PSYCHOPATHIC PERSONALITY AMONG THE MENTALLY DEFECTIVE*

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The problem of psychopathic personality among mental defectives is a part of the general problem of the psychopathic states. It is approached in this study through a comparison of the mental integrations of a psychopathic defective with those of two superior psychopaths. The material has been derived from literature and clinical material studied at the Henry Phipps Clinic, the New York State Psychiatric Institute, Letchworth Village, the Napanoch Institution for Male Defective Delinquents, and the Woodbourne Institution for Defective Delinquents. The three case studies represent a selection from over 60 reviewed, of which a number have been studied with considerable care. In order to provide a common basis for an approach to the theoretical consideration of the terms "mental deficiency" and "psychopathic personality," an abridged review has been made of contributions to the literature. This abridged review will be followed by a presentation of clinical material for comparison with the literature outlined.

Our problem raises the question "What is mental deficiency?" In attempting to answer this, it is possible to use more or less standardized definitions, a procedure not possible with definitions of "psychopathic personality," which require wider treatment. According to the British Mental Deficiency Act of 1927,¹ "Mental defectiveness means a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind existing before the age of eighteen years, whether arising from inherent causes or induced by disease or injury." Tredgold² contributed a sociological element by adding the provision that the defective individual be "incapable of adapting himself to the normal environment of his fellows in such a way as to maintain existence independently of supervision, control or external support." The British Education Act of 1921³ defined the concept "mental defect" as educational incapacity rather than social incapacity. The New York State Mental Hygiene Law⁴ has added a further differentiation in that the defective person "is not insane or of unsound mind to such an extent as to require his commitment to an institution for the insane." These definitions are satisfac-

*Presented before the interhospital conference of the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, April 19, 1939, at the New York State Psychiatric Institute and Hospital, New York.
tory to certain degrees; they fail, however, to clearly distinguish individuals who might be described in identical terms but who may be technically considered as psychopaths not suffering from intellectual deficiency. Neither do the definitions make diagnostic provisions for individuals becoming definitely defective "after an early age." To define "mental deficiency" will require much more study, but two points vitally important for the present purposes stand out clearly—namely, that "mental deficiency" consists of arrests in development, especially mental development, associated with social inadequacy.

Definitions of "psychopathic personality" or "psychopathic states" are less consistent and less standardized. In examining the definitions or opinions on the meaning of "psychopathic states," certain terms recur frequently in the literature. These terms will be briefly considered before presenting in abridged form various attempts to define psychopathic states. These terms represent common interpretations, since they were selected from Funk and Wagnall's standard dictionary and Warren's dictionary of psychology. The dictionary definitions were used because a presentation of the connotations of these terms as given by the various schools of psychiatric and psychological thought would introduce a problem of discussion too extensive for the present purpose.

Intellect: "The group of cognitive processes, more especially their higher forms, e.g., the discovery of relations or, the faculty of power of perception or thought, or power of understanding."

Conation: "Purposive activity in its inception, i.e., the active phase of volition, desire, aversion, conscious impulse, the conscious tendency to act, the faculty of desire, impulse or exertion as distinguished from cognition and feeling."

Affect-emotion: "An experience or mental state characterized by a strong degree of feeling and usually accompanied by motor expression, or, any strong movement or perturbation of the conscious mind;" "an act or state of excited feeling."

Temperament: "The general affective nature of an individual as determined by his inheritance and life history;" or, "a special type of mental constitution and development or mixture of characteristics supposed to have its basis in the bodily organism and to be transmissible by inheritance," "natural disposition," "the sum-