as leaving himself vulnerable to parental manipulation. Should the therapist misunderstand or not appreciate the deep significance of the exposure of a secret, he will hurt the patient and pass up an opportunity to give badly needed support. This simple exposure is already a very important step in the psychopath's unfoldment. It entails a degree of trust in the therapist, who ultimately is the bridge to humanity as a whole. Such revelation should thus be encouraged. Yet excessive probing is dangerous, for that can be a re-creation of the infantile trauma and/or trigger paranoid suspicion.

Current Anti-Social Behavior—Restitution

On the other hand, it is imperative to deal with some of the more blatant antisocial behavior, so that the patient is gradually brought back into the reality of personal interaction.

This is most important. Violations of the past have created accumulated, repressed guilt, but violations of the present create very real present-day guilt that weighs heavily on the psyche and requires further lies and coverups, thus constantly adding fuel to the fire. Present-day violations and antisocial behavior must be diminished or even stopped before the old, accumulated guilt can be dealt with.

It is not enough to simply recognize present-day violations. The patient should be encouraged to fully feel the pain his act has inflicted on others. Feeling this pain will lead to true remorse, which is restitution in the deepest sense. I believe that the Catholic sacrament of confession, which requires revealing oneself (to the priest), contrition (feeling the pain of the sin), and intent to avoid repetition (real desire to change) contains and exemplifies well what is meant here. Note that all these requirements are *inner* ones and that the Church absolves only if they are all met. Note also that only the sinner can know whether or not he/she did indeed fulfill all these conditions—the priest absolves anyway, but the sin will not be erased (forgiven) from the soul if any one of the three is absent.

Re-establishment of Self-Respect

The opposite of self-doubt is self-respect. To achieve this the person must first develop sufficient trust, at first in the therapist, later in others, and finally in himself and his feelings. Such a process is gradual and entered upon with extreme caution. Initially, progress is very slow and the slightest betrayal may cause the person to contract suddenly into old defense patterns. However, as trust develops, the person must be shown that self-betrayal, that is, violation of the inner conscience, works against his own best interests, if self-respect and integrity are objectives. I have found that most psychopaths are not even aware of this and that they welcome the realization that they can regain self-respect and that this self-respect is really based on following their inner voice, not on the opinion of others. For the psychopath's life force is strongly committed to getting other people's approval, which he desperately wants in compensation for his own disapproval of himself when he violates his conscience. Thus he wants two things: to get his way, irrespective of the consequences, and to get others to approve of him and his acts. This impossibility leads him to discard other people's feelings and opinions when they do not match his own. In this way, the psychopath is not truly concerned with other people's feelings. He only uses them. So the guilt increases, as does the disconnection from humanity and humane feelings. Therapy must, therefore, be concerned with re-establishing this bond with

humanity. I believe this is best done in group therapy. Individual therapy does not lend itself readily for this part of the process, for the therapist is only one person.

Arrogance

To be "special" was a strong motive during the child's development. The parental seduction always contained a message, "You are my 'special' boy or girl." The desire for specialness is strongly present in psychopathy. However, for adults this takes the form of arrogance which is very obvious in the ominous subtype, but less so in the other two. Nevertheless, the arrogance is always there and needs to be dealt with. This frequently proves very difficult. For the psychopath, giving up being special entails forever relinquishing the parents and this, in turn, means resolving the Oedipal situation. Admittedly, resolution on these very deep levels is rare— yet it can be hoped for and all occasions must be used to expose the arrogance. Such confrontations frequently lead to the underlying guilt and, hopefully, to remorse (a very important aspect of restitution).

Psychopaths use displacement very effectively. The therapist must be aware that sometimes the displacement is quite conscious and becomes just another evasion. It is helpful to confront this defense as soon as possible, for whenever displacement is conscious it is easily acceptable by the patient. However, the patient must not be made to feel that certain material is acceptable while other material is not. This would play right into the psychopathy itself.

Grounding

On the physical level, it is important to help the psychopath ground himself. This literally means re-establishing a sense of contact with the earth, via his own support system, his legs. By pulling up and away from the earth (mother symbol) and sexuality (involuntary processes), the psychopath is left with only his ego. The self-doubt is strongly reinforced if the brain does not perceive that the underlying body is solid, reliable, stable, so this perception must be re-established. Grounding also means reconnecting with sexuality. Even the promiscuous psychopath merely uses sexuality

for other purposes such as control, power over others or even simple contact. But psychopaths rarely experience the pleasurable aspect of sexuality. Again, this is easier said than done, for it entails developing trust in the involuntary processes and abandonment of the ego, even if only momentarily, during orgasm.

An important aspect of therapy is to help the patient release the rage, anger and spite that he has accumulated over the years. While it is not difficult for a psychopath to express *some* rage, it is extremely difficult for him to truly release, let go of the internal controls and fully abreact. I believe that the part of the rage that is always held back fulfills the psychopath's need to always have a back door, a reserve position for his defensive posture. Full abreaction of the rage would also entail a momentary loss of control. This, for the psychopath, means abandonment of a fundamental character defense. Since primary identification is with the negative, loss of control means to risk being flooded with the negative feelings, irretrievably, it seems to the ego. In this context, loss of control means madness. On a more superficial level, it may also mean revealing additional secrets. For in the heat of rage, contradictions may occur that lead to exposing more than was initially planned.

Behind his sometimes sickly sweet mask of niceness, the submissive psychopath has learned to survive by figuring out in a very subtle way both the false and real needs of others. He employs this information in a manipulative way to control, just as the ominous psychopath does. Both psychopaths make the same statement, "I want control," but the submissive psychopath does it in a completely different way from the ominous psychopath. He goes underground, never reveals his secrets and never exposes himself. This person is out of touch with his own real needs because the entire attention is focused on the other person's needs, which are then used in a manipulative way.

Ominous Subtype

With the ominous psychopath, it is imperative that he learn to control his will so as to not impulsively act it out; he must learn patience, tolerance, compassion. He must accept that his needs do *not* come first if he wants happiness, peace, satisfaction. He must be able to consider society's and other people's needs, or at least to

make room for them in his own self-interest (in the case of sociopathy). Care must be taken here to avoid humiliation and severe erosion, or even complete loss of the trust element and the therapeutic alliance. Yet he must be encouraged to consider and accept others' viewpoints as perhaps more valid than his own. In the case of the submissive psychopath, this course is very destructive, as this is precisely what he is so adept at doing anyway. He will comply and remain "underground," contemptuous and hostile.

Submissive Subtype

It is equally important for the submissive psychopath to begin to contact his own real needs and to risk expressing and satisfying them. In other words, the submissive psychopath must be encouraged to trust his own feelings, to fall back on his own perceptions of what he needs for himself, and stop pleasing and placating. The submissive psychopath must be reinforced and supported, even to the extent of encouraging him, temporarily, to oppose, to counter, to refuse, as long as this is done openly, in clean confrontation. He must not go "underground"—an almost reflexive maneuver for him. The therapist should be aware of the submissive's continuous attempts to please him. This person is constantly searching out what the therapist wants or expects and will produce feelings, attitudes, words that the therapist anticipates, expects, may even want. This is a very tricky situation. If the therapist directs the submissive psychopath to oppose, challenge and confront, that is what the person will do, and yet still, in so doing, submit to and "feed" the therapist. I believe it is very difficult for a single therapist to provoke the self-assertion that is lacking in the submissive psychopath. It is easier to work with this in group therapy.

Withdrawn Subtype

The withdrawn psychopath seems more difficult to me, perhaps because I have had less experience with this subtype. However, it seems that an important aspect of the therapy is to draw him out into life, the world and reality. A supportive environment must be provided. Therapy must constantly focus on his needs, or rather

on the denial of his needs and his arrogant, prideful attitude in minimizing these needs. Frequently, the lack of money, work and/or interpersonal relationships (sexual, friendships) must be brought out as this subtype may have suppressed these needs to such an extent that minimal survival conditions are considered quite acceptable.

Seduction

Seduction by the psychopath, which is generally unconscious, can be of many types. It is not necessarily sexual. In the case of the submissive psychopath, for example, the seduction is, "I will give you what you want," (unconscious) or "I will share a piece of myself" (conscious). Seduction is always intended to control but when the therapist does not fulfill the expectations that accompany the seduction, the psychopath feels justified in using any other means to achieve control and/or revenge. As a last recourse, the psychopath's rage, held in reserve, will also be used as a means of control. The ominous psychopath's rage is evident, while it is less evident but still present in the submissive psychopath.

Seduction is a learned process that originated with the seductive parent and has been internalized to the extent that it is virtually unconscious in the adult. It has to be unconscious. Otherwise the psychopath would have to accept that his seduction is just as cruel, just as confusing, just as hostile and manipulative as the seduction he experienced from the parent. This, of course, would lead to the admission of the pain and eventually the guilt, both of which are strongly disconnected from the mainstream of the personality. Accepting seduction is accepting self-responsibility for cruelty. The ominous psychopath blocks out pain, while the submissive psychopath blocks anger and the withdrawn psychopath blocks contact.

Defense of the Defense

A word about the treatment of psychopathy when used by the patient as a "defense of the defense." When the therapist is presented with this level, he must understand two things:

1. The patient feels over-confronted, accused, treated unfairly, judged—or the patient believes the therapist does not understand

the problem fully, in context. In either case, the automatic, immediate response is to become totally unreceptive, to the degree that he may not hear or understand what he is being told.

2. The patient, underneath the apparently very strong defense, is terrified. This state is the result of the powerful willpower being used to block all input. For the patient believes that an inevitable and most undesirable conclusion will be reached if the truth is fully exposed, if events are allowed to unfold sequentially and logically, without being controlled in any way. This is unacceptable—therefore the events, or their logical, rational unfoldment, must be "altered" (i.e., twisted and manipulated to ensure a different and "acceptable" conclusion). This sequence is based on many obvious *misconceptions*, several of which are:

a) The end-product projected by the individual is indeed the only possible and acceptable one, and the therapist's conclusion (when rationally pursued to its ultimate conclusion) is totally unacceptable. In reality, this end product may frequently be the best possible alternative if the long-term growth of the individual is considered. An example might be getting caught and shamed in a publicly humiliating act—such as petty shoplifting—which may be exactly the lesson the person needs to avoid uncontrolled escalation of his desire to steal, that could end in grand larceny and jail.

b) The personality's estimation of what is a rational progression of thought and/or events truly leads to the projected conclusion. This is very arrogant, for it excludes other people's thoughts, opinions, feelings and attitudes. It precludes the possibility that someone else may reach an entirely different conclusion from the same starting premises or facts. It is an expression of the certainty the psychopath has that his perceptions and conclusions alone are the correct ones, and that no one else can have totally different reactions and reach different conclusions from the same facts. Psychopaths are thus frequently surprised when they are not in their defended state, to see these completely unexpected (by them) conclusions are reached by others. These realizations are, in my opinion, one of the most powerful therapeutic experiences that psychopaths can have. It is a tool especially available in group therapy, where the number of people disagreeing with the psychopath, and reaching different conclusions than the one

projected, is a striking example of the psychopath's misperception of reality (and frequently, of his paranoia).

c) The intent of the world (i.e., people in general, and frequently specific individuals) is selfish; others will stop at nothing (a projection of his own ruthlessness)—hurting, attacking or otherwise damaging him—to get their objectives met. This is clearly the expression of the paranoid nucleus previously mentioned. However, it is important to underline it here, for when the patient, in the course of therapy, begins to question the validity of this heretofore unchallenged assumption, a big step has been made. Again, group settings are ideal for this to happen.

These three premises—the unacceptability of the projected conclusion, the inevitability of this conclusion and its estimated consequences (when reason is *not* used to visualize the real objective that will be achieved if the present avenue of action is continued unabated), and the ultimately selfish and therefore untrustworthy intent of others—must be challenged constantly during therapy. These are among the therapist's strongest tools.

Terror

Underlying this whole dynamic is terror—sometimes extremely powerful. Terror of being exposed, proven to be ultimately, finally and irrevocably "all bad." This is, of course, hidden from others, but mostly from self—and the personality will defend dramatically against any attempt to confront this issue, which is the very issue that needs repeated exposure. The psychopath needs to know again and again, that even if he does expose a negative trait or act or feeling, he will still be accepted; he will still be loved and loveable, he is still a child of God and *7wt*—as he dramatically believes—"all bad" and lost forever. In fact, he must be encouraged to see that the courage required to expose these negative traits is very great, and that by doing so he is accomplishing a very positive thing. In this manner, the "defense" aspect of psychopathy can be overcome gradually.

Connecting with the Spiritual

There is another, perhaps most important, aspect of therapy which is the re-discovery of the transcendental self, the "higher

functions" I have mentioned previously. This re-connection to the Holy One/Buddha/Atman/Christ/Higher Consciousness (however "It" is named), represents a very major step in the growth process of any individual. It is perhaps a most difficult and critical step for someone with a substantial amount of psychopathy in his defensive system. For it is this connection, in fact the very recognition that "It" (I prefer to use the word God) exists, that will support and nurture the individual through all the painful travails of therapy, in fact, for the rest of his life. God is simply the cornerstone of the early stages of conscience (which every child knows) and denying God was the price paid for the evolution of psychopathy in the first place. The very acknowledgment that God exists poses an insoluble dilemma for the psychopath who can no longer ignore humanity, the pain of those who he abuses, exploits or in any way violates in the service of his willfulness. The end can no longer justify the means if God exists and is common to all humans, including of course, the psychopath himself. For to justify the greed, the power drive, the ruthless exploitation of others, the psychopath must believe he is "better" or "different." At the very least, he must believe his selfish attitudes will have no consequence of any kind – an impossibility if a Greater Being, on any level and of any significance, exists.

Obviously this level of grounding may never be reached, in therapy or afterwards. It is mentioned here mainly because I believe that if the client should begin to move in this direction, an important stage of therapy has been reached, and very often, therapy is only a first step in a life-long spiritual quest. Bioenergetics holds that a client's progress can and should have a functional (sometimes visible) corollary. So also I believe that when the psychopath begins to look inward, valiantly defying the darkness and terror he at first believes is all of him, and begins to see, feel and know his essential goodness, so also will he begin to perceive his capacity to truly love both others and himself. Sometimes this is accompanied by what can only be called a spiritual re-awakening; at other times it is simply the awareness that others are just as important as he, and have the same rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Still other times it may be the establishment of a solid, long-term reality-based relationship that requires taming the rampant will. But always there will be an increased self-acceptance.

tance (with realization of personal limits and decrease of grandiosity and omnipotence) and a marked rise in self-worth. The person will seem more at peace within, as indeed he is.

Recapitulation

It is important to remember that the psychopath's defense is against collapsing into his secondary characteristic. Thus the ominous subtype defends against collapsing into masochism, the submissive into orality and need, the withdrawn into a schizoid, fragmented state.

All these aspects of the personality must be gradually uncovered. Reich's method of character analysis is most helpful here. In addition to providing a gradual unveiling of the defense, it also serves to keep the patient and the process focused, on track. It also avoids displacement, which the psychopath will invariably use.

But possibly the most important single factor in working with psychopathy is establishing a sound therapeutical alliance. To the extent that the client trusts, to that extent only can the therapist act as a solid, reliable alter ego. And trust is not easily given by a psychopath—more likely, it can be withdrawn suddenly. The therapist may not even suspect anything and suddenly all trust is withdrawn, for the patient may not even give the subtlest hint. Forewarned, the therapist possibly can accept this sudden painful withdrawal (or attack or submission, depending on the subtype), should he have the wisdom and fortitude to simply accept, it is possible (although surely not certain) that the trust will return, this time with greater sincerity and commitment.

Summation

A heavily exaggerated will function and exclusive trust in the ego is a disturbance of the psyche which in this paper is called "psychopathy" when it is neurotic, and "sociopathy" when it becomes psychotic.

This over-commitment to the will results in a disconnection between the emotional (hypothalamic) and the rational (frontal cortex) functions, that may lead to unbalanced, even bizarre behavior. While genetic and/or chemical imbalances should clearly remain as viable causal agents, this article is focused on the emo

tional aspects only. And so we can say that psychopathy includes great self-doubt which is generated partially, at least, by parental confusion, double messages and double binds which are reacted to by the symbolic statement, "You are wrong, I am right." Unbridled by the limits of ordinarily introjected parental authority, the willful ego becomes rampant. It creates its own reality rising, as it were, above the other aspects of the individual and consequently, of humanity as a whole. This "rising above" is manifested at all levels: (1) attitudinally by an arrogance that justifies all acting out ("Since I am special, I am entitled to this or that."); (2) physically by a disconnection from the reality of the earth/ground (mother, gravity, sexuality); (3) emotionally by an indulgence and immediate gratification of all desires ("What I want, I get."); (4) spiritually by a loss of awareness that Nature, and its Creator truly exist, independently of the overblown ego (symbolically, and at its extreme, the statement becomes, "I am the One").

Psychopathy is unique in that, in addition to being a character structure in its own right, it is also a defense used, under pressure, by all human beings, especially in our culture. As such, it is a defense of the defense itself. It can be developed throughout childhood and, I believe, right into adolescence (although this remains hypothetical). A psychopathic state can be identified by: (1) a sudden, exaggerated willfulness that defies common sense and may even be destructive to the person's own interest over the medium or long term, but which is found useful in gratifying what is perceived as an immediate need associated with survival; (2) an equally sudden blocking of all receptivity. The psychopath covers and then represses first the insecurity and later the guilt that originates from this dynamic. As the guilt is repressed, so is the voice of conscience, so that the personality eventually loses the conscious perception of right and wrong, truth and lie.

Another factor in the etiology of psychopathy was the constant prodding, searching and examining by the parent of the child's innermost feelings, always with the intent to control or manipulate. Defensively, the child developed a series of secrets around which he could organize his psyche and develop his strength. These secrets are essentially the negative dealings the child had as a result of the parental dynamic and which had to be covered up and protected by a network of lies. Thus, one of the psychopath's

principal fears is to reveal his secrets. There is a constant production of thoughts which are not revealed because the psychopath believes they are unacceptable, inadmissible and shameful. This constant accumulation of secrets and lies creates an enormous burden on the ego which must constantly filter out what is congruent and appropriate in the context of previously held-back secrets from that which is believed inappropriate and revealing, and could lead into the psychopath's worst fear—to contradict himself, and be caught and challenged. When caught and challenged, the person cannot be reached and does not understand what is said; elements of paranoia appear (which does not equate paranoia and psychopathy). However, psychopathy usually does include a paranoid nucleus.

This may be one reason it is so difficult to treat. It is certainly the reason that the most important aspect of the therapeutic process is to establish and maintain contact with the patient's heart—his capacity to love himself and others—a contact the patient himself has lost and must re-establish via the therapy. This requires a subtle balance of support and confrontation.

Full discharge of the rage is needed, yet often difficult to accomplish because of several reasons. They include: (1) The full discharge of the rage implies extending oneself beyond the full control of the ego and therefore possibly into a contradiction; (2) The full release of the rage also implies giving up a hidden weapon held in reserve if everything else fails; (3) Ultimately, at the bottom line, the psychopath is terrified of losing control over his enormous rage and acting out in a dangerous fashion.

In his constant deceit, in his constant denial of reality and in his mistrust of mankind and life, the psychopath easily reaches a point where he loses track of the lies that have become cumulative. Eventually, the psychopath cannot tell what is a lie to others, what is a lie to the self, or what is a lie at all. It is very important for psychopaths to realize they are lying to themselves and that this will ultimately lead into the trap of confusion and unreality. By heaping lie upon lie they finally confuse themselves to the point where they have to apply against themselves the same psychopathic defense that they used against the confusing parent. Thus when the psychopath is caught contradicting himself, he will flatly deny one of his two statements. He will truly believe that his

denial is objective reality and that the other person is inventing one of the conflicting statements. Denial is used as the only way that the environment can be "justifiably" manipulated. The suppression of guilt is blatant. All this debilitates the already weakened self-respect and consolidates the sense of worthlessness.

The psychopath's plight is the loss of his capacity to love truly. Enslaved by his own will, he constantly betrays the best in him. Therefore he feels worthless, no matter how successful he may be. And indeed he is, for without self-worth, nothing is fulfilling and life is a sham. The psychopaths who come to us for help know this, in their heart of hearts. When we let them know we understand their plight and pain, indirectly and without intent to humiliate or control, they will reveal the truly beautiful human beings they are. Working with a psychopath can be most rewarding, if the therapist understands the deep self-doubt, the deep need that is never expressed or shown, at least until the transformation process is well advanced. In treating psychopathy, the therapist's heart must be open. For it is when heart speaks to heart, when one human conveys the message, "I see and understand you," that another can, perhaps ever so cautiously at first, unfold the flower of his soul, reveal his deepest secrets and learn to trust.

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Glossary

Ego: A part of the psyche that becomes the interactive element between the deeper levels of the psyche and the social world, and the observer of the self as a whole on all its levels. It includes volition which in its positive manifestation orients the person toward life, joy, pleasure and fulfillment, and in its negative aspect seeks power and control.

Character Defenses: The defensive systems contained in the character structures and used in this paper specifically in the bioenergetic sense.

Character Structure: A system or pattern that is described in generalized terms, for the purpose of systemization and comprehension, which does not necessarily typify or even resemble a specific person but may describe—more or less accurately— layer or facet of the total personality significant enough to allow the therapist to understand and confront it in a therapeutic modality. Knowledge and comprehension of it as a model helps. The system used throughout this paper was devised by John Pierrakos and Alexanderer Lowen.

Real Needs: Needs based in reality and common to all humans as a species. However, the real needs of each individual vary according to culture, age, socio-economic levels, etc., so that the real need of any individual must be examined in the context of that person's reality and temporal position in life. For example, the real needs of a divorced adult will differ substantially from the real needs of the same person when married or as a youth initiating life.

False Needs: Superimposed needs whose fulfillment is not really necessary or even desirable for the person's full maturation as a complete, balanced individual. Among these one can frequently find a real need exaggerated to the point of becoming unnecessary and destructive. An example might be money: it is necessary and thus there is a real need to have an adequate standard of living (which needs to be defined for each individual). It is unnecessary and a false need to accumulate an enormous fortune beyond the point where its creation is a source of joy and pleasure and results in fear, tension and anxiety instead.

Grounded: Literally means contact with the ground, the physical earth. It is broadly used to describe contact (or lack thereof) with reality, sexuality, or the "other." In Freudian terms (a partial descrip

tion), the degree to which an external object can be cathexed. Groundedness contrasts and is in opposition to narcissism. It is also used to express the degree of acceptance of life's inexorable laws. To the degree a person is grounded he will accept life's unpredictability, fluctuations and pains in a flexible manner that will tend to maximize the pleasure principle.

Higher Self: That aspect, common to all, which is able to love, create, give and receive. However, the Higher Self is also taken to mean that spark of the Divine that wisely leads us through life and continues after death. It is also called the Soul. It is undefinable and only real when personally experienced.

Reason, Will and Emotion. Three basic functions of the ego. When in balance, they act harmoniously and appropriately, loving and caring reactions ensue. In reality, most people have two out of the three reasonably developed, and the life-task is then to develop the third undeveloped one. However, to the extent that only one of the three dominates, an imbalance occurs to the point of serious disturbance (see my article "The Modifiers").

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