

~~Don't fear cook~~
Aubrey 1/17/42

No. 47

*)
INCENDIARISM.

By Dr. Ernst Simmel.

The crime of incendiarism can have various causes. The incendiarist can be a feeble-minded or a psychotic individual; he can set fire as an act of revenge, or for getting the benefit of fire insurance. However, it is generally agreed upon that there is a particular form of incendiarism called pyromania, which is pathological. These pyromaniacs cannot explain why they set fires - they act under a compulsion and we are entitled to assume that even among the incendiarists who think they know, there are genuine pyromaniacs who only rationalize their unconscious drives.

Some years ago I was called in by a judge of a Superior Court to act as a psychoanalytic expert in a case where there was no doubt that it dealt with a pyromaniac. The pyromaniac was a twenty-one year old boy, whom we shall call George. I interviewed George twice and by applying my general psychoanalytic knowledge and interpretation of symbolic actions I arrived at some conclusions, at least in that individual case of pyromania. I gave my report to the judge and the boy was not sentenced to jail but put on probation.

*) Paper presented before the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society, Spring 1944.

The criminal act was repeated incendiaryism. The defendant George was accused of setting fires to fields of dry grass on five different occasions. This is a very serious crime. The defendant pleaded guilty. On being examined by the court psychiatrist, as to why he had committed these incendiary acts, George's reply was, "I don't know -- except for the thrill." The psychiatrist concluded: "George is not insane in either a legal or medical sense. I believe that he has told us all he knows as to the motivation of his offenses; that he committed them for the thrill he derived from setting fire to grass fields and helping the fire department to put them out. This, in my opinion, is a case in which only a psychoanalytic diagnosis could serve as a guide to other than the usual conventional action by the authorities in dealing with them."

Before investigating the criminal acts, I should like first to acquaint you with George's personality and development. George is a middle child; he has an older sister and a younger brother. His parents are living, but were divorced before his memory begins. George's personality reveals an obvious disturbance of his sexual development. In this respect he appears to be absolutely immature. In spite of the fact that he is twenty-one years old, he has had no sex life at all. For the past four months he has had an affectionate relation with a "nice" girl. However, he abhors the idea of having sexual intercourse with her. In the course of the interviews he revealed that he actually is afraid of intercourse. He went so far as to say that

The criminal act was repeated incessantly. The defendant George was accused of setting fires to fields of dry grass on five different occasions. This is a very serious crime. The defendant pleaded guilty. On being examined by the court psychiatrist, as to why he had committed these incendiary acts, George's reply was, "I don't know -- except for the thrill." The psychiatrist concluded: "George is not insane in either a legal or medical sense. I believe that he has told us all he knows as to the motivation of his offenses; that he committed them for the thrill he derived from setting fire to grass fields and helping the fire department to put them out. This, in my opinion, is a case in which only a psychoanalytic diagnosis could serve as a guide to other than the usual conventional action by the subject in dealing with them."

Before investigating the criminal acts, I should like first to acquaint you with George's personality and development. George is a middle child; he has an older sister and a younger brother. His parents are living, but were divorced before his memory begins. George's personality reveals an obvious disturbance of his sexual development. In this respect he appears to be absolutely immature. In spite of the fact that he is twenty-one years old, he has had no sex life at all. For the past four months he has had an affectionate relation with a "nice" girl. However, he abhors the idea of having sexual intercourse with her. In the course of the interview he revealed that he actually is afraid of intercourse. He went so far as to say that

he would never have intercourse with this girl, even in marriage, because "no one can tell whether or not she is sick after all."
"Intercourse is too dangarous."

In George's physical contact with this girl, he never experienced an erection. He never masturbates. He never has had an ejaculation, not even in the form of a pollution as the result of a dream. Only when he feels an urge to urinate, whether at night or during the day, does he notice an erection and relieves this by emptying his bladder.

He recalls a temporary period of masturbation when he was eight or nine years of age. Asked whether he remembered any bed-wetting as a child, his answer was that he did not.

To summarize: he is capable of loving a person of the opposite sex only by excluding every wish for genital contact with her. He suffers from a neurotic inhibition of his sex instinct, which is based upon fear, the origin of which is unknown to him. He rationalizes the unconscious motive of his fear in a typical neurotic manner. He believes that the female sex organ is dangerous and can injure his penis.

It can be taken for granted that George had to meet unusual emotional difficulties during the first six years of his life. For, during that period, the marital relations of his parents were so inharmonious that they were finally divorced. This occurred when he was about six years old. He has absolutely no recollection of ever having lived with his parents and his siblings. His first recollection of childhood dates back to

he would never have intercourse with this girl, even in marriage, because "no one can tell whether or not she is sick after all." "Intercourse is too dangerous."

In George's physical contact with this girl, he never experienced an erection. He never masturbates. He never has had an ejaculation, not even in the form of a pollution as the result of a dream. Only when he feels an urge to urinate, whether at night or during the day, does he notice an erection and relieves this by emptying his bladder.

He recalls a temporary period of masturbation when he was eight or nine years of age. Asked whether he remembered any bed-wetting as a child, his answer was that he did not.

To summarize: he is capable of loving a person of the opposite sex only by excluding every wish for genital contact with her. He suffers from a neurotic inhibition of his sex instinct, which is based upon fear, the origin of which is unknown to him. He rationalizes the unconscious motive of his fear in a typical neurotic manner. He believes that the female sex organ is dangerous and can injure his penis.

It can be taken for granted that George had to meet unusual emotional difficulties during the first six years of his life. For, during that period, the marital relations of his parents were so inharmonious that they were finally divorced. This occurred when he was about six years old. He has absolutely no recollection of ever having lived with his parents and his siblings. His first recollection of childhood dates back to

the moment when his grandmother took him up the steps to her apartment. He lived with his grandparents until he was eighteen. Later in his childhood he learned that his parents were divorced at that time, and that the whole family, consisting of the parents and three children, were separated. His mother remarried, but George cannot recall when this happened. His younger brother went with the mother and her new husband. The elder sister accompanied the father to California, where the latter subsequently married.

George was the only child who lived with the grandparents. He remembers that at their home he felt very unhappy. They were very strict and disapproved of his playing with other children. In recalling his life with his grandparents, George had the feeling that he suffered intensely from their lack of warmth, love and understanding. The bright days in his life came once every two weeks, when he was allowed to visit his mother and his younger brother.

It can be assumed that those visits to his mother's home aroused definite mental conflicts in the boy which he could not solve. On the one hand, he suffered from the loveless atmosphere in his grandparent's home; and on the other, he experienced the love of his actual mother only at definite intervals and at the same time had to face the fact that his mother no longer belonged to him, but to two other persons - her new husband and his little brother. We can assume that the divorce of George's parents determined a significant break in his mental development. He was

the moment when his grandfather took him to the
 country. He lived with his grandfather until he was
 later in his childhood he learned that his
 mother and that the whole family, consisting of the
 and three children, were separated. His mother
 George cannot recall when this happened. His younger
 with the mother and her new husband. The older
 the father to California, where the latter
 George was the only child who lived with the
 he remembers that at their home he felt very
 very excited and disapproved of his playing with
 in recalling his life with his grandparents, George
 feeling that he suffered intensely from their lack of
 love and understanding. The bright days in his life
 every two weeks, when he was allowed to visit his
 his younger brother.
 It can be assumed that those visits to his mother's
 in his grandparents' home; and on the other, he
 love of his mother only at definite intervals.
 was this that he felt that his father no longer
 to him, but to two other persons - her new husband
 brother. He can assume that the absence of George's
 continued a situation in his mental development. It was

forced to give up his mother completely to others at that time when he was in need of her to resolve his Oedipus conflict. He had to renounce his mother as his love object and had to take as a substitute for her the strict unaffectionate grandmother whom he hated. There is no doubt that at that time George must have suppressed feelings of envy and aggression against his happier rivals.

Like other children in similar situations, George took refuge in masturbation to comfort himself. The effect striven for in such masturbatory acts is not only the enjoyment of pleasurable sensations but even more, a mental economic one. The attempt to achieve genital satisfaction serves the purpose of alleviating the mental tension brought about by the suppression and repression of frustrated love demands as well as aggressive tendencies. In this way the infantile individual releases autoerotically, or rather autoplastically, tendencies which strive for contact with a definite object in the surrounding world that is denied to him. The masturbatory act of the infant actually avoids collision between the instinct driven child and his object. In this way, the infantile masturbatory act can also be described as the first social deed of the weak immature personality of the infant. Masturbation provides him with a release of incestuous and aggressive instinct tendencies, through which otherwise he would collide with the object of his conflict.

George indulged in his masturbatory activities when he was eight or nine years old - until he was caught by his grandmother. Once when he was supposed to be asleep, she found him sitting

forced to give up his mother completely to others at that time when he was in need of her to resolve his Oedipus conflict. He had to renounce his mother as his love object and had to take as a substitute for her the strict unaffectionate grandmother whom he hated. There is no doubt that at that time George must have suppressed feelings of envy and aggression against his happier rivals.

Like other children in similar situations, George took refuge in masturbation to comfort himself. The effort striven for in such masturbatory acts is not only the enjoyment of pleasurable sensations but even more, a mental economic one. The attempt to achieve genital satisfaction serves the purpose of alleviating the mental tension brought about by the suppression and repression of frustrated love demands as well as aggressive tendencies. In this way the infantile individual releases autoerotically, or rather autoplastically, tendencies which strive for contact with a definite object in the surrounding world that is denied to him. The masturbatory act of the infant actually avoids collision between the instinct driven child and his object. In this way, the infantile masturbatory act can also be described as the first social deed of the weak immature personality of the infant. Masturbation provides him with a release of instinctive and aggressive instinct tendencies, through which otherwise he would collide with the object of his conflict.

George indulged in his masturbatory activities when he was eight or nine years old - until he was caught by his grandmother. Once when he was supposed to be asleep, she found him sitting

on his bed masturbating. She scolded him severely . This frightened him. The following morning, both his grandparents came to his bedside and announced in a serious and solemn tone of voice that if he ever masturbated again they would cut off his penis. George recalls that the period immediately following this prohibition was very hard for him. He continued masturbating. As a consequence of the castration threat uttered by his grandparents, he was overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety and guilt after each masturbatory act. George was convinced that they would carry out their resolution if they ever caught him again. For months, George was shaken by this mental conflict. His fear was evidently stronger than his desire, for he stopped masturbating completely and has never started it again.

At the time of these inner conflicts, George was afflicted with a serious illness. He had to be operated on for a ruptured appendix, which resulted in general peritonitis. George informed me, in my interview with him, that he felt sick at that time and had severe abdominal pains and that, as a remedy, his grandmother gave him an enema. As physicians, we know that this enema was effective as a hostile attack by his grandmother and might have been responsible for the serious character of his appendicitis, due to the rupture of his appendix.

I think I am not mistaken in considering it not a mere coincidence that George was stricken with appendicitis at a time when he had to suppress the masturbation impulses under the castration threat of his grandmother. It was an attempt of his organism to dispose inwardly of his aggressive destructive tendencies, which he could not discharge either by masturbation autoplastically or

on his bed masturbating. She scolded him severely. This frightened him. The following morning, both his grandparents came to his bed and announced in a serious and solemn tone of voice that if he ever masturbated again they would cut off his penis. George recalls that the period immediately following this prohibition was very hard for him. He continued masturbating. As a consequence of the agitation threat uttered by his grandparents, he was overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety and guilt after each masturbatory act.

George was convinced that they would carry out their resolution if they ever caught him again. For months, George was shaken by this mental conflict. His fear was evidently stronger than his desire, for he stopped masturbating completely and has never started it again.

At the time of these inner conflicts, George was afflicted with a serious illness. He had to be operated on for a ruptured appendix, which resulted in general peritonitis. George informed me, in my interview with him, that he felt sick at that time and had severe abdominal pains and that, as a remedy, his grandmother gave him an enema. As physicians, we know that this enema was effective as a hostile attack by his grandmother and might have been responsible for the serious character of his appendicitis, due to the rupture of his appendix.

I think I am not mistaken in considering it not a mere coincidence that George was stricken with appendicitis at a time when he had to suppress the masturbation impulses under the operation threat of his grandmother. It was an attempt of his organism to dispose inwardly of his aggressive destructive tendencies, which he could not discharge either by masturbation autoerotically or

against the grandmother alloplastically. I am inclined to assume that George's sickness of appendicitis marked the time when he definitely repressed his entire infantile genital and aggressive instinct demands, a repression which later on precipitated his incendiary impulses. This infantile instinct repression was traumatically increased during adolescence. His sexual impulses reawakened and he then wanted to associate with girls as other boys did. But here again he came into severe conflicts with his overreligious grandparents. They considered all forms of social intercourse with girls inappropriate for a boy -- before the age of twenty-five. With threats of punishment, they ordered him not to associate even with his boy friends when any girls were present.

Both these great traumata were disastrous for his development because they were associated in his mind with the trauma of the previously mentioned threat of castration. This castration fear made it impossible for him to satisfy autoerotically, on his own body, his desire for the love of his mother and his repressed aggressive reactions against his grandparents.

Of particular significance for the psychoanalytic elucidation of George's compulsive acts is his relation to his father's second wife - his step-mother. During the past two years, he has been living with his father and his step-mother. George and his step-mother have become very friendly and he is devoted to her. When I asked him why he was so fond of her, he replied that she "explained so many things to me", things pertaining to sex, and that she gave him instructive books on sex to read, such as "What a Young Man Should Know." Obviously, she had noticed his immaturity

against the grandmother, allopathetically. I am inclined to assume
that George's sickness of appendicitis marked the time when he
definitely repressed his entire infantile genital and aggressive
instinct demands, a repression which later on precipitated his
incredibly impulses. This infantile instinct repression was trans-
fusedly increased during adolescence. His sexual impulses remained
and he then wanted to associate with girls rather than boys. But
here again he came into severe conflicts with his over-religious
grandparents. They considered all forms of social intercourse with
girls inappropriate for a boy -- before the age of twenty-five.
With threats of punishment, they ordered him not to associate even
with his boy friends when any girls were present.
Both these great traumas were disastrous for his development
because they were associated in his mind with the trauma of the
previously mentioned threat of castration. This castration fear
made it impossible for him to satisfy autoerotically, on his own
body, his desire for the love of his mother and his repressed
aggressive reactions against his grandparents.
Of particular significance for the psychoanalytic elucidation
of George's compulsive acts is his relation to his father's second
wife - his step-mother. During the past two years, he has been
living with his father and his step-mother. George and his step-
mother have become very friendly and he is devoted to her. When
I asked him why he was so fond of her, he replied that she
"explained so many things to me", things pertaining to sex, and
that she gave him instructive books on sex to read, such as "What
a Young Man Should Know." Obviously, she had noticed his immaturity

in matters relating to sex, and thought that she could help him through intellectual enlightenment. I do not think it inadmissible that through the encouraging attitude of his stepmother he was able to overcome his timidity toward the opposite sex and thus make the aforementioned affectionate contact with a girl.

We may conclude that his step-mother became a really adequate mother-substitute for him. But she was the direct opposite of his first mother-substitute, of his stern grandmother. The harshness of the grandparents, especially of the grandmother, and their threat of castration had caused him to repress all sexual desires. The barrier of repression was now loosened by the fact that the new mother-substitute alleviated the effect of the prohibition his grandmother had put upon him. It is quite clear that he transferred to his step-mother the unfulfilled love demands which he had to suppress in relation to his own mother, and which he tried in vain to transfer to his grandmother.

When he now lived with his father and the latter's second wife, the situation which existed during the first six years of his life was repeated. But there was one significant difference between the two situations. The home atmosphere was harmonious, and now he was the only child of his new mother. Old repressed incestuous wishes must have been revived in his unconscious. It appears as a defense against these wishes that he transferred his love from his step-mother to his girl friend. Typical of the pattern of relations that come about in this way, George could have no sexual feelings toward his love-mate, because in his unconscious that girl represented a mother-substitute or, more accurately, a step-mother substitute.

in matters relating to sex, and thought that she could help him through intellectual enlightenment. I do not think it inadvisable that through the encouraging attitude of his stepmother he was able to overcome his timidity toward the opposite sex and thus make the

aforementioned affectionate contact with a girl.

We may conclude that his step-mother became a really adequate mother-substitute for him. But she was the direct opposite of his

first mother-substitute, of his stern grandmother. The harshness of the grandparents, especially of the grandmother, and their threat of castration had caused him to repress all sexual desires. The

barrier of repression was now loosened by the fact that the new mother-substitute alleviated the effect of the prohibition his

grandmother had put upon him. It is quite clear that he transferred to his step-mother the unfulfilled love demands which he had to

suppress in relation to his own mother, and which he tried in vain to transfer to his grandmother.

When he now lived with his father and the latter's second wife,

the situation which existed during the first six years of his life was repeated. But there was one significant difference between the two situations. The home atmosphere was harmonious, and now he was

the only child of his new mother. Old repressed incestuous wishes must have been revived in his unconscious. It appears as a defense

against these wishes that he transferred his love from his step-

mother to his girl friend. Typical of the pattern of relations that come about in this way, George could have no sexual feelings toward

his love-mate, because in his unconscious that girl represented a mother-substitute or, more accurately, a step-mother substitute.

Therefore his girl friend was taboo sexually.

Psychoanalytic experience teaches that in such situations repressed infantile masturbation impulses become reawakened in the unconscious. These impulses, however, become at once inhibited since they tend to satisfy forbidden incestuous desires, this the more so if, as in George's case, they are paralyzed by the threat of castration. These unconscious auto-erotic tendencies had to strive for a substitute gratification. As we remember, there was an intimation of at least latent sexuality whenever George felt the need to urinate. At those times he experienced an erection which disappeared when he emptied his bladder. From this we may conclude that under the threat of castration he had regressed from the level of genital object love to that of urethral autoerotism.

I consider George's incendiary acts an unconscious compulsive attempt to find a substitute gratification for his re-awakened and re-repressed infantile masturbatory impulse. Due to the blockage of genital libido, this impulse had regressed to the level of infantile urethral autoerotism. I was led to this assumption by evaluating the actual occurrences which preceded George's incendiary acts.

I might remind the reader that George, on the invitation of his father, had come to live with him and his second wife. During the last years, preceding his incendiarism, George had been employed as a night clerk in a hotel. He was in the habit of going home every morning and having breakfast with his step-mother and his father. It was on one of these mornings that an abnormal exaltation was aroused in him for the first time by the sight of fire.

After breakfast, he had gone back of the house and had seen

Therefore his girl friend was taboo sexually.

Psychoanalytic experience teaches that in such situations

repressed infantile masturbation impulses become reawakened in the unconscious. These impulses, however, become at once inhibited since they tend to satisfy forbidden incestuous desires, this the more so if, as in George's case, they are paralyzed by the threat of castration. Those unconscious auto-erotic tendencies had to strive for a substitute gratification. As we remember, there was an intimation of at least latent sexuality whenever George felt the need to urinate. At those times he experienced an erection which disappeared when he emptied his bladder. From this we may conclude that under the threat of castration he had repressed from the level of genital object love to that of wretched autoeroticism.

I consider George's incidental acts an unconscious compulsive attempt to find a substitute gratification for his re-awakened and re-repressed infantile masturbatory impulses. Due to the blockage of genital libido, this impulse had repressed to the level of infantile wretched autoeroticism. I was led to this assumption by evaluating the actual occurrences which preceded George's incidental acts.

I might remind the reader that George, on the invitation of his father, had come to live with him and his second wife. During the last years, preceding his incestuousness, George had been employed as a night clerk in a hotel. He was in the habit of going home every morning and having breakfast with his step-mother and his father. It was on one of these mornings that an abnormal excitation was aroused in him for the first time by the sight of life. After breakfast, he had gone back of the house and had seen

a grass fire in a vacant lot some distance away. He was overwhelmed by the danger of the situation and thrilled with the prospect of putting out the fire. He ran to the telephone and called the fire-department. When the firemen arrived, George eagerly helped them extinguish the fire. He could not understand why he felt so elated. The experience was so exiting that afterwards he could think of nothing else but to reexperience it once more. The fact that this first fire was in an empty lot - where no one else was present - impelled him to look about for isolated lots which he could set on fire, unobserved. He had the feeling that that would still his unrest.

He did not drive back to the hotel that afternoon, but felt impelled to search for empty lots. He found one that suited his purpose, set fire to it, and immediately was overwhelmed with feelings of anxiety and guilt. He could only think: "What will happen to me now?" He ran away and hid nearby. As soon as the firemen appeared, however, he rushed back to the scene and worked intensively to help put out the fire. This activity relieved his mental strain. In all, he repeated his incendiary act five times. And in every instance his procedure was the same: he first looked about for a vacant lot where he would be unobserved, then he set fire to it. Again the subsequent reaction of dread and guilt and the feeling of relief when he was able to assist in extinguishing the flames. In each instance, however, he managed to get close to the Fire Chief in charge. His presence at all these grass fires was observed by the Chief, who became suspicious and had George taken into custody.

a grass fire in a vacant lot some distance away. He was overwhelmed by the danger of the situation and thrilled with the prospect of putting out the fire. He ran to the telephone and called the fire department. When the firemen arrived, George eagerly helped them extinguish the fire. He could not understand why he felt so elated. The experience was so exciting that afterwards he could think of nothing else but to reexperience it once more. The fact that this first fire was in an empty lot - where no one else was present - impelled him to look about for isolated lots which he could set on fire, unobserved. He had the feeling that that would still his unrest.

He did not drive back to the hotel that afternoon, but felt impelled to search for empty lots. He found one that suited his purpose, set fire to it, and immediately was overwhelmed with feelings of anxiety and guilt. He could only think: "What will happen to me now?" He ran away and hid nearby. As soon as the firemen appeared, however, he rushed back to the scene and worked intently to help put out the fire. This activity relieved his mental strain. In all, he repeated his incendiary act five times. And in every instance his procedure was the same; he first looked about for a vacant lot where he would be unobserved, then he set fire to it. Again the subsequent reaction of dread and guilt and the feeling of relief when he was able to assist in extinguishing the flames. In each instance, however, he managed to get close to the fire Chief in charge. His presence at all these grass fires was observed by the Chief, who became suspicious and had George taken into custody.

There was no doubt that George unconsciously wanted to be caught, for in all the repeated acts of incendiarism he also used his father's automobile to drive to the vacant lots. This car was painted red and was very conspicuous. He drove the car onto the lot, set fire to the dry grass, then drove away from the lot, called the fire department and waited near the fire for the firemen. Naturally not only he personally, but his car as well became conspicuous. The fire chief discovered the traces of car tires on the lot, measured them, compared them with those of George's car and George was trapped.

I have no doubt that George's whole attitude toward his incendiary act is a repetition of his former conflict about masturbation -- it is typical of persons suffering from an unconscious masturbation complex to become excited when they find themselves unobserved in isolated places. This situation invariably revives the temptation to do something that is forbidden. For George, the incendiary act - a symbolical representation of masturbation - became compulsive, just because it was against the law. This nameless fear which overcame him after setting fires corresponds to his earlier castration fear. His endeavor to become noticed by the fire chief in helping to extinguish the fire can be interpreted as an unconscious wish to atone for his sin and to regain the love of a father image.

In conclusion we can say that George repressed his impulses toward genital masturbation out of fear of threatened castration. He sought an inner escape from this conflict by regressing to the urethral phase of his libidinal development. Whenever his bladder was full, he produced an erection, which was relieved by urinating. Now in a symbolical repetition of this process George feels the compulsive need to splash water on the fire, thus to discharge

There was no doubt that George unconsciously wanted to be caught for in all the repeated acts of incendiarism he also used his father's automobile to drive to the vacant lots. This car was painted red and was very conspicuous. He drove the car onto the lot, set fire to the dry grass, then drove away from the lot, called the fire department and waited near the fire for the firemen. Naturally not only he personally, but his car as well became conspicuous. The fire chief discovered the traces of car tires on the lot, measured them, compared them with those of George's car and George was trapped.

I have no doubt that George's whole attitude toward his inner-dirty act is a repetition of his former conflict about masturbation - it is typical of persons suffering from an unconscious masturbation complex to become excited when they find themselves unobserved in isolated places. This situation invariably revives the temptation to do something that is forbidden. For George, the incendiary act - a symbolical representation of masturbation - became compulsive, just because it was against the law. This nameless fear which overcame him after setting fires corresponds to his earlier castration fear. His endeavor to become noticed by the fire chief in helping to extinguish the fire can be interpreted as an unconscious wish to atone for his sin and to regain the love of a father image.

In conclusion we can say that George repressed his impulses toward genital masturbation out of fear of threatened castration. He sought an inner escape from this conflict by regressing to the urethral phase of his libidinal development. Whenever his bladder was full, he produced an erection, which was relieved by urinating. Now in a symbolical repetition of this process George feels the compulsive need to splash water on the fire, thus to discharge

an excitation which he himself had kindled.

The sympathetic, or may we call it, the seductive attitude of the step-mother, has reawakened in George the impulse toward genital masturbation; psychoanalytic experience permits us to assume that the actual situation which was associated with the precipitation of George's pyromanic impulse must have been of particular symbolical significance in this respect. He was sitting at the breakfast table with his father and his step-mother. Then he saw the fire. Eating together with a couple has, as we know from dream symbolism, very often the unconscious connotation of ^{taking part in} ~~making~~ the primal scene, i.e., the sexual relations between the parents, and himself being the third party. Seeing the fire behind his father's house and becoming aware of the power of destruction this fire had, he was also immediately overwhelmed by the idea that he could extinguish by water the destruction which threatened him and the others. The excitement and relief he felt at the same time was due to the fact that there is an external danger which can be met. Excitement and release associated themselves with his experience that sexual tension (erection) can be released by urinating.

Therefore the act of incendiarism can only be considered as genuine pyromania when it is considered in its entirety, to set the object on fire and also to extinguish the fire. This gives the pyromaniac act the significance of a masturbatory act, projected into the outside world. What is the thrill which George told us impelled him to repeat the incendiary act?

an excitement which he himself had kindled.

The sympathetic, or may we call it, the seductive attitude of the step-mother, has weakened in George the impulse toward genital masturbation; psychoanalytic experience permits us to assume that the actual situation which was associated with the precipitation of George's pyromania impulse may have been of

particular symbolic significance in this respect. He was sitting at the breakfast table with his father and his step-mother. When

he saw the fire. Eating together with a couple has, as we know from dream symbolism, very often the unconscious connotation of making the primal scene, i.e., the sexual relations between the parents, and himself being the third party. Seeing the fire behind his father's house and becoming aware of the power of destruction this fire had, he was also immediately overwhelmed by the idea that he could extinguish by water the destruction which threatened him and the others. The excitement and relief he felt at the same time was due to the fact that there is an external danger which can be met. Excitement and release associated themselves with his experience that sexual tension (erection) can be released by urinating.

Therefore the act of incendiarism can only be considered as genuine pyromania when it is considered in its entirety, to set the object on fire and also to extinguish the fire. This gives the pyromaniac not the significance of a masturbatory act, projected into the outside world. What is the thrill which George told us impelled him to repeat the incendiary act?

In my opinion, the sensation of thrill reflects the triumph of extinguishing the fire through water, i.e., urine; a discharge of sexual tension is possible, a discharge which is sexually accepted and for which one cannot be punished because it neutralizes the possible damage. Setting the grass on fire must have meant to George kindling his sexual excitement, and extinguishing it by water must have provided him with the sensation of an organic discharge, which he could not find as a child because of the interference of his grandparents and later on because of his inhibitions.

As far as the unconscious content of the masturbation phantasies are concerned, which he released in his incendiary acts, we are entitled to assume that they represent his Oedipus situation. The grass lot symbolizes his mother, as well as his stepmother, and also his grandmother. By using the car of his father to drive onto this lot, he identifies himself with the father and his powerful penis, performs the incest act on his mother, but at the same time attempts to destroy her, particularly when she assumes the image of the grandmother as a frustrating love object. The fire chief symbolizes the father, as well as the grandfather, by whom George is afraid of being castrated and to whom he must prove that he has no incestuous intention toward the mother object.

So far went the material I gathered from the two interviews with George. I felt entitled to assume that a pyremanic act substitutes a repressed act of masturbation and the connection of this act with urethral erotism, counteracting object destructive energies, gives the pyromaniac his specific opportunity to re-extrovert his

In my opinion, the sensation of thrill reflects the triumph of extinguishing the fire through water, i.e., urine; a discharge of sexual tension is possible, a discharge which is sexually accepted and for which one cannot be punished because it neutralizes the possible damage. Getting the grass on fire must have meant to George kindling his sexual excitement, and extinguishing it by water must have provided him with the sensation of an organic discharge, which he could not find as a child because of the interference of his grandparents and later on because of his inhibitions.

As far as the unconscious content of the masturbation phantasies are concerned, which he released in his incendiary acts, we are entitled to assume that they represent his Oedipus situation. The grass lot symbolizes his mother, as well as his step-mother, and also his grandmother. By using the car of his father to drive onto this lot, he identifies himself with the father and his powerful penis, performs the incest act on his mother, but at the same time attempts to destroy her, particularly when she assumes the image of the grandmother as a frustrating love object. The fire chief symbolizes the father, as well as the grandfather, by whom George is afraid of being castrated and to whom he must prove that he has no incestuous intention toward the mother object.

So far went the material I gathered from the two interviews with George. I felt entitled to assume that a pyromanic act substitutes a repressed act of masturbation and the connection of this act with urethral erotism, counteracting object destructive energies, gives the pyromanic his specific opportunity to re-express his

repressed Oedipus conflict. However, from the viewpoint of psychoanalytic theory, one important part of the development of this pyromaniac remains unclear. This is that George remembered so well his childhood masturbation and the castration threat which, as I had reason to infer, made him repress and forget the masturbation tendencies. This is contrary to all our psychoanalytic experiences. We should have expected that the castration threat in childhood should have brought about a complete repression of the masturbatory impulse and should have caused the castration threat itself to be repressed and forgotten. We know how difficult it is in our analyses to make conscious this whole repressed conflict of the forgotten masturbatory tendencies.

In the event, we discover, by comparing this case with other cases, that it is characteristic and differentiates in this way from a neurosis : that the castration threat does not become repressed. In this way the fear of an external danger can be displaced to the destructive element of fire. The other problem in contradiction to psychoanalytic theory, that this pyromaniac had not repressed his infantile masturbation conflict, found some clarification through information given me by the probation officer to whose care George was entrusted.

Very fortunately this probation officer was a student of psychoanalysis and decided to try to help George to become aware, to understand his problems as much as possible. This gentleman, because of his own psychoanalytic knowledge and because of reading my report was not satisfied to merely watch George to see whether

repressed Oedipus conflict. However, from the viewpoint of psycho-
 analytic theory, one important part of the development of this psycho-
 mania remains unclear. This is that George remembered so well his
 childhood masturbation and the castration threat which, as I had
 reason to infer, made him repress and forget the masturbation
 tendencies. This is contrary to all our psychoanalytic experiences.
 We should have expected that the castration threat in childhood
 should have brought about a complete repression of the masturbatory
 impulse and should have caused the castration threat itself to be
 repressed and forgotten. We know how difficult it is in our analy-
 ses to make conscious this whole repressed conflict of the for-

gotten masturbatory tendencies.

In the event, we discovered, by comparing this case with other
 cases, that it is characteristic and differentiates in this way
 from a neurosis: that the castration threat does not become re-
 pressed. In this way the fear of an external danger can be dis-
 placed to the destructive element of life. The other problem in
 contradiction to psychoanalytic theory, that this pyromania had
 not repressed his infantile masturbation conflict, found some clarifi-
 cation through information given me by the probation officer to
 whose care George was entrusted.

Very fortunately this probation officer was a student of
 psychoanalysis and decided to try to help George to become aware,
 to understand his problems as much as possible. This gentleman,
 because of his own psychoanalytic knowledge and because of reading
 my report was not satisfied to merely watch George to see whether

however,
one point, ~~on~~ which George ~~had~~ lied to me, and this
point, ~~was~~ actually proved a triumph for my psychoanalytic
theoretical conscience. ~~He~~ ^{George (with)} had to admit to the probation
officer that he ~~had lied to me about his masturbation in~~
~~childhood. Actually~~ could not remember anything about
having masturbated during his childhood or having been
punished for masturbation. There was another lie, implied
in his interview with me, which I consider.....

X in clearing up the puzzle of George's unrepresed
castration threat,

↗
(Suggestion ~~on~~ this addition for clarification. Also suspect that
it would be less confusing to leave out last sentence of the
paragraph and use it two paragraphs later instead of "In which
respect did he lie to me again?")

Good enough.

he would set fire to another empty lot and to try to persuade him not to do this. The probation officer decided to try to help George to uncover the unconscious roots behind his compulsion. In these interviews he also made use of the technique of interpreting dreams, on the basis of George's free associations. ^{Murder} Surprisingly it came out that George had lied. ^{to the probation officer,} At first ~~sight~~, ~~these~~ confessions of having lied seemed to shake the whole ground on which the structure of my conclusions was built.

George ^{had} told his psychotherapist that he had masturbated, not only in childhood but also later on, throughout his life and that he had had several affairs with girls, among them real intercourse. However, in the period of his treatment afterwards, it came out that the probation officer had become to his unconscious the image of his younger brother, whom he had hated because he could live with the mother, and George admitted that he had lied to the probation officer — that he had wished to smock him, and that he wanted to brag to him of his sexual potency. (When he was asked why he had not told me in the ~~first~~ ^{those} place about his sexual debauches, it came out that I was a man representing the court, and dreams showed that the judge and his grandparents and I were all one person. From this person he had to conceal his sexual strivings, because of his castration fear. Therefore, in lying to the probation officer by telling him, under the condition of his analysis, that he had lied to me, he repeated his experiences with the grandparents during his childhood.

he would set fire to another empty lot and to try to persuade him not to do this. The probation officer decided to try to help George to uncover the unconscious roots behind his compulsion. In these interviews he also made use of the technique of interpreting dreams on the basis of George's free associations. Surprisingly it came out that George had lied. At first sight, these confessions of having lied seemed to shake the whole ground on which the structure of my conclusions was built.

George told his psychoanalyst that he had masturbated, not only in childhood but also later on, throughout his life and that he had had several affairs with girls, among them real intercourse. However, in the period of his treatment afterwards, it came out that the probation officer had become to his unconscious the image of his younger brother, whom he had hated because he could live with the mother, and George admitted that he had lied to the probation officer - that he had wished to shock him, and that he wanted to brag to him of his sexual potency. When he was asked why he had not told me in the first place about his sexual debauches, it came out that I was a man representing the court and dreams showed that the judge and his grandparents and I were all one person. From this person he had to conceal his sexual strivings, because of his castration fear. Therefore, in lying to the probation officer by telling him, under the condition of his analysis, that he had lied to me, he repeated his experiences with the grandparents during his childhood.

*These lies
What was repeated was*

~~The repetition consisted of his lying to them because he was~~ afraid of being castrated, the same punishment he expected from the judge and from me.

In his interviews with me, he lied the truth, when he stated that he was afraid of sexual contact with girls, that he had no sexual affairs, that he did not masturbate. The important lie, which he had to rectify, was really a triumph for my psychoanalytic theoretical conscience. He had to admit to the probation officer that he had lied to me about his masturbation in childhood. Actually he cannot remember anything about having masturbated or having been punished for masturbation. However, he had to admit another lie implied in his interview with me, which I consider closely associated with this invention of the masturbation conflict in his childhood.

If the defendant had been a student of psychoanalysis and not, as a court psychiatrist described him, "of dull mentality," we could have thought he invented the classical masturbation conflict with the necessary requisite of the castration threat, because he knew this from case histories he had read and used to fool the judge, but believe me, he was a truck driver and not a student of psychoanalysis at all.

~~In which respect did he lie to me again?~~ When I asked him about bed-wetting, he denied any recollection of such experiences. In his treatment it came out that he had again felt compelled to lie, because he was afraid of me. He really remembered that during his whole childhood, up to the time he had his ruptured appendicitis, he was suffering from enuresis. This was ^{the occasion for} the castration threat in reality, but he was never threatened with castration by the grand-

What was expected was

The repetition consisted of his lying to them because he was afraid of being castrated, the same punishment he expected from the Judge and from me.

In his interviews with me, he lied the truth, when he stated that he was afraid of sexual contact with girls, that he had no sexual affairs, that he did not masturbate. The important lie, which he had to testify, was really a triumph for my psychoanalytic theoretical conscience. He had to admit to the probation officer that he lied to me about his masturbation in childhood. Actually he cannot remember anything about having masturbated or having been punished for masturbation. However, he had to admit another lie implied in his interview with me, which I consider closely associated with this invention of the masturbation conflict in his childhood.

If the defendant had been a student of psychoanalysis and not as a court psychiatrist described him, "of dull mentality," we could have thought he invented the classical masturbation conflict with the necessary requisite of the castration threat, because he knew this from case histories he had read and had to fool the Judge, but believe me, he was a truck driver and not a student of psychoanalysis at all.

In which respect did he lie to me again? When I asked him about bed-wetting, he denied any recollection of such experiences. In his treatment it came out that he had again felt compelled to lie, because he was afraid of me. He really remembered that during his whole childhood, up to the time he had his ruptured appendix, he was suffering from enuresis. This was the castration threat in reality, but he was never threatened with castration by the grand-

parents for masturbation - rather he was threatened with castration for wetting his pants and his bed. Once his grandfather showed him the knife with which he would cut off his penis.

The experience he mentioned in his interview with me, of his grandparents one morning holding some kind of a solemn trial with him, was confirmed by him in one of his psychoanalytic sessions. He even remembered more, that the grandparents arranged some sort of court session with other people present, to make it appear similar to a real judicial procedure. This pseudo-court at that time condemned him to castration, but put him on probation. However, as he later verified, this was not for masturbation, but for bed-wetting.

George brought up some childhood material which showed how his enuresis conflict brought him in contact with fire. At the time when he stopped bed-wetting, after the castration trial and the appendicitis, he developed a great interest in the fire station of his village. A dream and associations show that this fascination was stimulated by admiration and love for one particularly great fire engine which appeared to him like a person, because it had lots of water inside of it. The engine in the dream he saw and particularly the nozzle of the hose attached to it, reminded him of a penis. Projecting himself into a fire engine helped him to keep repressed the urge to urinate against the prohibition of the grandparents. He also remembered that at that time he had fleeting phantasies of being able to put out fires, just by urinating. He also reported remembering around that time that he had the idea that intercourse between women and men consisted of their urinating into each other.

parents for masturbation - whether he was threatened with castration for wetting his pants and his bed. Once his grandfather showed him the knife with which he would cut off his penis.

The experience he mentioned in his interview with me, of his grandparents one morning holding some kind of a solemn trial with him, was confirmed by him in one of his psychoanalytic sessions. He even remembered more, that the grandparents arranged some sort of court session with other people present, to make it appear similar to a real judicial procedure. This pseudo-court at that time condemned him to castration, but put him on probation. However, as

he later verified, this was not for masturbation, but for bed-wetting. George brought up some childhood material which showed how his nursemaid conflict brought him in contact with fire. At the time when he stopped bed-wetting, after the castration trial and the appendicitis, he developed a great interest in the fire station of his village. A dream and associations show that this fascination was stimulated by admiration and love for one particularly great

fire engine which appeared to him like a person, because it had lots of water inside of it. The engine in the dream he saw and particularly the nozzle of the hose attached to it, reminded him of a penis.

Projecting himself into a fire engine helped him to keep repressed the urge to urinate against the prohibition of the grandparents. He also remembered that at that time he had fleeting phantasies of being able to put out fires, just by urinating. He also reported remembering around that time that he had the idea that intercourse between women and men consisted of their urinating into each other.

The analysis showed that he also identified the fire engine with the big hose with his father's and grandfather's penises. We now understand why he used the red truck of his father when he drove onto the grass field and committed his incendiary acts. His father's red painted truck was a substitute for the loved fire engine of his childhood. The emotional relationship which George built up as a boy to this one fire engine, had a similar value to that described by Erikson in play configuration of children. By identifying himself with the fire engine with the big hose, admired by everyone not despite, but because of the fact that it eliminated a great amount of water, he could overcome his fear because of his untimely bed-wetting and imagine himself endowed with the power to fulfill an act of great social value by bed-wetting. Bed-wetting obviously had for him the meaning of urinating on his mother out of erotic desires, but also the meaning of discharging his pent-up destructive desires against his grandmother. These aggressive destructive desires against his torturous grandmother again proved to be of a devouring character. Also, the analysis of this incendiarist assured me of the correctness of my theory of the devouring instinct.

The patient had the following dream:

He was in his grandparents' home in the East, and a small bull-dog was let loose and ran up the stairs toward a woman who was crouched on the first landing. The woman called for help. He looked and saw that the dog had a tailor's measuring tape tied around its mouth so that it couldn't bite.

Of his associations, I mention only that the woman on the staircase was his grandmother, whom he hated, and of whom he was afraid. She

The analysis showed that he also identified the fire engine with the big hose with his father's and grandfather's penises. We now understand why he used the red truck of his father when he drove onto the grass field and committed his incendiary acts. His father's red painted truck was a substitute for the loved fire engine of his childhood. The emotional relationship which George built up as a boy to this one fire engine, had a similar value to that described by Erikson in play configuration of children. By identifying himself with the fire engine with the big hose, admired by everyone not despite, but because of the fact that it eliminated a great amount of water, he could overcome his fear because of his untimely bed-wetting and imagine himself endowed with the power to fulfill an act of great social value by bed-wetting. Bed-wetting obviously had for him the meaning of urinating on his mother out of erotic desires, but also the meaning of discharging his pent-up destructive desires against his grandmother. These aggressive destructive desires against his torturous grandmother again proved to be of a devouring character. Also, the analysis of this incendiarist assured me of the correctness of my theory of the devouring instinct.

The patient had the following dream:

He was in his grandparents' home in the East, and a small bull-dog was let loose and ran up the stairs toward a woman who was crouched on the first landing. The woman called for help. He looked and saw that the dog had a tailor's measuring tape tied around its mouth so that it couldn't bite.

Of his associations, I mention only that the woman on the staircase was his grandmother, whom he hated, and of whom he was afraid. She

deprived him of all pleasure and particularly exposed him for bed-wetting. He had loosened the dog against her but then he became frightened and he had tied the dog's mouth with a measuring tape. The patient had the feeling that he was in a similar mental condition, when he lit the fires. He first unleashed this destructive element and then, afraid of what would happen, he tried to ameliorate the effect. The fire becomes identified with the devouring dog. The patient identifies himself with the dog.

Another dream:

Patient is driving a truck down a steep grade. It is going fast and at first he is very happy. All of a sudden one of the front tires blows out, the truck goes over an embankment and the ~~vicinity~~ cab of the truck burns up his right side in the vicinity of his appendix. He is taken to the hospital and treated for his injury. Afterwards the highway patrol takes him back to the scene of the accident and he must explain how it happened.

I shall omit mentioning all the patient's associations to this dream and state only that the dream represents a symbolical condensation of the criminal act of incendiarism, and his appendicitis and appendectomy. Going down a steep grade is often a well-known symbol of the act of autoeroticism. The injury of the front wheels indicates the identifying of this autoeroticism with the act of self-destruction, turning the erotic energies against oneself. The self-injury manifested in the right side of his abdomen, his appendix, is caused by the fire which he had brought about himself. The surgeon is his grandfather as well as the judge. The place of the accident is the empty lot, the hidden place where

deprived him of all pleasure and particularly exposed him for being
 wetting. He had loosened the dog against her but then he became
 frightened and he had tied the dog's mouth with a measuring tape.
 The patient had the feeling that he was in a similar mental con-
 dition, when he lit the fires. He first unleashed this destructive
 element and then, afraid of what would happen, he tried to smother
 the effect. The fire becomes identified with the devouring dog. The
 patient identifies himself with the dog.

Another dream:

Patient is driving a truck down a steep grade.
 It is going fast and at first he is very happy.
 All of a sudden one of the front tires blows
 out, the truck goes over an embankment and the
 steering cap of the truck burns up his right
 side in the vicinity of his appendix. He is taken
 to the hospital and treated for his injury.
 Afterwards the highway patrol takes him back to
 the scene of the accident and he must explain
 how it happened.

I shall omit mentioning all the patient's associations to
 this dream and state only that the dream represents a symbolical
 condensation of the criminal act of incendiarism, and his appen-
 dicitis and appendectomy. Going down a steep grade is often a
 well-known symbol of the act of autoeroticism. The injury of the
 front wheels indicates the identifying of this autoeroticism with
 the act of self-destruction, turning the erotic energies against
 oneself. The self-injury manifested in the right side of his ap-
 pendix, his appendix, is caused by the fire which he had brought
 about himself. The surgeon is his grandfather as well as the judge.
 The place of the accident is the empty lot, the hidden place where

he performed autoeroticism.

This dream and its associations show that I was correct in assuming that George's psycho-physical organism attempted to consume the repressed hatred against the grandmother by displacing them from the mouth, which in the dream about the dog he had tied symbolically with a measuring tape, to the deeper inner strata of the gastro-intestinal system, to the region of the caecum.

Was I really wrong when I interpreted these furtive acts of George's as a substitute for an act of masturbation? I don't think so, but here we must use a conjecture. We know that the enuresis complex, manifested relatively late in a boy of eight or ten, means regression to an earlier stage of libido development and retreat from the phallic stage to the stage of urethral erotism. Usually the urethral erotism is revived when the phallus, which children of that age believe is common to both sexes, is threatened with castration. Therefore we are entitled to assume that George must have reacted to the separation from his mother with early infantile masturbation, to compensate for the loss of his mother. I have reason to assume that this must have been between his third and sixth year of life. ~~My assumption is that~~ George, as you may remember, told me that he came to live with his grandparents when he was six years old, because at that time his parents were divorced, and that he does not remember anything about the first six years of his life. However, as his father testified in court, he was divorced when the boy was three years old and that was the age at which the boy went to live with his grandparents. What he completely repressed therefore, ~~were~~

be performed autosexually.

This dream and its associations show that I was correct in assuming that George's psycho-physical organism attempted to connect the repressed hatred against the grandmother by displacing them from the mouth, which in the dream about the dog he had tied symbolically with a measuring tape, to the deeper inner strata of the gastro-intestinal system, to the region of the coccyx.

Was I really wrong when I interpreted these furtive acts of George's as a substitute for an act of masturbation? I don't think so, but here we must use a conjecture. We know that the enuresis complex, manifested relatively late in a boy of eight or ten, means regression to an earlier stage of libidinal development and retreat from the phallic stage to the stage of urethral erotism. Usually the urethral erotism is revived when the phallus, which children of that age believe is common to both sexes, is threatened with castration. Therefore we are entitled to assume that George must have reacted to the separation from his mother with early infantile masturbation, to compensate for the loss of his mother. I have reason to assume that this must have been between his third and sixth year of life. My assumption is that George, as you may remember, told me that he came to live with his grandparents when he was six years old, because at that time his parents were divorced, and that he does not remember anything about the first six years of his life. However, as his father settled in court, he was divorced when the boy was three years old and that was the age at which the boy went to live with his grandparents. What he completely repressed therefore, was

were the first three years of his living with his grandparents. I assume that the complete amnesia for these three years is due to the fact that at that time he was caught playing with his penis by his grandmother, was punished, repressed the masturbation impulse and substituted it through bed-wetting.

This looks like a screen memory and the proof of my assumption is that the patient in his treatment remembered with great joy and ⁱⁿ detail a little toy wagon which was his favorite toy in his grandparents' home. He recognized in his analysis that this little toy wagon represented to him his lost mother. I think we are also entitled to assume that this little toy wagon found its imaginary resurrection in the big fire engine with the imposing hose, a being with whom little George attempted to identify himself ^{as} ~~to~~ be his mother, because he could not have her, the phallic mother, whose existence denies the reality of castration.

were the first three years of his living with his grandparents.
 I assume that the complete amnesia for these three years is due
 to the fact that at that time he was caught playing with his penis
 by his grandmother, was punished, repressed the masturbation im-
 pulse and substituted it through bed-wetting.

This looks like a screen memory and the proof of my assumption
 is that the patient in his treatment remembered with great joy
 and detail a little toy wagon which was his favorite toy in his
 grandparents' home. He recognized in his analysis that this little
 toy wagon represented to him his lost mother. I think we are also
 entitled to assume that this little toy wagon found its imaginary
 resurrection in the big fire engine with the imposing nose, a
 being with whom little George attempted to identify himself as
 his mother, because he could not have her, the phallic mother,
 whose existence denies the reality of castration.