

PERSONALITY

Brain hemisphere dominance

When a person is asked a question that requires more than a simple response he will look up and either to the right or left. He is avoiding visual stimuli that might interfere with his train of thought. This common motor response, called conjugate-lateral eye movement (CLEM), is associated with mental activity.

Dr. Paul Bakan of Michigan State University has conducted studies on left lookers and right lookers and found that they have many personality and psychological traits in common. He hypothesizes in the April *PSYCHOLOGY TODAY* that this is due to the dominance of one hemisphere of the brain over the other. Electroencephalograph recordings show that the right hemisphere is dominant for a left CLEM, and vice versa.

Dr. Bakan's studies show that persons with right hemisphere dominance tend to have higher verbal scores on scholastic aptitude tests, show greater fluency in writing and are likely to choose classical and humanistic areas of study. They are more susceptible to hypnosis, tend to have more vivid imagery, are more sociable and more likely to be alcoholic (males).

Persons with left hemisphere dominance tend to have higher quantitative scores on scholastic aptitude tests and are likely to major in science fields. They spend more time asleep and make career choices earlier in life.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Benefits of daycare programs

The words "mental institution" often conjure up visions of barred windows and doors, padded cells, strait-jackets and worse. New evidence suggests that even acutely disturbed mental patients may do just as well or better in a daycare program as in a mental institution.

A study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health's Hospital Improvement Program was conducted at the New York State Psychiatric Institute to compare the results of daycare and full-time hospitalization.

At the start of a two-year study 90 patients were chosen and assigned randomly to either daycare or inpatient care. During the first four weeks twice as many of the inpatients had to be transferred to an intensive care unit because of dangerous or disorganized behavior. Daycare patients were ready to return to full-time community life after an average of 48.5 days. The average for inpatients was 138.8 days. Within six months after discharge 31 percent of the inpatients had to be readmitted, only 18.6 percent of the day patients.

DOMINANCE

The vanishing American father

Since the dawn of time in most civilizations, the family has been the basic social unit, and the father, the dominant head of that unit. As earner and dispenser of food or money, he controlled the destiny of his family with a firm hand. The woman was considered to be too emotional and too impractical to do anything but bear and rear children. By Victorian times the father had emerged as a stern, forbidding and almost frightening figure. Now, according to E. E. LeMasters of the

University of Wisconsin, this child-frightening man has been changed into a family court jester.

In the January-March issue of *IMPACT OF SCIENCE ON SOCIETY* LeMasters reports that in the typical American family the father is no longer assuming enough responsibility. The mother is taking over his position.

As reasons, he cites three events between 1900 and 1950. First was the economic depression of the 1930's, which took away from men their position as principal breadwinner. Next was the war in the 1940's, which took the man out of the home and left family management in the hands of women. This gave the woman a position she is not ready to relinquish, as evidenced by current women's lib movements. The final blow to the supremacy of the husband/father was the emergence of a powerful adolescent peer group that could challenge his authority and values.

LeMasters concludes that in today's revolutionary times the conservative institution of the family may be on the way out and that the dominant father is neither functional nor practical in our society.

DRUG ABUSE

Advertising and the doctor

The large pharmaceutical companies are dependent on professional medical and psychiatric journals for much of their advertising space. These journals, in turn, have come to rely heavily on the drug companies for a major source of their income. Physicians and psychiatrists, the readers of these journals, are therefore bombarded with advertisements for psychoactive drugs.

Logically, the drug companies are intent on widening the uses of their products. They encourage the use of their drugs in treatment of problems of everyday life, rather than only for treatment of mental illness.

This, says Dr. Robert Seidenberg, a Syracuse, N.Y., physician, in an editorial in the April 8 *NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE*, has been a factor in producing much of the illegal drug dependency in today's youth. They followed the example of their legally drug-dependent parents.

To his medical colleagues Dr. Seidenberg says, ". . . we do control our prescription pads and should control our professional organizations and the advertising policies of their journals."

PSYCHIC RESEARCH

The Russians and ESP

The Soviet Union has made great strides in emotional training and conditioning. Soldiers are being taught to set their own emotional tone in battle and stress situations. Astronauts are being taught to distort time and to offset boredom in outer space.

"The Amazing" Kreskin is an ESP showman who, according to Prof. Frank Murphy of Seton Hall University, "has developed a strikingly unique form of communication." In the April *PSYCHIC* Kreskin says he has had meetings with National Aeronautics and Space Administration officials about psychic training for the astronauts but has had no positive response.

"I think we've been missing the boat on this," he says, "even if the boat is a spaceship."