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DYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY  
COURSE TEXT

JAMES A. MURPHY

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# DYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY

## LESSON I

### INTRODUCTION

#### THE PROBLEM

This twentieth century has been marked by enormous strides in all branches of the physical sciences. From atomic physics to astrophysics, from electronics to neu-tronics, from rocketry to jet propulsion. These advances have placed into man's grasp hitherto unknown powers and forces. Powers which, if used for good, can transform this planet into a lush paradise capable of supporting billions of people in plenty. Powers which, if used for evil, can destroy forever all trace of man and his works. The existence of such awesome forces has brought forward and emphasized problems which previously, while pressing were nevertheless supportable. These as well as newer problems created by such modern transportation miracles as the jet plane and rocket missile can be ignored no longer. They must be solved and quickly if life on this globe is to have any chance of surviving the next few decades.

What are these problems which demand immediate and effective solution? They are the age-old ones of poverty, despotism, war and pestilence, hunger and disease. The sciences which are supposedly concerned with solving these problems, the social sciences, have not done so. The science of the poverty of material possessions, economics, offers no hope to the underprivileged, exploited masses. The science of the poverty of real leadership, political science, offers even less hope to the citizen that he will be able to select men who will truly be his representatives in the council chambers of the land. Nor has it any solution to the prospect of a nuclear holocaust other than deterrence.

Nor is psychology, the science which is concerned with what may well be the root problem of all, the poverty of the mind or spirit, in any better position than the others. There are so many different and conflicting schools of psychology, that it is difficult for adherents of the various schools to communicate with each other much less understand what is being meant.

to communicate with each other, much less understand what<sup>3</sup> is being conveyed. Each separate branch or school of psychology has its own jargon or terminology, often conflicting with those of another school. Each stress different aspects of the problem and disagree as to aims and goals.

Is it any wonder then, that psychology is considered one of the orphan sciences? Modern Psychology is a veritable Tower of Babel, thrusting out in all directions in vain attempts to solve the mysteries of the psyche, while the very foundations upon which psychology is laid are at best shaky and insecure. Most of the terms in current use have never been subjected to careful scrutiny, but have been incorporated into the pre-existing scheme without regard as to whether these terms are true or not.

So, while tremendous gains have been made in the physical sciences, the social sciences have been lagging sadly behind. This lag in the very sciences which have most to do with enabling man to incorporate the new advances into existing frameworks is mainly the reason why our modern age is having such trouble adapting to the new ways of life. New inventions, new technologies, new nations and new ideologies demand new concepts and new ideas in the social sciences which will enable us to cope with the manifold problems which they bring in being. We cannot maintain our nineteenth century ways and institutions in the face of twentieth century innovations and technological changes.

One of the surest signs that man is becoming less and less capable of coping with the increased pressures and stepped-up changes which these strides in the conquest of nature has brought about, is the vast increase in mental illness and disturbance. From every part of the civilized world come reports of greater mental breakdown under increasing stress and tension of modern life. There are, in isolated and primitive areas of the world, tribes where mental illness is a minor problem. Mostly in those areas which are uninfluenced by progress and technology. Fairly low rates of mental illness are reported in Australia, in Bali, in the South Sea Islands and among the Esquimes in the far north. These people still pursue their old habits and folkways almost unaffected by the white man and his ways.

Admittedly there have been advances in the social sciences, and in psychology in particular, but the extent of these gains is far below that which is necessary to even keep abreast of the mounting need for new methods of treatment and diagnosis. While discoveries have been made, and are being made, disappointments have also followed disappointments and new treatments which at their introduction were hailed as "miraculous" turned out later to be no more or less effective than sugar pills or placebos.

Although much has been left unsolved in the fields of social science and human behavior, many of the problems which plagued our ancestors have been solved by brilliant application of scientific methods of analysis to the puzzling and seemingly unpredictable behavior of material particles and heavenly bodies. The first sciences to which scientific methods were applied were the ones furthest removed from man and his environment. These were astronomy and mathematics. The ancient Egyptians, and later, the Greeks made systematic observations and kept reliable records of the movements of the stars and other celestial bodies. They discovered that certain phenomena were recurring so regularly as to be predictable.

There is evidence that priests in the reign of the Egyptian Pharaoh Amenhotep could accurately predict the flooding of the Nile, eclipses, and other natural events. Later on, as man became more daring in his observations and analyses, he began to turn his attention to what was occurring here on earth, and the sciences of physics, geology and hydraulics arose. Also, as war became more and more a part of life, weaponry, armour development led to metallurgy, chemistry and a host of allied crafts.

Each new advance in man's understanding of the natural laws governing events on this planet was resisted tooth and nail by the ever-present forces of reaction, the established church and state. The earliest innovators and questioners of the old established "truths" were often crucified or burned at the stake for heresy. The gains man has made in his continuous uphill struggle against the reactionary elements in society have been costly and bitterly contested, and all the time the struggle has

been towards that last bastion of reaction man himself. The history of the warfare of Science with Theology has been one of constant striving towards applying reason, logic and scientific discipline to the study of man himself, his human reactions and ways of getting a living.

It is only within the last century that the humanities have been put upon a scientific footing. And even yet, they are far from being on a par with the physical sciences such as physics and chemistry. Even so, most of the courses in the social sciences and humanities that are currently given in colleges and universities leave much to be desired, and are regarded by the students as being dull, difficult and diffuse. These courses are to be taken for credit only and are not worth the time.

From all parts of the civilized world come reports of a rising tide of mental disturbance, of soaring suicide rates, of wanton murder, rape and arson. Mental hospitals are filled to overflowing, while many more new hospitals languish on drawing boards, lacking funds and space to build them. Increasing numbers of doctors are coming to realize that a large component of real physical disease is psychosomatically or mentally determined. This means that so great is the power of the sick or failing mind that it can actually produce organic damage, interfere with body processes, grow extra deposits of fat, create hormonal imbalances and wreak havoc generally. Some of our doctors are so narrow in their thinking as to reject the tremendous power that the central nervous system exerts on all parts and functions of the body. Such doctors are typified by the specialist who only searches for the local causes of disease, who so narrows his visual field as to single out a small gland or isolated section of the body for study, neglecting or pooh-poohing the mental factor as being unimportant or secondary.

and There is mental disturbance among rich and poor, married and single, and under a host of other conditions, believed by some schools of psychology to be important if not deciding factors in precipitating or bringing on mental illness. There are almost as many different schools of psychology today as there are different practitioners of the art. There are champions of the heredity as well as the enviro-

Comment theory. Rival schools of thought of this or that persuasion blast the errors of the other camps while glossing over the holes in their own. Truly the science of psychology is in its infancy if it has as yet been born at all. It would be like chemists arguing hotly over whether the shape of the test tube influenced the weight of the sample inside.

That there is some aspect or aspects of the mind or its functioning which leaves it vulnerable to malfunction, no one contests, it is in deciding which one or ones are vital that the difficulty arises. While studies have been undertaken to determine if some common environmental factor is significant in triggering or causing mental illness, none, so far as is known have been able to pin-point any one or several conditions which are a necessary or contributing factor in mental breakdown. Elaborate statistical surveys and analyses have also been made covering almost every facet of human life, without singling out or correlating anything significant.

There is an old saying in science, "Nature is a blabbermouth, if you only ask the right question she will answer you correctly every time, but if you ask the wrong question you will always get either no answer at all or an erroneous one." We can therefore only conclude that the correct psychological questions have yet to be asked, or if they have been the results have not been published.

The association of increasing mental imbalance with the increase of education and knowledge is one of the challenges of our time. The mere fact that such evidently unbalanced men as Hitler and Stalin can seize control of the reins of government and lead men into blood purges and disastrous wars is alarming, nay terrifying. The liability of this type of maniac having control of modern nuclear weapons is even more terrifying. Nor does the madness have to be at the top level of national policy to pose a threat to world safety, as several current best sellers have depicted all too vividly. Even a lowly private who loses control in some vital nuclear installation could well trigger an atomic holocaust. Besides the prospect of future warfare using mind weapons can only be imagined.

To educate psychopaths is to equip ruthless men with means to carry out their warped plans and grandiose schemes for the ruination of mankind. At the same time to impoverish honest men and embitter them makes the path of these charlatans and rogues easier. There must be some very powerful force operating in our society now which can influence in some as yet unknown way normal, happy, playful children so that they become monsters, killers, maniacs and misfits. It is one of the unexplained facts of human life that children have a very low rate of mental disease. Starting at adolescence, the incidence of psychic illness increases rapidly, to reach its maximum at around forty.

The problems of mental functioning are vital and must be solved if we are to advance further in the struggle against mental poverty. The effects of our neglect of this all-important subject is painfully evident on all sides. There has not yet been received an adequate solution which accounts for all the facts and points to a clear and simple remedy. This is illustrated by the many and varied attempts to explain mental disfunction and the therapies used at present to deal with them. They all exhibit not merely a divergence between common sense and expertese, but also show that the agreement which should exist between those who profess to the same general theory breaks up into an anarchy of bitterly argued opinion and vituperation when it comes to the practical application of their theories.

Upon high psychologic authority we are told that mental illness is due to overwork, upon equally high authority, that it is due to idleness. One school of thought attributes malfunction of the mind to internal conflicts, while an opposite school blames soft living, laziness and lack of challenge. According to still a different school it is caused by poor interpersonal relationships, while for another it arises from too much human closeness. Various concepts, such as the Id, Ego and Superego, engrams, the archetype, the Unconscious, birth trauma, anxiety, etc., have been brought forth by theorists to explain what it is that goes wrong with the mental apparatus. So the professors disagree and the ideas that there is conflict between one part of the mind and another that heredity makes

character and health. while environment is secondary gain general acceptance laymen, and lead to misunderstandings about psychology and related fields. All this makes the work of the serious scientist less effective than it could be. Such ideas and even more grotesque ones can only lead to harm. They can even undo some of the good work which is being done by devoted and dedicated men. But such false ideas and erroneous impression cannot be successfully combatted until scientific psychology comes up with some consistent and effective answers to the vexing problems in the field.

The answers to such questions do lie within the scope of psychology, and such a study rightly undertaken must yield adequate solutions to the many questions awaiting replies. Psychology is not a set of dogmas, but an explanation of certain facts. It is the science which given a mass of accumulated data, seeks to trace out mutual cause and effect relations much as the other physical sciences do. It lays its foundations upon firm ground and only builds upon this foundation as true relationships and natural laws are discovered.

The basic logical tools which any scientist has at his disposal are identification, separation, combination and cataloguing. Once he has defined his terms and delimited his sphere of action or field of study, then he searches for recurring phenomena or cycles of activity. Events that repeat themselves continually under the proper conditions. Once he has discovered unvarying sequences of action and reaction, of one event invariably leading to another, he is then in a position to formulate a hypothesis or postulate to explain this seeming cause and effect relationship. His next step is to put his hypothesis to the test of experiment. Under carefully controlled laboratory conditions he sets up experiments which are calculated to put the severest strain on his hypothesis. In other words, the true scientist does not put his favorite theory or guess to an easy test which it may pass readily, no, on the contrary, a really dedicated scientist will seek to subject his pet theory to the most exacting test his brain can devise. Only then will he feel somewhat confident of the result he obtains. In addition, he invites his colleagues to try and abolish, if they can, the foundations of



his hypothesis, and cooperate in serious research by others to do just that. In a sense, the only deep-seated belief that the scientist has is an abiding faith in the power and value of questioning and testing new ideas and suggestions with a view to discovering the good, if present, and discarding the bad.

It is unfortunate that in the field of psychology we cannot test our favorite theories by recourse to laboratory experiments as readily as they can be carried out in the other more materialistic sciences. One cannot use human beings coldly & scientifically as we can employ chemicals in a test tube. Yet there are many things that a skilled researcher can do. As psychological theory progresses, more and more ways are being found to test out educated guesses, and this without interfering in any way with the subject's welfare or freedom. Largely it is a test of the psychological tester whether or not he can devise non-destructive tests of his theories, and postulates. Here too, a rich imagination is a big help, because we can mentally combine, separate, analyse and dissect, add or subtract forces, factors or ingredients of known action or effect, without in any way endangering or even needing a subject. Ultimately, the criterion of any hypothesis is its practical applicability, or "does it work?"

The task I have set for myself in this book is to try to solve by as scientific a method as I can avail myself of the problem stated above. I shall seek out the law or laws of psychology which associates mental poverty with maturation, which explains why most people are merely using a small fraction of their psychic potential. I believe that once this paradox is explained, we shall also be able to explain many other hitherto puzzling and aberrant behavior traits of human beings. Properly undertaken and carefully pursued, such an investigation must reach conclusions which are in accord with all the facts, which stand up under the worst tests human intelligence can devise and correlate with other sciences. In the sequence of world phenomena there are natural laws which, however poorly they are understood and how invisible they may be to human perception, are surely present, exerting their eternal pressure to maintain universal harmony and order

. To sum up, present day psychology does not adequately explain mental function or disfunction, it does not accord with deep-seated perceptions and understanding of men; it is often rooted in mysticism, it is taught as though its truths were unrelated or even non-existent; it has failed to make progress in popular thought, which the truth, however unpleasant must make. It has been labeled as a pseudo-science by many educated and thinking men. Such a sad state of affairs needs to be remedied, and it can only be remedied by taking a fresh approach, by getting a new slant. There is some false assumption being made in the basic beginning steps of the analysis. Perhaps some overlooked factor of force is operating which makes objective thought in this area difficult.

Like Henry George, I propose in this enquiry "to beg no question, to shrink from no conclusion, but to follow truth wherever it may lead. Upon us is the responsibility for seeking the law, for in the very heart of civilization today, women faint and little children moan. But what that law may be is not our affair. If the conclusions that we reach run counter to our prejudices, let us not flinch; if they challenge institutions that have long been deemed wise, and natural, let us not turn back."

At this point in introductions it is customary to give credits to various people who have assisted the author in one way or another in preparing his work. Unfortunately I have worked almost all alone preparing this book. It stems out of courses which I have given fairly regularly at the Henry George School over a period of years. Students have continually requested that they be given the name of some textbook which they could use as supplementary reading for classroom study. I honestly could not recommend a single book either by authoritative writers or by more popularly oriented psychologists. The ideas expressed within these pages are the result of many years of reading, thinking as well as teaching, not only psychology, but political science, political economy and other social sciences. It has occurred to me that it was high time to give these neglected subjects the scientific analysis they deserve and need. I am in the course of writing books on economics and politics. In all these works, I have attempted to fol-

low the lead of Henry George and, by using his masterful method of analysis of a problem, to try to solve the very many and pressing questions in all these fields. I only hope that the reception this book receives will be different from that accorded Mr. George's masterwork, Progress and Poverty. Though one of the all-time best sellers in economic literature, running over 3 million copies, it is seldom if ever mentioned in academic circles, and has been generally accorded the silent treatment by the press, radio and TV. Perhaps the people in positions of power and influence see in his ideas threats to their security. Or perhaps it is due to other causes, who can say? It is clear that George does not appeal to any one group or special interest, but to all men. Therein may lie the explanation for his lack of popularity. An appeal to everyone is an appeal to no one, this could very well be the case with Mr. George.

This book contains no appeal to all men nor to any one group or profession. It is rather, written for the self-curious, for the inquiring mind, for the person who wishes to know more about himself and how his inner machinery works. Also, how it can possibly be made to function better. Nor is there any attack real or implied in these pages against any group or Profession now practicing in any or all of the many branches of psychology. The author is only against reaction, ignorance and stereotyped thinking in all fields of endeavor. Unfortunately in psychology there is a much higher incidence of such reactionary and stereotyped thinking than in related fields. It has long been known that the people who "go in for" psychology, usually have some psychic quirk of their own which impells them to associate with other birds of like feather. It is true that in the case of the author, there were many impelling reasons why he was attracted to psychology other than scientific curiosity.

Probably the better attitude to take toward any new and untried scheme or principle which at first glance seems to bring into question all the fundamental and time-honored principles long accepted is to conditionally agree to consider it on an as if basis. In other words, ask one's self suppose what this man is saying is true, what would be the consequences of assuming for a moment its truth and see just where it leads? In this way one can learn and yet

avoid the pitfalls that await the gullible and novelty-for-novelty's sake dilettante. As mentioned before, the only scientific attitude to take in any controversy is one of sceptical acceptance, subject to further testing and later findings.

The author asks no more of the reader than this, that he take everything set forth in this book with a grain of salt, and if possible, try to use and test out the hypotheses outlined herein. If they fail to meet the supreme test do not hesitate to discard them. If they work, no matter what opposition may arise to their use, don't falter, but persevere. If they prove to be false and misleading, or worse, harmful and dangerous, do not hesitate to wage a hard and dogged struggle against these doctrines. To remain silent in the face of injustice is to condone, if not to approve such infamy. To fight on, when all seem against you may be folly, but at least your self-pride will not be bent. Let us hope that martyrs will not be necessary, yet if they become necessary, then let them be forthcoming.