

Psychopathy revisited

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50.4. Psychopathy Revisited

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Psychopathic development belonged to the exceptional diagnoses within the realm of the neuroses (psychoanalysis/Freud). The diagnosis of neuroses was considered when the patient had considerable flaws in the superego structure, called lacunas. Such neuroses included emotional shortcomings, possibly caused by amygdala dysfunction, excessive self-centeredness, not caring for other people and having instrumental relations, only to fulfil their own needs. It was then believed that psychopathic development was the tragic

result of severe shortcomings of affection in childhood combined with bad environmental circumstances (poor upbringing and/or education). It was thus considered a severe developmental disorder, with a poor prognosis if not treated correctly. At that time the diagnosis was not limited to criminals or criminal behaviour, although psychiatrists considered the diagnosis as a severe risk for social maladjustment and criminal behaviour. What happened to the diagnosis since then? Is the diagnosis still valid or do we have to revisit the diagnosis psychopathic personality. The vicissitudes of this diagnosis, the way it disappeared from our diagnostic horizon (DSM - narcissistic and antisocial personality disorders) and the way it returned, but now in criminal law and mental health (the PCL-R). The outline will be shown of the similarities and differences in the diagnosis now and then, and the consequences for the prognosis.

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