

PSYCHOLOGY

Drink and Still Think

► DRINKING ALCOHOL does not necessarily muddle your thinking. In fact, your ability to solve very difficult reasoning problems may not be damaged as much as your ability to walk a straight line or to drive your automobile.

This conclusion, based on experiments conducted under a grant from the U. S. Public Health Service, was reported to the meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association in Philadelphia by Drs. John A. Carpenter, Omar K. Moore and Edith S. Lisansky, all of Yale University, and Dr. Charles R. Snyder, now at Southern Illinois University.

In the Yale experiment the men taking part drank various amounts of 90-proof whisky mixed with soda. The liquor was consumed on an empty stomach and all within 15 minutes. Then they were required to solve difficult problems in the calculus of propositions.

Not until the dosage of alcohol reached one milliliter of absolute alcohol per kilogram of body weight did the drinking have any adverse effect on problem-solving ability. This is equivalent to six ounces of pure 90-proof whisky for a man weighing 180 pounds.

At some of the smallest doses of alcohol there was an actual improvement in solving the difficult intellectual task.

No one yet knows how alcohol affects the solving of simpler problems or reasoning that is even more difficult.

Very little scientific work has been done on the effect of alcohol on various kinds of intellectual tasks and much of what is generally believed is really in error, Dr. Carpenter said. Research in this field is badly needed, he added.

It is widely believed, for example, that alcohol is relaxing; it is often prescribed by physicians to relax tense, keyed-up patients. These investigators found no evidence to indicate that alcohol actually has a relaxing effect. What they did find was that alcohol is probably more damaging to motor and sensory abilities than to the "higher" thought processes.

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Reading Difficulties

► IF JOHNNY cannot read, the fault may not be with his teacher or the method by which he was taught whether the phonics method or the "see and say." He may be having difficulty with his mental health, Dr. Franklin H. Goldberg of the New York University Reading Institute reported to the Eastern Psychological Association in Philadelphia.

Dr. Goldberg studied 32 boys who were from one to four years retarded in their school work. The boys were not all stupid, Dr. Goldberg found. Although some were "dull-normal," some were superior in intelligence. Most of the boys were of average intelligence. Of the boys studied, 56% (18

boys) were found to have mental health difficulties.

Dr. Goldberg studied the personality characteristics of these retarded boys. The typical retarded reader, he found, is an immature, frightened and unhappy boy who does not enter actively into relationships with boys his age because of deep-seated feelings of inadequacy and failure.

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Compatibility Test

► IF A MAN and his wife can see the same kind of pictures in the shapeless blots of the Rorschach ink blot test, this reveals to psychologists that the marriage will be a happy one.

To some individuals one blot may look like a young girl dancing or a man running for a train, while to others the same blot may look like a pool of water or an odd-shaped table or other motionless object. If both members of the couple see a similar number of scenes with human movement, the chances are good that the marriage will be happy.

This new measure of compatibility was reported to the Eastern Psychological Association

by Drs. Barry Bricklin of the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia and Sophie G. Gottlieb of Teachers College, Columbia University.

When couples were interviewed and treated by a psychiatrist and then divided into two groups according to whether they improved most or improved least in compatibility, the two groups matched exactly two groups who had the highest and lowest Rorschach compatibility scores.

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Better Training Method

► A BETTER METHOD of training mail-order clerks has been found by two psychologists—self-instruction instead of classroom instruction.

The psychologists took a two-week training course as billers in a mailroom, then prepared self-instruction workbooks covering what they had learned. They found that the kind of "programmed learning" given by their books was superior in some ways to the usual classroom training of mail-order clerks during the Christmas rush.

Drs. A. E. Hickey and B. Jean Anwyll of the Itek Corporation, Waltham, Mass., reported results of their experiment to the Eastern Psychological Association meeting in Philadelphia.

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BIGGEST BUCKET—The biggest drag bucket, capable of lifting 50-ton loads, is constructed of steel plate up to five inches thick. It can dig materials 170 feet below ground level and cast it on a pile up to 110 feet high and 425 feet away. The 70,000-pound bucket, built by Esco Corporation, Danville, Ill., will be used at a coal stripping mine in Brazil.