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Psychology and Psychurgy

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PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHURGY: The Nature and Use of The Mind.

by
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In this paper I have thought it well to call attention to the importance of a study of the Science of Mind (Psychurgy).

The word "Mind," as I have herein used it, signifies the totality of the phenomena of Consciousness and includes all that can feel, remember, or adapt acts to ends; and, therefore, it properly includes all of the phenomena of the Intellect, such as sensations, images, concepts, ideas, thoughts, reasonings, introspection, etc. It includes all of the activities of the systemic and organic feelings and of the tender, aesthetic, moral, logical and religious emotions. It includes the whole subject of volition and will; and it includes a study of all of the vital and subconscious processes connected with the exercise of these functions. It includes affections, tastes, habits, knowledge, conduct and civilization. Whatever thing can feel and adapt

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acts to ends has mind; and therefore, the study of the mind includes feeling, memory, and adaptive activity. Psychology, therefore, includes the study, by scientific methods, of our own minds and of the minds of all living organisms, so that we may judge from the facts regarding anatomy, physiological activities, habits, environment, etc., what mind is, and so that we may learn by a study of minds what organisms are.

The definition which I have herein made of the mind is the one I have found most consistent with the general study and practice of Psychurgy, or the Art of Mentation; but the philosophic import of this definition, that mentality includes and is synonymous with vitality, constitutes no necessary part of the science of mind as I

desire to teach it, or of the psychurgic art. But it will be necessary for the reader to remember that the meaning which I have herein given to the word "mind" includes all there is of consciousness, together with the functionally associated subconscious processes of the organism; that is, it includes within its scope the psychologic characteristics of the cellular activities. The organs of the body are composed of cells, and these cells can feel stimuli and perform adaptive activities, and as only mind can feel and adapt, it follows that what characterizes

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the life of a cell is its mind-capacities. If a cell cannot feel and perform adaptive actions, it is dead. I do not attempt to philosophize upon the subject; I prefer to await further knowledge of the mind. It matters not, as far as an understanding of the principles of the art of using the mind are concerned, whether mind includes all there is of vitality or not; or whether there is Mind and Matter; or Spirit, Mind and Matter; or whether Mind, like number, dimension, motion, and persistence is a property inseparable from matter; or whether there is an energy that manifests as Matter, Mind, Motion, etc. These questions I do not attempt to decide, but the fact remains that it is the mind-like capacity of the cell that constitutes its life, and that it is out of these mind-like functionings of the cells of the body and brain that the conscious processes of the human mind arise; or, if you prefer a different philosophical implication, you may say that it is the judgment-properties of the matter of the body becoming dynamically evolved and accentuated as compared with the space-properties, motion-properties, number-properties, and time-properties of the matter of the body.

Some people have supposed that there is in us a higher kind of intelligence than mental; such,

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for example, as that of the "soul;" and that, therefore, psychology does not include within its survey all of the phenomena of life. To see the incompleteness of this belief, it will suffice to say, without at present committing myself to either the materialistic or spiritualistic hypotheses, that if the soul has not, or is not, a Mind, then it cannot feel, nor remember, nor know, nor adapt acts to ends. To maintain this position is equivalent to saying that the soul is inanimate. If that which has been called "soul," "spirit," etc., can feel, remember, know, adapt acts to purposive ends, etc., then the scope of psychology includes all such phenomena. Science has experimented upon the mind, but it has not yet, in the same manner, experimented upon the soul, if by "soul" is meant something different from mind. I doubt if it ever pays to theorize

or express opinions upon this, or upon any other subject, or to discuss matters in advance of scientific evidence; but it will serve to illustrate my point of view if I may be allowed to say that if there are orders of existence higher than man (and there is no reason why the Universe in its infinite possibilities should not contain them), then, no matter how much higher and greater than man's conceptions these forms may be, and no matter in what unknown states and conditions they

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may exist, if they can feel and know and act, they must have minds, and thereby they will fall within the survey of psychology. Furthermore, if there is embodied in the whole Cosmic Universe a Supreme Mind in some manner analogous to the way in which mind is embodied in the human organism (and I say it with deep and genuine reverence), then, in studying the phenomena of mind you will, to that extent, become acquainted with the kind of power that lies at the head of Cosmos.

I say, that if there is purposive intelligence at the head of the Universe, and if that which has been called God or the Supreme Being can know, or adapt acts to ends, or if that which has been called the Creator can be conscious, then it must *have* Mind or *be* Mind, and in that case, to learn the laws of consciousness is to learn something about that which rules the whole Cosmic Event throughout all space and duration. Your mind must be, in its own nature, similar unto that cosmic condition in the Universe out of which it came, or of which it is an eternal part. Your mind cannot be in fundamental antagonism and contradiction to the cosmic order out of which it was generated and from which it has directly inherited all of its characteristics; and, therefore, to introspectively and scientifically know the nature

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and laws of your own mind is to know directly that much of what is the most interesting, mysterious, wonderful, and perhaps the most all-pervading and potent force in the Universe. It is to know in your own consciousness and as consciousness the power that rules life and is life in all worlds and times. If "that than which there can be nothing greater," has the power to know or to have a purpose, then that power must be due to mind; and in that case, to the extent that you know the mind, just to that extent you know the Universe ontologically. Or if, for the sake of still illustrating a point of view, we assume the opposite belief and contend that there is in the Universe no being higher than man, and that death ends the individual life, then it still follows that the chief subject of study must be the mind, for it is the mind that constitutes the man

and is his only guide through life.

From the psychurgic standpoint all sciences should be studied as subdivisions of psychology, and that fact has been to many a puzzling feature. I have often been asked, “Why do you devote so much time and give such prominence to the experimental study of chemistry, physics, botany, zoology, mathematics, history, and the other sciences, when your laboratories are devoted to

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psychology?” “Why do you study music, metallurgy, microscopy, photography, electricity, and the arts generally, when your work is psychological?” The popular idea is that these subjects have no connection with the study of psychology. The reason why the sciences constitute such a prominent feature in the study of the science of the mind is, that we must study the products of mental activity in order to understand the mental functions which produce these products. It must be obvious that the most wonderful, useful and notable products of the mind’s action are these very sciences. Not only are the sciences discovered and known by means of the mind-activities, and by no other way, but each science is a particular mode of mental functioning and comprises a particular kind of mental content. Hence, the sciences offer the best fields for the study of the mind through its products, modes and contents. In order to adapt acts to ends—in order that such a thing as conduct may be possible—the mind must know. It must have a knowledge about the things on which and in the presence of which it acts, as well as a knowledge of the thing (the mind) that does the acting. Without such a knowledge of things outside of the body no adaptive action whatsoever could take place. Now,

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such a knowledge of things, no matter how meagre, must be a knowledge about some of the natural groups of objects in the universe around us, such as the starry-group (Astronomy), or the plant-group (Botany), or the animal-group (Zoology), or the substance-group (Chemistry), and so on; that is, a normal mind must contain correct knowledge of each taxonomic group of phenomena, and only to the extent that it does possess such knowledge can normal and safe conduct be possible.

The intimate and direct relation of the sciences to the study of the mind must be obvious to any one who will reflect upon this aspect of the subject. In like manner the arts represent what the mind has done in applying knowledge to human uses. It is not enough to discover by means of the intellect a new truth; it is not even enough to feel the beauty and possible utility of such a discovery; the mental process is not completed until that truth

which you know, and that beauty which you feel have been rendered concrete and available for human uses by conation, or by that act or series of acts which applies this knowledge and feeling to the good of the human race. The industrial and fine arts represent the utilitarian and aesthetic deeds of the mind and the methods by

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which the mind applies knowledge and feeling. In the practical study of these arts we come in closest and completest touch with the mind's modes of working. The sciences and arts, are, therefore, from this point of view, properly, subdivisions of the science of psychology.

If it is the mind that creates and discovers every science and art, and if it is in the mind alone which can supply such knowledge to an amelioration of the conditions of life; if it is the mind that builds every house, writes every book, and paints every picture; if it is the mind that suffers and enjoys; then it follows that a knowledge of how to regulate the functions of the mind so as to achieve results more economical. and more truthful, will rank first in importance in the knowledge to which the human race has been paying attention.

It will be impossible to fully describe this Art in a single paper. I will very briefly describe the first step, which consists, among other things, in the complete inductive mastery of some one science by the psychurgic method. First of all, each one of the nine kinds of sensory functionings, such as touch, pressure, warmth, cold, muscular feeling, taste, smell, seeing and hearing, are trained for several months, until the sensitiveness and accuracy have been increased from five to ten

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times!* These senses are the instruments of observation by which all knowledge is acquired.† If a person had been born without any of the senses he could never have known of the existence of a single object, and knowledge and conduct would have been impossible to him.

After this training of the senses the pupil should be taken into a building wherein have been placed, in classific groups, every object and piece of apparatus known to some one science, so that every phenomenon of that science might be shown to him, in taxonomic order. The second step consists in giving the pupil correct images of every object belonging to that science; then in causing the pupil to classify these images into naturally-related groups, for the purpose of forming concepts of such groups. The next step consists in experimentally discovering the relations

which exist in nature between the objects for which the pupil has concepts; and thus arise ideas. The pupil is then taught how to discover truths common to two or more such ideas, and thus arise thoughts of the first order or laws of the first

*I have proof of this.

†Knowledge of physical objects and their relations, rather, we should say; “Subjects” and “Principles” are matters of knowledge, but are not recognizable by the senses.—Ed.

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degree of generalization. The generalization of thoughts of the first order produces thoughts of the second order, where most sciences end.

In thus acquiring psychologic data belonging to any science the pupil avoids learning any theories, hypotheses or speculations! He learns the science by first-hand observation and acquires the sum total of the knowledge relating to that group of phenomena. By this means he observes that there are no other kinds of knowledge about phenomena than the sensations, images, concepts, ideas and thoughts which he may inductively derive from a study of such objects. This puts normal content in the mind. The pupil is next taught conceptual reasoning, and ideative reasoning, and thinking reasoning; and then made to introspect all of these processes while they are taking place; this finishes the intellectual acquisition of that science. (The concomitant emotional or moral training and the concomitant volitional training I will not now describe).

Having mastered this science, the pupil then reimages each one of the images belonging to that science, and thus causes certain parts of the brain to grow stronger and increases the imagining speed from five to ten times.* He then re-concept-

*I have proof of this.

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uates the concepts, re-ideates the ideas, re-thinks the thoughts, and this increases the speed and the accuracy of each of these functions. He practices the three kinds of reasoning and introspection, and thus learns for the first time in the history of education to use each one of the intellectual functions independently of the others. He increases the speed of his mental activity from five to ten times. He likewise increases the accuracy of the process. He wastes no time in theory and hypothesis. Each incorrect image, each false idea, misleads the whole mentative functioning and vitiates every conclusion that may be formed. Having thus mastered the normal content of one science, having

acquired skill in using each one of the intellectual processes, the pupil is then taught to apply this knowledge and skill to the art of invention and discovery, according to methods that cannot now be described.

The object of this mentative art is to discover Truth and apply it to the betterment of life. This is the whole process and scope of evolution, and it involves the getting of more mind at each step. The getting of less mind would not be evolution; hence, every act which give us more mind is right, and every act which gives us less mind is wrong. There is no other kind of knowledge

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about the universe than just such a knowledge as I have described. A knowledge of one science, however does not suffice. Each one of the natural sciences must thus be learned, to make up a perfectly normal mind.

My plea is for the study of the sciences according to this method, so that by basing our mental operations upon verified truth, without an admixture of speculation, we may the more certainly achieve more and more truth. And it is in the Religion of Truth that I have perfect confidence; I have but little confidence in theory, and speculation, and philosophy. Generally their postulates have been wholly or partly wrong. But truth itself would be of no value were it not for the mind which may learn to apply this truth. Hence, progress resolves itself into a question of the amount of mind which we have and into ways of using the mind. Psychology has pointed out the feasibility of an art of promoting and regulating the use of the mind in discovery, in invention, and in right living, and the development of this art, which I have called Psychurgy, shows that we can systematize the hitherto undirected mental functions of talent and genius, and reduce to scientific rule the haphazard efforts of the mind in discovering Truth. Investigators and

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thinkers have hitherto violated almost every bodily, environmental and psychologic condition conducive to the best mental functioning, and for some unaccountable reason the human race has studied almost every subject except how best to use that mind which makes all such studies possible. There is a correct way of acquiring scientific data; there is a correct way of regulating bodily and environmental conditions so as to conserve organic energy and promote mental functioning; and the development of such an art of Mentation is destined to exert an important influence upon any individual life and through that upon the life of the race.

You did not create your own consciousness; you did not form

the nature and capacities of your own mind; it had its own immanent nature when you first became aware of consciousness, and out of it has grown the total sum of your experiences and possibilities. The wonder of consciousness taking place within us according to its own eternal laws, and in obedience to its own cosmical nature, may well profoundly amaze and astound us. It is an ever-present mystery and wonder towards which our aspirations may lead us to an increasing knowledge, not only of the mind, but of the things in the presence of which it exists.

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I regard Mind with as much reverence as I have ever regarded the infinite Cosmic Universe out of which all mind is born. With overwhelming awe I meditate upon the star-studded expanse, with systems of worlds floating therein, and doubtless filled with life—systems of worlds that in presence of Eternity come and go like bubbles upon the stream, but it is with still deeper awe and reverence that I turn to that Awareness in me which is conscious of every passing conscious state; which observes critically, and with absolute justice, the phenomena of mind as they are imperfectly and partially exhibited to me in my consciousness; and I feel that if there be an intelligent purpose or Consciousness at the head of that which has eternally filled unlimited space, then to the extent that I learn the truth about mind, to that extent I become acquainted with the power that is regnant in nature. Whatever of purpose or plan there is in the whole or in any part of the universe, must be due to mind, and whatever you and I may achieve for self or others must be due to the activity of the mind functioning in us; and this mind which takes place in us, and of which we become aware, is as much a cosmical process as is the flow of the tides or the evolution of the universe. A knowledge of your own mind and how

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best to use it is your only possible guide, for what can never come to your consciousness can never be a part of you or for you. Mind is the path to the goal of all possibilities. This is the age of the apotheosis of Mind.