

# Understanding the Mind of Man

*Psychiatry*

DR. ADOLF MEYER of Johns Hopkins University in his presidential address before the American Psychiatric Association at Minneapolis:

We deal with the most unruly and willful part or aspect of man, the very organ or function of self-assertion, self-concern and self-protection. Mankind would like to be free from the scourges and their consequences without having to surrender the joys and habits that spread and engender them. It would like remedies for drug and alcohol addiction without having to give up its cravings and gratifications.

The same holds for the prevention of paresis and syphilis and the control and training of emotion and fancy that clash with reality, and for the craving for self-realization at any price in contrast to a sensible acceptance of a consensus. Understanding and handling these problems may not be everybody's job as little as teaching or research in the sciences or many other things which we let those do who have skill, time and experience. A psychiatrist has to have the most comprehensive knowledge of the human organism and also of its functions in complex personal and social relations, past, present and future.

Anyone who thinks that Watson's accounts of behaviorism cover all that arises in our field has difficulty in understanding the meaning of psychiatry, mental hygiene, psychopathology and neurology.

Those who imagine that all psychiatry and psychopathology and therapy have to resolve themselves into the smattering of claims and hypotheses of psycho-analysis and that they stand and fall with one's feelings about psycho-analysis are equally misguided.

I sometimes feel that Einstein with all his concern in the relativity in astronomy has to deal with very simple facts as compared to the complex and erratic and multi-contingent performance of the human microcosmos, the health, happiness and efficiency of which we psychiatrists are concerned with.

Man has at last begun to see himself as part of Nature and he demands that the scientist include in his view of Nature also what we know of man. We recognize that we are organisms that start under very definite conditions and represent a curve of life, of growth to a more or less complete maturity with a wealth of op-

portunity for doing our share, and in time a passing away. We blossom as individuals and sink back again into the larger flow of contemporaries and survivors in our family, our race, our nation and whatever we are just a part or a more or less thoughtful representative of.

In contrast to the practice of past ages, we do not start from mythological and philosophical absolutes, but single out concrete data of experience in whatever complexity we may find them. This does not necessitate any presumptions concerning final definitions and views of the ultimate nature of life and of consciousness and its contents, or of such topics or factors as religion, ideals and codes, ambitions and ethics, etc., or any final philosophies. . . .

In dealing with human facts with our limited concepts and expressions and capacity to think at once comprehensively and concretely, we cannot afford to disregard suggestive pointers or indicators or references and perspectives within reach; we have to seek and respect the more comprehensive topics and groups of facts which elementalism is apt to disregard or actually to shun, the data that some of us point to under the heading of integration and integrates, the data which are in the mind of the holist, to use General Smuts' term, and which Aristotle must have tried to include in his entelechies and what in practical life we call trends, possibilities, contingencies, etc.

As such suggestive rather than finished, contingent rather than finite topics and entities, I should mention what we call person and personality, character, tendencies, experiences, the intellectual, and active, and effective, and thought processes, primary and secondary symbolization, the crystallization of types, of life attitudes, of prospective and retrospective emphases, of the range of vision of the moment, and the balance of assets. We might single out behavior-situations of tangible and suggestive and sufficiently comparable nature, the general and temporary energy and action pressure of an organism or a person, and the inherited and acquired endowment, the extent to which the person reaches the capacity for constructive composure as well as the ability to muster the assets in emergencies (i. e., what we call judgment), the amount or extent of de-

pendability (i. e., the character), the extent and type of the inclusion of others, singly and in groups, in the tendencies of action, in vision and thought and fancy, in play and work and in retrospect and prospect, and the amount of socialization as opposed to the mere self-concern and almost obsessive individualism so rampant today.

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## Marginal Peoples

*Anthropology*

ROLAND B. DIXON in *The Building of Cultures* (Scribner's):

We have seen that marginal peoples, those whom fate has placed in the far corners of the world, seem foredoomed to cultural poverty. But here, for peoples as for individuals, the factor of ability, of genius, of intellectual fibre enters in. For, just as a man born in poverty and destitute of advantages may, if he has the ability and the mettle, rise above these obstacles, seize opportunity, and achieve success, so may a whole people. And, as a man, although poor in material things, may yet become a great leader, so may a whole people. The little group of poor Semitic nomads who, as the Hebrews, fought their way into tiny Palestine and settled on its rocky hills, wrung from this hard environment a culture poor indeed in material things, but so rich in thought and in its conception of life, that it has profoundly influenced the history of the world. The little clan of the Inca, from their high, cup-like valley of Cuzco, hemmed in by forest and bleak *paramo*, reached out and grasped an empire almost as great in extent as that of Rome, and evolved a scheme of government which almost completely realized the socialist Utopia, not dreamed of in Europe for many a hundred years. The Japanese in their rocky archipelago took in the seventh century of the best that China had to offer and rebuilt their culture on a higher plane; and then in the nineteenth century reached half way around the world to Europe and did the same thing again.

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Wild silk is used in China to make pongee.

There are 1,400 different kinds of mosquitoes.