

Chapter 18 — Epilepsy and Sex Perversion

from *Race Decadence:
An Examination of the Causes of Racial Degeneracy in the United States* (1922)

by William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S.

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Sources for Chapter 18, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) Paul Popenoe and Roswell Hill Johnson, *Applied Eugenics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918)
- (2) J. E. Wallis Wallin, *Problems of Subnormality* (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1917)
- (3) Charles Benedict Davenport, *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911)
- (4) Dr. W. A. Evans, “A Study of Epilepsy,” in *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 14, 1920
- (5) William Healy, A.B., M.D., *The Individual Delinquent: A Text-Book of Diagnosis and Prognosis for All Concerned in Understanding Offenders* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1915)

Key

- (a) Green indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) Yellow highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) Tan highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from one another.

- (e) **Bold type** indicates passages which Sadler copied verbatim, or nearly verbatim, from an uncited source.
- (f) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (g) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.
- (h) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake, in most cases brought about by Sadler's miscopying or misunderstanding his source.

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XVIII: EPILEPSY AND SEX PERVERSION

28:0.1 WE ENCOUNTER numerous cases difficult of classification in our study of mental defectiveness and its relations to society. Epilepsy is a fairly definite disease, but the various groups of sex perverts are much more difficult of either understanding or classification.

THE EPILEPTIC PROBLEM

IX: THE DYSGENIC CLASSES
(Popenoe&Johnson 176)

It has been calculated that the number of epileptics in the state of New Jersey, where the most careful investigation of the problem has been made, will double every 30 years under present conditions (P&J 179).

[contd] In dealing with both insanity and epilepsy, the eugenist faces the difficulty that occasionally people of the very kind whose production he most wishes to see encouraged—real geniuses—may carry the taint.

The exaggerated claims of the Italian anthropologist C. Lombroso and his school, in regard to the close relation between genius and insanity, have been largely disproved;

28:1.1 **It has been calculated that the number of epileptics in the state of New Jersey, where the most careful investigation of the problem has been made, will double every thirty years under present conditions.**

28:1.2 “In dealing with both insanity and epilepsy, the eugenist faces the difficulty that occasionally people of the very kind whose production he most wishes to see encouraged—real geniuses—may carry the taint.”

28:1.3 It is doubtful if we can always regard epileptics as we do the feeble-minded and advocate the application of general and universal restrictive measures to reproduction.

The exaggerated claims of the Italian anthropologist, C. Lombroso, and his school, in regard to the close relation between genius and insanity, have been largely disproved;

SOURCE

yet there remains little doubt that the two sometimes do go together; and such supposed epileptics as Mohammed, Julius Cæsar, and Napoleon will at once be called to mind.

To apply sweeping restrictive measures would prevent the production of a certain amount of talent of a very high order (P&J 179).

A field survey in two typical counties of Indiana (1916) showed that there were 1.8 recognizable epileptics per thousand population.

If these figures should approximately hold good for the entire United States, the number of epileptics can hardly be put at less than 150,000.

Some of them are not anti-social, but many of them are (P&J 179-80).

Feeble-mindedness and insanity were also included in the census mentioned, and the total number of the three kinds of defectives was found to be 19 per thousand in one county and 11.4 per thousand in the other.

This would suggest a total for the entire United States of something like one million (P&J 180).

18: RACE DECADENCE

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This would suggest a total for the entire United States of something like 1,000,000.

SOURCE

V: THE PROBLEM OF EPILEPSY IN ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL, EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL, AND MEDICAL RELATIONS (Wallis 350)

In order to throw further light on this problem the writer some years ago undertook a psycho-clinical study of every inmate in an entire colony for epileptics. As a result of this study

it appeared that about 85% of the inmates were feeble-minded from the standpoint of intelligence (including cases of both amentia and dementia),

the great majority (61.5%) classifying as high-grade cases (morons) (W 362-63).

In view of the above facts, namely, the obscure nature of the affection, its incurability, and its permanent psychopathic, psychasthenic, and sociopathic sequelæ,

I cannot agree with Binet and Simon that the problem of epilepsy—at least in the present unsatisfactory state of its therapy—is “essentially medical.”

Tanzi, according to my views, has stated the situation more fairly:

“Epileptics require not only medical treatment but also, and perhaps even more, care and supervision.”

While, therefore, I do not wish to minimize the value of the medical care and supervision of the epileptic by the skilled epileptologist,

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28:1.7 As a result of the recent study

of an entire epileptic colony,

it appeared that about 85 per cent of the inmates were feeble-minded from the standpoint of intelligence,

and that the great majority (61.5 per cent) were classified as high-grade morons.

28:1.8 In view of the above facts, namely, the obscure nature of the affection, its incurability, and its permanent psychopathic, psychasthenic, and sociopathic sequelæ,

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Tanzi, according to our views, has stated the situation more fairly:

“Epileptics require not only medical treatment but also, and perhaps even more, care and supervision.”

(See Fig. 15.) [Note: A photo of an epileptic colony.]

While, therefore, I do not wish to minimize the value of the medical care and supervision of the epileptic by the skilled epileptologist,

SOURCE

in fact, I deem such supervision absolutely essential so long as the epileptic continues to suffer from severe or frequent repeated convulsions,

it is clear to my mind that

society will not do its duty by the individual epileptic until it provides him with the type of educational and social training and care which will tend to make him maximally self-supporting,

and until it supplies the form of benevolent restraint and occupational provisions which are necessary both in the interest of the well-being of the person afflicted and the welfare of society (W 364).

III: THE INHERITANCE OF FAMILY TRAITS (Davenport 26)

19. EPILEPSY (Davenport 72)

This term is believed by many professional men to cover a number of distinct brain disorders that have in common the symptoms known as convulsions or “fits” (D 72).

The hereditary basis of epilepsy has been studied and, rather remarkably, it follows the same laws as feeble-mindedness.

Two epileptic parents probably produce only defective offspring, and the defect sometimes takes the form of epilepsy, sometimes that of feeble-mindedness.

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EPILEPSY AND HEREDITY

28:2.1 Epilepsy is a term believed by many physicians to cover a number of distinct brain disorders that have in common the symptom known as convulsions, or “fits.”

28:2.2 The heredity basis of epilepsy has been carefully studied and, almost without exception, it follows the same general laws as feeble-mindedness.

Two epileptic parents probably produce only defective offspring, the defect sometimes taking the form of epilepsy, sometimes that of feeble-mindedness.

SOURCE

It does not seem necessary to repeat the laws of heredity for epilepsy since in them the words epilepsy and feeble-mindedness are almost interchangeable (Figs. 38-43) (D 72).

[Source?]

“A STUDY OF EPILEPSY.” (W. A. Evans in *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 14, 1920)

The New York State Board of Charities recently published a bulletin written by Miss Smith of the Craig colony.

In this colony there are 1,500 epileptics.

Miss Smith investigated nine families to which there was an unusual amount of epilepsy (E 6).

[contd] In these nine families there were 200 individuals into whose health history and habits inquiry was made.

Of these 63 were found to be feeble minded.

Some of the conclusions to be found in the study are as follows:

[contd] Inheritance plays a good part in epilepsy.

18: RACE DECADENCE

It does not seem necessary to repeat the laws of heredity for epilepsy, since in them the words of epilepsy and feeble-mindedness are almost interchangeable.

The epilepsies which are not inherited are probably not true epilepsy—but rather pseudo-epilepsy or some other form of convulsive seizures which are so often erroneously called epilepsy. The hereditary nature of most types of genuine epilepsy is now generally recognized.

A STUDY OF EPILEPSY IN NEW YORK

28:3.1 The New York State Board of Charities recently published a bulletin regarding the Craig colony.

In this colony there are 1,500 epileptics.

They investigated nine families in which there was an unusual amount of epilepsy.

In these nine families there were 200 individuals into whose history and habits inquiry was made.

Of these 63 were found to be feeble-minded.

Some of the conclusions to be found in the study are as follows:

28:3.2 Inheritance plays an important part in epilepsy.

SOURCE

Gowers estimated that to it was 40 per cent of the total influences causing the disease.

Kraepelin made an estimate of 75 per cent.

The difference was due to the fact that Kraepelin took into account more mental and nervous states than did Gowers (E 6).

[contd] In this study there was a history of chronic alcoholism in at least one parent or grandparent in one-third of the cases, a history of epilepsy in one parent or grandparent in one-fifth of the cases and a history of insanity in one-tenth (E 6).

It was shown that where there were the weak traits of a poor stock in families where there was epilepsy those traits were emphasized (E 6).

If two neuropathic, neurotic individuals married there was a much more than average possibility that some of the progeny would have epilepsy (E 6).

[contd] The conditions of mental and nervous weakness and instability out of which epilepsy grew and which were liable to grow out of epilepsy were

insanity, alcoholism, the established migraine habit, and various convulsive disorders.

If in a family tree there was any undue amount of any of these disorders there was likely to be an unusual amount of epilepsy also (E 6).

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28:3.4 Dr. W. A. Evans in summarizing this investigation says:

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[contd] Of the cases of epilepsy investigated 74 to 85 per cent developed before 20 years of age and of this group one-half developed before 5 years of age.

Miss Smith divided epileptics into three groups.

First, the cases which develop early.

In this group inheritance is a considerable factor.

Second, adolescents, and third, epilepsy first developing late in life.

The disease among those of the third group is frequently associated with a history of alcoholism, syphilis, and arterio-sclerosis.

In one-fourth of the cases of epilepsy investigated there was a history of injury at the time of birth (E 6).

[contd] The estimate was made that there are 175,000 epileptics in the United States, 6,860 being registered in New York City (E 6).

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28:3.6 Of the cases of epilepsy investigated 74 to 85 per cent developed before 20 years of age and of this group one-half developed before 5 years of age.

Doctors divide epileptics into three groups.

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In this group inheritance is a considerable factor.

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The disease among those of the third group is frequently associated with a history of alcoholism, syphilis, and arteriosclerosis.

In one-fourth of the cases of epilepsy investigated there was a history of injury at the time of birth.

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SEX PERVERTS

28:4.1 No discussion of feeble-mindedness, moronism, etc., would be complete without some consideration being given to the question of sexual perversions. There is no way of knowing what percentage of our population is abnormal in this respect, but the frequent crimes that are committed against young boys, pointing to perversions more or less homosexual in their nature;

and the terrible outrages perpetrated every now and then against little girls, showing perverted sex leanings along other lines, all serve to indicate that there is no inconsiderable number of these abnormally sexed individuals to be found in the general population.

28:4.2 These sex perverts cannot always be regarded as belonging to the feeble-minded or moron group. They are sometimes quite thoroughly normal mentally, when subjected to every possible test, and only show their abnormality or degeneracy when it comes to the matter of sex behavior and sex relations.

28:4.3 No doubt many of the sex crimes that shock modern society from time to time are committed by those who are mentally defective, by morons, and even in some cases by high-grade imbeciles or idiots. But on the whole, these sex crimes are committed by a different group of abnormal individuals, by a class of defectives who may be said to belong to and constitute the "third sex," in that they are so thoroughly abnormal that they can scarcely be classed sexually as either typical males or females.

28:4.4 While habitual obscenity of thought and long-continued bad sex practices may sometimes lead up to some form of sex perversion; nevertheless we think, as a general rule, these cases are more largely hereditary. In the case of these homosexual perverts, it would seem that an individual may be born with a man's body but, sexually speaking, with a woman's brain. They, therefore, develop sex affection for those of their own physical sex.

SOURCE

18: RACE DECADENCE

Mild sex perversion of this sort can be acquired and is not always hereditary, and in these cases it is more or less curable. Many of our tramps are sex perverts of the homosexual order.

28:4.5 It is the author's opinion that the sex perverts who perpetrate the most of our outrageous crimes of this nature are a class belonging to the feeble-minded group as a whole, and who have directly inherited their brutal and perverted sex tendencies. It is certain that this unfortunate group, as a class, is much more numerous than we are willing to believe. One thing is certain, men, in particular, who are once convicted of a crime of this kind, should not be turned loose to prey upon innocent childhood. They should be segregated or otherwise so confined in some special colony as to render them incapable of further mischief, for in most cases of this sort, once a sex pervert, always a sex pervert.

ABNORMAL SEXUALISM

XI: ABNORMAL SEXUALISM (Healy 400)

We are frequently at a loss to decide what mainly underlies any appearance of abnormal sexualism in the individual, or at least to decide in what proportion various possible causes may have been effective.

The mental and the physiological elements are much mixed.

Who can tell whether the person who exhibits anti-social sexualistic tendencies is the victim of an excessive output from certain internally secreting glands,

28:5.1 We are frequently at a loss to decide what mainly underlies any appearance of abnormal sexualism in a certain individual, or at least to decide in what proportion various possible causes may have been operative.

Who can tell whether the person who exhibits antisocial sexual tendencies is the victim of an excessive output from internally secreting glands,

SOURCE

or of obsessive mental imagery, or of predisposing anatomical conditions, or of various environmental and physical experiences?

Frequently still more difficult is it to decide between innate tendencies as a whole, some of which may be derived from heredity, and the effect of environment (H 401).

§243. Hypersexualism. (Healy 402)

The overwhelming attraction which negro men occasionally have for white girls and women, directly leading in our social life to delinquency, is to be explained by the hypersexualism of the female attracted.

One has seen instances in which the arguments of social ostracism, race antipathy, and religious faith have availed nothing against this extraordinary impulse (H 403).

[contd] Undoubtedly hypersexualism is a vastly greater cause in early life of other than sex offenses than it is later.

The morally disturbing influence would naturally be much more during the years when there is less than normal adult self-control (H 403).

Mere repression, such as is undertaken in all sorts of penal institutions, frequently turns the individual from seeking one kind of gratification to another that may be more disastrous mentally.

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Frequently still more difficult is it to decide between innate tendencies as a whole, some of which may be derived from heredity, and others from the effect of environment.

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which Negro men occasionally have for white girls and women, directly leading in our social life to delinquency, is to be explained by the hyper-sexualism of the female attracted.

One has seen instances in which the arguments of social ostracism, race antipathy, and religious faith have availed nothing against this extraordinary impulse.

28:5.3 Dr. William Healy remarks that:

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Mere repression, such as is undertaken in all sorts of penal institutions, frequently turns the individual from seeking one kind of gratification to another that may be more disastrous mentally.

SOURCE

Punishment does not destroy in these sexualistic individuals such deep-set mental and physical inclinations (H 404).

§244. Sexualistic Obsessions and Impulsions. (Healy 405)

The theft of articles for fetishism, that is for their sexually symbolic purposes, is well known (H 405).

The remarkable self-abnegating impulse which leads women to become the abject slaves of men, even to the extent of turning over earnings gained from sex immorality, is of sexualistic origin.

The power of the “cadet” over women cannot be understood unless this psychological phase of their relationship is taken into account.

Some women find satisfaction in actually suffering at the hands of their masters.

This subsection directly gives opportunity for development of sexual vice (H 405).

The impulse to peculiarly violate little girls, often without rape, is one which unfortunately is not infrequently met with in court work.

At the risk of discovery and imprisonment the offense may be repeated over and over, and in this shows the force of an obsessional impulse (H 406).

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At the risk of discovery and imprisonment the offense may be repeated over and over, and in this shows the force of an obsessional impulse.”

MASTURBATION

§245. **Masturbation.** (Healy 407)

[contd] We heartily agree with the judges, police and probation officers, and parents whom we have heard, many of them, insist on the effect of masturbation in causing other delinquencies. **We decry exaggeration of this subject because in some ways the habit, like other single factors, is not nearly so important as has been made out.**

Then, too, our experience in the neurological clinic

shows us the truth of what has frequently been observed, namely, that worry about masturbation frequently does more harm than the habit itself.

But in our study **of young offenders who are well started in careers of delinquency,**

we have been **profoundly impressed with the break-down of will, of physical condition, and of general moral fibre that is correlated with the excessive practice of masturbation.**

We have found it **of the utmost importance as a causative factor in girls as well as in boys.**

The extent to which it stands out clearly may be seen by our statistics, § 95;

in over 10 per cent. the habit was practiced to such a degree that it was to be fairly considered a definite cause.

28:6.1 **We decry exaggeration on this subject because in some ways the habit, like other single factors, is not nearly so important as has been represented.**

Then, too, **our** experience in dealing with a large number of nervous patients,

shows us the truth of what has frequently been observed, namely, that worry about masturbation frequently does more harm than the habit itself.

On the other hand, Healy

in his study **of young offenders who were well started in careers of delinquency,**

was **profoundly impressed with the breakdown of will, of physical condition, and of general moral fiber that is correlated with the excessive practice of masturbation.**

He regarded it as **of the utmost importance as a causative factor in girls as well as in boys.**

The extent to which it stands out clearly may be seen by his statistics.

In over 10 per cent the habit was practiced to such a degree that it was to be fairly considered a definite cause.

SOURCE

In many other instances the practice may have been a habit, but we did not learn that it was anything of a factor in producing delinquency (H 407).

The connection between masturbation and anti-social offenses seems to be established along the following lines—the effect varying greatly, of course, with environmental circumstances and innate tendencies of the individual.

The act in itself is antisocial.

The individual feels this, and realizes the stigma which indulgence places upon him.

His constant efforts at secrecy in this regard may lead to moral break-down.

The sequence is not difficult to understand.

First there is weak self-indulgence, then secretiveness and lies, then avoidance of duties and search for stimulation and artificial energy.

The effect of masturbation in directly promoting several forms of anti-social behavior among young people is one of the most marked phenomena to be observed in court work (H 408).

§246. Early Sex Experiences. (Healy 410)

[contd] It will be noted in our statistical analysis, § 95, that

at least 13 per cent. of our cases had encountered some early sex experience sufficiently serious to be accounted by the student a causative factor of delinquency.

18: RACE DECADENCE

In many other instances the practice may have been a habit, but they did not learn that it was anything of a factor in producing delinquency.

Healy further says:

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His constant efforts at secrecy in this regard may lead to moral breakdown.

The sequence is not difficult to understand.

First there is weak self-indulgence, then secretiveness and lies, then avoidance of duties and search for stimulation and artificial energy.

The effect of masturbation in directly promoting several forms of antisocial behavior among young people is one of the most marked phenomena to be observed in court work.

28:6.3 It should be noted that

at least 13 per cent of delinquents in Chicago courts had encountered some early sex experience sufficiently serious to be regarded by the psychologic experts as a causative factor of delinquency.

SOURCE

In these cases the trouble arose from the teachings of other children and adults of both sexes, as much as from actual bad sex practices with others. In children the unfortunate introduction into sex life came often from persons of the same sex (H 410).

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SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

1. It has been calculated (in New Jersey) that the number of epileptics will double every thirty years under present methods and conditions.

2. Epilepsy is usually associated with mental defectiveness; but not always. It is sometimes connected with genius—as shown in Mohammed, Caesar, and Napoleon.

3. A survey of Indiana showed almost 2 epileptics per 1,000 of population. This would mean about 150,000 for the whole country.

4. A study of one colony showed 85 per cent feeble-minded; 61.5 per cent being classified as high-grade morons.

5. Epileptics require colonization, supervision, and proper medical treatment, together with suitable education and training.

6. Epilepsy is more of a symptom complex than a disease. But whatever its protean character, it is largely hereditary.

7. A study of the Craig colony shows in the ancestors: feeble-mindedness, epilepsy, alcoholism, neuroticism, and migraine.

8. Three-fourths of epilepsy develops before 20 years; and one-half of this before 5 years of age.

9. There are 6,860 known cases in New York City. This would mean 175,000 in the country.

10. Sex perverts do not always belong to the feeble-minded group. Many are normal as regards all nonsex matters.

11. Some sex perverts are homosexual from birth; they belong to the so-called "third sex"—they are physically of one sex, while mentally belonging to the opposite sex.

12. While bad and unnatural sex practices may lead to sex perversion, nevertheless, most of these cases (homosexual ones) are predisposed to their vice by inheritance.

13. Out-and-out sex perverts when once convicted of crime against children, should not be turned loose further to prey upon the innocent.

14. Hyper-sexualism is responsible for many criminal assaults, delinquency, and vice. This is the explanation of the nefarious "cadet" system.

15. Masturbation, while associated with some phases of delinquency is probably more often an effect than a cause. Its influence has undoubtedly been greatly overestimated.

16. Thirteen per cent of the delinquents in Chicago courts have encountered some early and unfortunate sex experience, sufficiently serious to be considered a factor in their delinquency