

DYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY
LESSON II
CURRENT DOCTRINE OF PSYCHOLOGY
ITS INSUFFICIENCY

Reducing to its essentials the problem we have set out to solve, it could be reworded to state the following:

WHY IS IT THAT WITH INCREASING EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE AVAILABLE TO MAN IN SOCIETY, DOES THE GENERAL LEVEL OF MENTAL EFFICIENCY REMAIN SO LOW?

or to enlarge on the idea, why is it that in spite of the fact that most people live longer, are exposed to more experience and data than our ancestors ever were, nevertheless the average level of mental functioning is on a par with a mental age of twelve to fifteen. Almost all schools of psychology are agreed that most persons are using but a fraction of their potential abilities, and are functioning far below the optimum level for modern age living. In addition to this problem, vexing enough as it is, there is also the question of the rapid rise in the deterioration of the mental health of the general population. Although more and more mental hospitals are going up, there is still not enough to meet the need. It seems as though there is some powerful influence at work in our age which is exerting such pressure upon people as to cause mental breakdown. Many doctors believe that perhaps a virus or some hitherto unknown substance beyond detection by present instruments is responsible for this sorry state. Perhaps one of the newly discovered superpower chemical substances called pheromones may be partly responsible.

The explanation of the current orthodox schools of psychology is that the level of intelligence or index of mental functioning is determined mostly by inherited traits, traits which cannot be altered short of having different parents than one actually had. The presently accepted belief in intelligence tests, (I.Q.) personality tests, as well as a whole gamut of tests for measuring a lot of obscure facets of the mind is firmly rooted in the idea of the permanence of these traits and the impossibility of in any way changing them. According to the thinking of those make up these tests, these characteristics remain constant

throughout a person's life. There is also an alternative school of thought which maintains that while the infant may have equivalent natural endowments as far as hearing, speech, memory etc. are concerned, different environments and methods of bringing up children will produce different abilities and personalities. Once fully grown, however, very little change in mental functioning or what is called the mental set can be expected.

In current thought this doctrine is fairly generally accepted. The schools which are not fully in accord with this belief are mainly those concerned with clinical or medical psychology. Mainly because they have the job of doing something about correcting or treating mental or psychosomatic ills. Among the meliorist or "something can be done about it" schools are the major psychotherapy camps such as the Freudian, Jungian, Existentialist, Gestalt and Conditioned Reflex therapies. These practitioners among others are almost universally agreed that mental function can be improved and mental illness treated successfully, but by "their" method only. Most of these treatments are long, arduous, time consuming and last but not least, expensive. The rules for these therapies were usually laid down by the founder of the particular school and must not be departed from. However, most if not all of these various schools of therapy admit that their techniques do not work in all cases, and do not work at all for some categories of mental illness.

While striking successes have been achieved with certain categories of diseases, such as psychosomatic complaints, hysterias and mild neuroses, the greater part of the serious conditions such as depression and psychosis are resistant to almost all forms of therapy except electro shock and drugs. Practically none of the "talking it out" types of psychotherapy work for the severely disturbed patient in mental hospitals. The vast majority of our mental hospitals rely most heavily upon the modern "wonder" drugs, tranquilizers, psychenergizers, psychedylic agents etc. to manage their patients. And here again, there is only relief of symptoms so long as the drug is given, for except in a few cases, when the drug is withdrawn, back come the old symptoms in all their ori-

ginal intensity. This difference in belief between the two schools is probably due in large measure to the fact that the behavioral psychologist is largely concerned with the normal healthy human being, while the clinician is constantly being called on by distraught relatives of disturbed persons to "do something". As a result a large body of literature has grown up treating of the problems faced by the clinical psychotherapist in dealing with mental cases.

Until recently, there was seldom much that could be done, and even today, a large part of the treatment of the mental patient is custodial, meaning in essence, no treatment at all, unless you call eating, sleeping, and being watched 24 hours a day treatment. And yet surprisingly many people recover from quite severe breakdowns with nothing more than this being done. Most of the procedures for treating the disordered mind are too long and costly to be used on any but a few of the wealthier patients. In addition, most hospitals are woefully understaffed and too over-populated to provide more than the bare minimum of therapy for their patients.

In the field of behaviorial psychology, or that branch of psychology concerned with man's mental functioning and behavior under differing situations, the animal whose psychology is most known is the rat. Why not man's behavior? Well, man is a very expensive guinea pig and the budgets of the psychology departments of most universities do not permit of employing many human subjects in experimentation. The rat, because of his high rate of reproduction and cheap eating habits is the preferred experimental animal. It is probably no exaggeration to say that more has been written and published in connection with rat experimentation than almost any other creature on this planet. Although they are small and seemingly dull and slow witted, they can display feats of learning far out of proportion to their size and niche in the animal kingdom. They can be trained to run through mazes with uncanny accuracy, they can be conditioned to respond to a wide variety of stimuli, sights, sounds, smells, etc. and to ignore others. They can solve elementary problems and discriminate between colors, patterns and even complicated sequential displays in which only a certain

special sequence is responded to. In some ways rats do behave much as humans do, and can even do a few things we would find impossible, such as scurrying into a tiny hole.

But still, in the really important questions of human behavior, personality and especially mental malfunction, there is nothing to equal the study of man himself. No matter how much we may learn of animal behavior from the rat and other laboratory creatures, we are primarily interested in how man functions and may his mental efficiency be improved. It is all very well to say that we can learn a great deal from the rat about human psychology, but we can learn a lot more from direct observation of man himself. The main obstacle to the study of man and his mind is man himself. Few persons want to be guinea pigs in any sort of laboratory experiment, even if there is no discomfort or pain. Even fewer wish to assist in those which do involve slight discomfort or moderate amounts of emotional stress. How these obstacles to scientific work in psychology can be overcome has been the worry of most of the investigators in the field. Many sleepless nights have been spent in devising some method of getting cooperation from reluctant subjects and students. The most fruitful source of subjects for the average teaching psychologist is his student body. Because they are in a sense dependent on the teacher's good will for a good mark, many students are motivated to cooperate with the professors in experiments for which it would be otherwise difficult to get volunteers. Like rat psychology, probably more is known about student psychology than any other group of people. Whether the lessons learned from the observations of students also apply to the rest of mankind is a question I will leave to the reader.

Another doctrine with which most authorities seem to be in agreement is the philosophy of adjustment. It seems important to most schools of psychology that man should be "well adjusted". By this they seem to mean that unless man adjusts himself to the society in which he finds himself he is "maladjusted". The whole idea seems to be that we as human beings have desires and goals to ward which we are striving and every once in a while we reach an obstacle

which prevents us from attaining our goals or desires. It is then that adjustment enters the picture. There are so many ways in which man can react to the obstacle in his path. The appropriateness of his responses is a measure of his adjustment. The various methods of dealing with the situation range from denying or ignoring the obstacle to seeking to destroy or remove it. Adjusting to the obstacle in a healthy manner seems to involve according to the interpretation of psychologists, accepting the inevitable and readjusting one's goals and behavior to the new facts. Any emotional outburst, whether anger or grief is considered a very unhealthy response or a poor adjustment. So too is avoidance or pretense that the obstacle doesn't exist. In the view of the psychology fraternity the best response is quiet acceptance of the presence of the obstacle and a readjustment of one's goals and desires to take into account the changed situation.

At first hearing this may sound very plausible, and many people have come to accept this philosophy almost without question, so that today one could say that the predominant viewpoint in orthodox psychology is one of adjustment. At first hearing this may sound like a very plausible point of view, but if you analyse it thoroughly, you will find that in addition to being erroneous it is bad advice. Man has not climbed to the top of the animal tree by adapting himself to the world he found around him. Quite the contrary, man has progressed and has only progressed in measure as he has adapted nature and the environment in which he found himself to his needs and desires. Almost alone of all the creatures on earth man changes and adapts the obstacles and materials he finds around to his own ends,

rather than adapting himself to the limited means available. While it is true that many animals make nests, dig burrows and build dams, still these are done instinctually, without conscious thought, repeating patterns laid down in deep ancestral memories or archetypes.

No, man is not an adapting or adjusting animal, he is an adaptor and adjuster, not a passive, take-things-as-you-find-them vegetable. To tell a person or a patient, "You must adjust yourself to this or that situation" is in effect tell

ing that person to become a vegetable or at best a grubbing animal, content with what it finds along its crawl-path. Yet, judging from the evidence of most clinical literature on the subject of psychotherapy, "adjustment" is the prime goal of the therapist for his patient. The philosophy of adjustment, if it should be distinguished by being called a philosophy, is one that asks us to turn back the tides of human evolution and go back to the worm. The worm, if you think about it is a marvel of adaptation. It is one of the oldest and most adaptable life-forms on this planet. It is almost indestructible. Cut it in half and it grows into two worms, make mince meat of it, and you reap a whole colony of wiggling night-crawlers. The main staple in its diet, dirt, is so plentiful as to defy measure, and its enemies while many, find them hard to find in the cold, hard ground. Is a worm's life the one we should pattern our own after?

I say no, that man's destiny lies not in adjusting himself to the temporary set of circumstances that happen to surround him at any one time. Just the opposite, man's improvement and growth lies in the direction of greater freedom of action, of more communication and control over his environment, in liberating himself from the bonds of stupid custom, stereotyped behavior patterns as well as the many subtle forms of brain-washing and indoctrination which goes under the misnomer of education, up-bringing and learning right from wrong.

If man is to eventually reach and control the stars, he must first learn to control himself. If he is to control himself, he must learn more about himself, his abilities and limitations. To establish adequate and reliable communication with one's own inner world of the mind is a prerequisite to self-understanding and thereby self-control. Without self-control, it is very difficult, if not nearly impossible for man to cope with nature and the often hostile environment he finds around him. With self-control, control of his environment becomes possible. Between controlling the world as it exists around us and allowing the world to control us lies a wide chasm of difference. Thus we see that the current philosophical basis of psychology is one of despair and hopelessness, that sees nothing wrong in drifting with the tides of life, constantly trimming one's hopes and aspirations to

suit the obstacles we encounter along the way. These are counsels of pessimism at a time when hope should be given. However much one may criticise theologians with their impractical counsels of perfection and love thy neighbor homilies, still at least they asked us to look up, to be hopeful and confident that the good would win in the end. The present-day counsels of our psychologists have little in them to inspire hope and confidence in the future.

What is the proper attitude to take toward obstacles if not passive acceptance of their presence? The attitude which we have always used but which we have lacked a proper verbalization for, namely to use what seem to be obstacles, to convert them into tools and adapt them to our ends. This is what man has always been doing, even though he may not have realized it.

To cite an example, suppose a large tree falls across a primitive man's path. Animals which also use the trail will detour around it, burrow under it or climb over. Man on the other hand sees in this fallen tree, not an obstacle but a tool, something to be utilized, not accepted and adjusted to. He summons help to pull the tree down to a narrow bend in the river and manages to place it across so as to make a bridge. It seems to me to call such intelligent use of what would ordinarily be an obstacle "adapting oneself to the environment" is gross understatement and obscuring the real issue.

Another widespread belief among psychologists of the authoritative schools of psychology is that memory is a very unreliable and easily lost part of mental functioning and only constant repetition and rote memorization makes it possible for man to recall those significant facts and data which he needs in order to function properly. This myth has been punctured by the work of neurophysiologists like Penfield and Jasper of the University of McGill at Montreal. They have shown, and others have corroborated their findings that there is some part of the brain which stores in perfect fidelity all of the experience of a lifetime. And not merely memories or vague impressions of the past, but full-range, sight, sound, taste, smell etc. re-

cordings which could be played back whenever the right area of the brain was stimulated by fine electrical probes. Drs. Penfield and Jasper obtained these fantastic results as a result of their operations upon the exposed cortex of human beings undergoing brain surgery. Using tiny wires carrying a small electric current, they would place them upon different spots on the exposed surface of the brain. When a specific area was touched, the patient's arm would jerk, placed in contact with another area, the patient would see "stars". But when a certain specific region was stimulated, patients reported the reactivation of old and almost forgotten memories, experiences from early childhood or adolescence. Fragments of songs, conversations held long ago, fifth birthday parties re-experienced in all their original color, sound and emotional gaiety

Penfield and Jasper had uncovered a wonderful storehouse of the mind, one which seems not to forget but retains undimmed and untarnished by time, the full fidelity recordings of the organism throughout its life. Here in an inexhaustible reservoir of experience was information no one knew he possessed. Information which seemingly is locked forever in the mind inaccessible to our conscious awareness.

Nor were only conscious memories retained by this great storehouse of the mind, present also were unremembered dreams, nightmares, fantasies and in some rare cases, feelings of being born, of being in the womb and of reliving past lives, often with great detail and physical sensations appropriate for the experience. In one person the probing needle of the surgeon reactivated an accidental occurrence when the patient was six years old and had been run over by an automobile. All of the shock, pain and even unconsciousness were re-experienced by the patient all unknown to the doctor.

Since the time when this work was done, research using other avenues of approach have confirmed the existence of this high-fidelity memory bank or warehouse. By means of new drugs such as mescaline and LSD, by means of hypnosis and regression techniques, thousands of people have been shown that they do possess a marvelous retentive facility in their minds which merely await the right circumstances to be full-

ly reawakened and brought to consciousness. In addition to these methods of bringing into awareness the wonderful and awesome retentiveness of the mind, it has long been known that close brushes with death have had the same effect, almost total recall of one's whole life. Drowning people, as well as seriously ill persons have long been known to suddenly see parading before their eyes their whole lifetime, seeming to last an eternity and yet in reality taking only a fraction of a second. Surely there must be some very real and compelling reason why the organism prevents or blocks our access to such a wonderful treasure house of memory.

Yet when you read through the standard college works on psychology hardly anywhere in them do you find any reference to these facts. Rather you find long treatises on memory and learning, of tests conducted to determine how many repetitions is necessary for something to be retained in the mind, how long it takes for something seen once to be lost beyond recall and so on. Surely one would expect that the exciting discoveries of the neurophysiologists would have been taken up by the psychologists and experiments undertaken to find out why we cannot use even a fraction of this powerful potential. No, over fifteen years after Drs. Penfield and Jasper announced to the world their discoveries hardly any major college department of psychology has any project going to carry this idea further. Many have even ignored and pooch-pooched it as belonging only to medical psychology and of doubtful value clinically. Almost no textbook that I know of mentions it or if so only in the most off-hand way as if to belittle or deny its importance for the proper study of the mind.

So we see that the study of psychology, like that of the other orphan sciences relating to man, embracing economics, politics and sociology are all languishing in a sort of special limbo of their own, awaiting a unifying idea to produce order out of the present chaos, to harmonize the facts and fit them together into a satisfactory whole. This too, is part of the task I have set for myself in these pages. If I do not succeed, it will not be for lack of trying. All that one can expect of himself is the best he can do under the difficult handicaps that all of

us have when it comes to thinking about and analysing man and his functioning. The major handicap is lack of objectivity, for how can the observer of himself be objective about himself? It is fairly easy for man to be completely objective about the material world outside his inner world but very difficult to be objective about himself and his fellow man.

This sorry state of affairs is due to a seemingly inherent tendency of men in all fields to engage in a very common failing of human beings. The author has also found himself guilty of this trait as well. To label it with a rather pedantic term, one could call it anthropomorphic monodeterminism. A somewhat more colloquial phrase would be a one-track-mind egocentricity, but this rather derogatory phrase does not really convey the whole meaning of the more precise pedantic one. We all tend, whether we realize it or not, to view the world around us in terms of our own experience, up-bringing and culture. We project onto others, even onto God and Nature, attributes which properly belong within ourselves. This is what is meant by anthropomorphism, investing the outside world with our own inner reality or lack of it. A person who is insane is sure that it is the others who are crazy, not he. If there is anything about which he is in doubt, it is not his own sanity. He "knows" he is sane.

On the other hand, the mature individual, who after a long and painful process of self searching, begins to acquire what he realizes are a few glimpses of wisdom and knowledge, is continually beset by doubts and qualifications. Certainty begins to seem like a foolish and childish view of a complex and ever-changing phenomenon, Nature. But he continues to search for certainty, to look for what have come to be called natural laws, invariable sequences of action and reaction in the physical universe, of cause and effect relationships. He longs to be able to predict the future and control nature and her forces with ever increasing accuracy and speed.

This need to find certainty in what he recognizes as a very uncertain world is the impelling force behind man's scientific achievements. But this can only be achieved if he cultivates the opposite state of mind from anthropomor-

phic monodeterminism is unbiased pan-determinism. Or to be more down-to-earth, fair-minded many-sided cause and effect relationism. It is a state of mind in which all natural phenomena is observed without previous preconceived notions or prejudiced by some favorite postulate or desired end. It is very difficult even for the trained scientific observer to record an event exactly as it occurred, without adding or subtracting some important piece of data. He like most of us tends to report that which he interprets or believes as being important, usually based upon his training or background, and ignoring all else that he feels is unimportant.

A monodeterminist is a person who selects out of nature some one problem which he feels needs to be solved, and who thinks that if only this problem can be solved, then all the other problems will automatically solve themselves. It is good to look for a common cause of poverty for instance, but let us not blind ourselves to the fact that solving the problem of material poverty need not also solve the poverty of the mind or spirit nor the poverty of political and social wealth.

In this inquiry I shall seek to use a method of analysis which Henry George used to unlock the riddle of the material poverty Sphinx. His method of analysis I call the Factor Method. In it one determines exactly what it is that there is a poverty of and the desired product that will eliminate this particular poverty. Once the desired product is defined and the sphere of analysis is limited to consider only this particular product, we then determine what is the Passive Factor or the raw material from which the desired product is made. After this is fixed and exactly defined, we then search for the Active Factor or the energy-adding, determining agent necessary to produce the wished-for product. Next attention is directed to the Auxiliary Factor or those agents which will immeasurable increase the efficiency and speed of operation of the process. In other words, what are the conditions and apparatus necessary to facilitate our productive process. All these three factors, and almost invariably they can be reduced to these three, suffice to keep our pot boiling and turning out the wanted item. In order to maintain the process for any period of time how-

ever, there must be some replenishing of the three factors otherwise they will wear out or run out or break down. This replenishment or maintainance of the factors is necessary if the process is to continue for any length of time. One could also call these three items which are fed back to the original factors avenues of distribution or feedback channels

Without proper feeding back of information from the output side of the process to the input side, no process can long keep up its most efficient rate of production. There has to be constant communication between all of the factors in any process for any sort of orderly control to be possible. Communication and control are the essential ingredients for the successful orderly operation of any system. Without it, the system will break down sooner or later, either drowned in a pile-up of unprocessed raw material or Passive Factor or become idle for lack of energy to the Active Factor.

Since the science of Psychology is concerned with the mind and the poverty of the product of mental activity, the first term to fix in its meaning is what constitutes the wealth of the mind or the desired product of thinking. In technical terms it probably should be called Constructs, or the results of conscious deliberate activity of the mind acting on the raw data or sense impressions which impinge upon us daily. Popularly it would be called knowledge or wisdom, but really should be made broad enough to include skills, ideas, postulates, feelings, memories, everything which contributes to a rich mind. A rich mind not only knows, feels and experiences but can reason, perform and create easily and without strain.

The raw material from which mental wealth or constructs are produced are the unanalysed, second-by-second sense impressions which our body constantly routes to our awareness center for our consideration and thought. These senses are many more than the traditional five, sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. There are more like fifty different organs sending messages to our brain regarding the external and internal environment. There centers of balance, heat and cold, position of the limbs, chemical sensors which monitor all sorts of bodily phenomena, stretch receptors, oxygen and sers and a host of other specialized sense organs.