

Mental Illness, Mental Retardation, Mental Hygiene in Modern Culture

Julius Bauer

Over 700,000 draftees were rejected as unfit during World War II because they were mentally deficient or illiterate (statement of President Kennedy). Induction data during the Korean War show that about 10% of American youth were disqualified for mental reasons (1). It has been estimated that there are some 17 million persons in the U. S. suffering from some form of mental illness, in Los Angeles County about 600,000, and in Manhattan four out of five white adults are said to show symptoms of mental illness. Does the stress of modern culture cause this amazing frequency of mental disorder? The common belief is that it does. Stress of culture, however, is a relative term. What has been considered to be such stress and been blamed for mental derangements more than half a century ago certainly would not represent it to-day. New discoveries and progress everywhere "have taken civilized humanity by surprise. It has had no time to adapt itself to its changed conditions of life", wrote the German novelist Max Nordau in 1895. Emotionally frustrating influences increased in intensity throughout the period 1870-1930 and tended to provoke anxiety, insecurity, resentment, helplessness and herewith psychosomatic ailments (Halliday, 2). The British psychiatrist J. Atkin (3), however, recently pointed out that modern mental health propaganda should emphasize that stress is and always has been a normal part of ordinary living. *Are people to-day subject to greater life stress or did they become less resistant to it, and if they did, why?*

Intensity of cultural stress

To evaluate the intensity of such stress by comparison of different cultures at different secular periods of life is inadequate. Its effect can be studied only by exposing the same individuals to definitely increased stress such as military service, imprisonment in concentration camps or enforcement of a radically changed way of life. Under such circumstances increased stress actually may become an etiologic factor of mental disturbance in constitutionally predisposed persons. Psychosomatic diseases increased in incidence during the II. World War among the 13 Million registrants of selective service, particularly in Negroes who in peace-time appeared

relatively immune (L. G. Rowntree, 4). The frequency of mental break-down in the army was at least twice as great in the first months after induction than among the N. Y. state civilian males in the same age group of 20 to 39 years (H. B. M. Murphy, 5). Among those who survived concentration camps of the Nazi-regime psychoneuroses developed after they resettled to a new life. Even among those enforced and impoverished emigrants from Central Europe without previous confinement in camps extreme nervousness, anxiety neuroses with nightmares, depression, fatigue and hyperthyroidism became very common (J. Bauer, 6). Adjustment to the completely different culture of Western civilization by uncivilized persons among Papuans and Melanesians or of Indian soldiers or Asian and African students in Western universities imposes an extraordinary life stress on such persons. Increased incidence of neurotic disorders among these groups have repeatedly been reported (Murphy, 5).

Inculcation with rigid new religious concepts may become one of precipitating factors of mental breakdown. It has been observed in Christian Bataks as contrasted with their pagan compatriots (5). Sister M. W. Kelley (7) (Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles) found an increased number of psychoses among hospitalized members of religious communities of women. Rigid training and preoccupation with imaginary sin appeared to be a causal factor in these constitutionally inclined females. Their choice of this way of life may even be considered an indicator of a personal predisposition.

In spite of questionable reliability of some of the reported data we must admit that *extraordinary* life stress may precipitate mental derangement in certain persons. There is, however, no extraordinary life stress to which our population at large is exposed. Not even the psychologic implications of the atomic age and the "cold war" are an extraordinary stress. Those who believe it should be reminded that the same stress with anxiety and phobias existed, for instance, in Central Europe before and after the long expected explosion of the I. World War in 1914, during the postwar starvation and political unrest, not to speak of the era of Mussolini and Hitler. We come to the conclusion that *it is not greater life stress but rather a lower resistance to it that accounts for the appalling frequency of mental derangements in modern culture.*

Functional mental retardation

Of what kind are these derangements that cause our concern with the mental deterioration of modern society? It certainly is not a significant increase of the great clinical psychoses taken care of in institutions of the insane, and of severe mental defects that are caused by genetic factors, intra—or extrauterine acquired injuries or diseases of the brain, endocrine glands or other metabolic disorders. These always existed in any population of the world. It is the increased frequency of what in President Kennedy's statement is called *Mental Retardation* resulting from arrested mental development and consequently lack of intellectual ability without a clinically or

pathologically detectable disease. Most of the estimated approximately 5 million retarded persons in this country apparently belong to this category which we may properly call "functional mental retardation".

The term *functional* mental retardation implies biologic immaturity and is identical with what I analyzed and called *psychic infantilism* or abnormal persistence of child's mentality (8). In child's mentality instincts and emotions are its driving forces that are not counteracted by the force of reasoning. Reasoning is a function of intellect which only gradually develops as knowledge of the child's environment expands beyond the original narrow radius by accumulating information and learning about the miracles of nature, man's progressive understanding and control of the physical forces of the world, and social organization of human society. This *knowledge* is supposed to be provided at home and school by teaching first the command of means of communication, that is, the use of language in speaking, reading and writing, then the fundamentals of mathematics, biology, science, geography and history. Training of *intellect* comprises understanding of and reasoning about the accumulated knowledge, distinction of essentials and nonessentials, logical thinking, the ability to draw conclusions and to foresee possible consequences of any action. *Ethics* and moral behavior must emerge and be understood as necessary to warrant the protective order of interpersonal relations and human society. Religion may or may not be used to strengthen ethical concepts, not to create them. The sense of *responsibility* develops with maturation of normal mentality and full understanding of ethical concepts. Adults with deficient intellectual ability are mentally retarded in various degree. Socially detectable degrees vary from morons to imbeciles. Intellectual capacity, of course, does not necessarily depend on the amount and extension of knowledge which, in turn, is determined by the cultural level.

Child's mentality is ruled by instincts and emotions; instincts to feed, to play, to associate with peers, later to fight and compete. Emotions are aroused by sensory perceptions, optic, acoustic and tactile. Memories molded by as yet limited associations form imaginary pictures and scenes in the child's mind which sometimes cannot tell the imaginary from the real. Actual sensory impressions merge imperceptibly with memories. Obfuscation of reality by exuberant fantasy of children is often taken for lying and testimonies of adult witnesses with mental retardation are accepted at face value. Gullibility and excessive suggestibility are likewise signs of a child's mind and mentally retarded as well. Verbal suggestion can readily induce make-belief in children's play and falsify memories of mentally retarded. In both children and mentally retarded we notice the tendency to perseverance and stereotypical repetition of the same words, sentences, stories or activities. Other such traits are tendency to imitate others on the one hand, and a negativistic attitude, that is, unreasonable opposition to orders on the other.

In a recent little book I pointed out how perfectly normal adults may fall back into a child's mentality when they think and act as part of a collective, of a crowd, herd or of one of the organized groups of human society. This *collective regression* to child's mentality appears to be a dominant factor responsible for the "Errant Ways

of Human Society" (8). The ever increasing number of such groups with different organizations and aims, often interfering and competing with one another and mostly overlapping, exerts a confusing and disturbing effect on the individual trapped in the web of this complex social organization. Mental disturbances of various types may emerge from this situation with a frequency commensurate to that of intellectual retardation and especially in those who are constitutionally not endowed with a normal balance of the main driving forces of human behavior, instincts, emotions, intellect, willpower and incentive.

Where do we meet the various types and different shades of mentally retarded? They cross our daily life with amazingly increasing frequency. The most dangerous type are those ruled by instincts only, often perverted, not impeded at all by reasoning: sex criminals of every variety, arsonists, certain murderers. Then there are other criminals, especially terrifying juvenile gangs and vandals of large cities, fighting society and each other. Without reason, imagination and foresight, in blind conformism to the rules established by their psychopathologic leaders they defy social order and law the necessity of which they do not comprehend. They had failed to subordinate infantile instinctive destructive impulses to the commands of reason and ethics. Teen-agers are very sensitive to the opinion of their peers and hence suggestible conformists to the rules of their gang. Drug addiction among juveniles comes from the same source.

Most numerous, however, are those who are unable to solve various emotional conflicts of daily life. Instead of solving them rationally by discussion or intelligent thinking they try to escape reality by obfuscating their mind with excessive quantities of alcohol. Theater, movies and television illustrate this mechanism very well. The suggestible audience readily believes this to be an accepted normal behavior of disappointed, frustrated humans. Especially in Anglo-Saxon culture another factor contributes, unfortunately, to the habit of excessive drinking used as escape mechanism of the mind: hypocrisy. This discrepancy between surface appearance and inside feelings which is taught and praised as good behavior from childhood on, is an additional emotional stress readily drowned by alcohol.

Another group of mentally retarded who cannot cope with ordinary and common difficulties at home, in school, business or other interpersonal relations seek for help from outside. It may be supplied by church or a physician who is consulted, particularly if psychosomatic symptoms disguise the underlying emotional conflict. These persons are the main clientele of modern psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. Never before existed such a demand for these specialists of the healing art, never before such vast sums were spent on them, and never before has the fact to be under a psychiatrist's or psychoanalyst's care been a sign of social standing and fashionable progressiveness. In the past it used to have rather a derogatory significance.

At the annual conference of the National Association for Mental Health in London Lady Wootton "castigated the trends in psychiatric treatment in U.S.A. whereby about half the academic staff of one of America's renowned universities seemed to be having, or had had psychiatric treatment. Psychiatrists were called on more

and more to deal not with illness but with personal, social, and ethical problems of living" (reported in *Lancet* 1962, March 17. p. 583). This point is well taken. The American psychiatrists Ebaugh and Barnes, in an article on our "psychiatric education", complain about the insufficient training of psychiatric residents because of the rejection of the mentally ill, of psychoses, by psychiatrists (9). In Los Angeles a novel "Walk-in" center for problems of living to be known as "Benjamin Rush Center for Problems of Living" has been opened in 1962 and was immediately crowded with persons who want help to cope with an emotional crisis arising from some problem of living. Psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists, social workers are on hand to solve problems a large majority of which had been handled in the past by average responsible persons themselves.

Ethics and Responsibility

It requires average intelligence to understand meaning and purpose of *ethics* and *personal responsibility* as well. Taught by drill and command, religious or otherwise, without recognizing ethics and responsibility as indispensable attributes of a democratic society offers a flimsy basis of future conduct in life. It gets lost, though temporarily, in the man of a crowd and fades away in members of an organized social group. Personal responsibility is readily replaced by collective responsibility of the group. Individuality is substituted by conformism. Conscience, the emotional accompaniment of ethics, the guardian over the choice of moral good or bad, of right or wrong, is strengthened only by comprehension of moral commands. *The mentally retarded is lacking in ethical behavior and responsibility.*

The impact on our society of this group of mentally retarded is best illustrated by the story of the police force in Denver, where some 6% of it were part of the biggest criminal ring that ever operated in this city. Corruption, taking bribes, sometimes even hold-ups or burglaries committed by policemen occasionally occur as single events in many other cities. A veritable crime syndicate of crooks in a police force, however, demonstrates the influence of suggestibility and conformism in this group of mentally retarded.

Not long ago a Negro janitor in Los Angeles happened to find on a quiet residential street a canvas bag containing \$ 240,000 which had been accidentally lost from an armored truck. He returned it and received a \$ 10,000 reward. Shortly thereafter he was scorned by friends and strangers, colored and whites, was flooded with letters including two from law enforcement agents, and his 3 sons were sneered by their classmates because all these citizens called the honest Negro stupid, crazy, a sucker and a "disgrace to the colored people". What a horrible devaluation of the moral of our society! Only after publication of this story throughout the world the tide turned and bundles of complimentary enthusiastic mail from all continents poured on the honest Negro family in Los Angeles.

As to the purely religious concept of ethics it is interesting to learn about the divergent opinions of clergymen concerning citizens who intend to supply their own

family atombomb-shelters with machine guns to keep their neighbors out when the bomb falls (Time 1961, Aug. 18. p. 58). This is only a modern version of religious ethics that had been the decisive factor of European history, and decimated European population during middle-ages.

Anyone in doubt about the extension of ethical defects in our culture may be reminded that the yearly nationwide loss of American business and industry employers from thefts of goods, merchandise, parts and materials by their own employees amounts to one billion dollars. Much higher are even the losses of retailers, hotels, air-lines and others through the activities of shoplifters and "collectors of keepsakes".

Conformism

Conformism is a subterfuge, an evasion from individual responsibility. Responsibility is fading away with increasing bureaucracy. Gullibility and suggestibility, these infantile traits, foster irresponsibility and conformism both in children and mentally retarded. Renouncing education in favor of precipitated marriage in juveniles, "walking out" on one's family and home in grown-up's are too well known signs of emotion prevailing over responsible reasoning.

Conformism is the theme of behavior in modern culture. Lack of conformism may even be confused with lack of mental health or at least arouse suspicion of communistic tendencies. Spread of fanaticism, racial, religious, political, pseudo-humanitarian as in antivivisectionists or pseudo-scientific, for instance in food fadists, is generated by conformism to the preaching of skillful demagogues. Their method is very old. Conditioned behavior patterns implanted in the brain, especially in childhood, can be destroyed or even reversed by proper technique that became highly refined for political purposes in totalitarian states and is known as brain washing. Threats of torture, hellfire sermons of Wesley, steady drumming and dancing of Voodoo rites, constant questioning by police, and others belong to this "Physiology of Conversion and Brain-washing" (W. Sargant, 10). The more mentally retarded, the easier succumbs a person to such tactics.

An almost incredible manifestation of misunderstood democracy and misguided child psychology are a few so-called progressive schools which cropped up in America and England, only to learn their failure the hard way. One of these schools "without rules" in Britain had to be closed only recently. It was based on the misconception that freedom rather than coercion breeds responsibility of children. The pupils, boys and girls aged 7 to 17, were allowed to smoke, to disregard cleanliness and order, not to attend classes if they wanted to or to play hooky for weeks and even months at a time. They might have bathed or even slept together. A study of the results of this type of "education" has not been reported to my knowledge. Is it pure coincidence that the majority of the parents were artists, musicians, actors and writers but never businessmen? The answer requires a short discussion of the mental condition of many contemporary representatives of modern creative art, music and literature.

Aesthetics

The purpose of these professions as artists and composers is to create beauty and to convey the aesthetic feeling of beauty to their customers and admirers; as writers they are supposed to arouse temporary emotions of the reader serving both mental relaxation and widening the horizon and knowledge of human nature. It is not attempted here to elaborate on deliberate professional neglect of aesthetics by replacing "fine art" and literature with dirt, filth and products of maltreated technical material, and offend our acoustic cerebral receptors by a cacophony of incoherent noises. These activities betray qualitative mental abnormalities. As *schizoid* or definite *schizophrenic mentality* it is evident to any psychiatrist. To the scientific term "word-salad" for a typical schizophrenic symptom I added the terms "color-salad" and "tone-salad" (8). Schizoids usually are not mentally retarded, they are mentally deranged cranks but not necessarily sick and requiring medical-psychiatric treatment. Often they may even have extraordinary abilities in a limited specific area, yet detached from intellectual control and normal emotions. Schizoid personalities show the characteristic traits in various forms. Grotesque and absurd fantasies of Picasso, for instance, came to the fore both in his art and as playwright. Combined with mental retardation, uninhibited by intelligence, ethics and responsibility but highly susceptible to the suggestive influence of their peers, schizoids form the group known as beatniks, or we meet them as isolated cranks. Gertrude Stein, famous for her typical schizophrenic stereotypic utterance "a rose is a rose, is a rose, is a rose", became a social center of many talented and untalented schizoid characters in the twenties in Paris. From her fashionable salon emerged a great deal of what became labeled as dadaism, surrealism and similar schizoid products of art and poetry.

The danger of this large group of schizoid artists, composers and writers is their suggestive influence on the masses, their spreading collective confusion of the minds, especially in the mentally retarded. Remedial measures against deteriorating and vanishing aesthetics are in the hands of music critics, literary critics and directors of art museums. They are the competent custodians of mental health of our society in this special field, as psychiatrists are in the field of mental illness, and law enforcement agencies in the area of criminal and dangerous psychopaths. Some of the exhibits of modern art and of musical performances could rather well serve as audio-visual educational material in departments of psychiatry in medical schools. A final remark to this subject might be in order. Psychiatrists and law enforcement officers are trained in dealing with persons with mental aberrations and are licensed to deal with them. Such training and licensing of guardians of aesthetics is lacking and their appointment does not eliminate the possibility of their own abnormal schizoid deviation.

Perversion of values

Perversion of Values in our society extends beyond the sphere of aesthetics and illustrates a collective mental immaturity. An extensive research project on the social life of teenagers in ten highschools of northern Illinois revealed that about half of the questioned prefer rock-and-roll to any other kind of music, and many more would rather be a good athlete or a leader in extracurricular activities than a brilliant student. This is an expression of a *physiological* mental immaturity of adolescents. If a champion of baseball or another sport is received and admired by a parade of his fans it is what I called *regression* to psychic infantilism of a crowd. Heroes of brain work and leaders of cultural progress never have aroused this type of collective enthusiasm. If muscle strength and skill enjoys preference to intellectual brain power, if the "regular guy" ranks higher than the disrespected "egg-head" at large, it is a sign of mental retardation, of failing mental maturation above the adolescent level. In biographies of outstanding scientists more importance is often attached to the part they formerly played on a college football team than to their more valuable real achievements. A good illustration is the presentation to the public by the press of the newly appointed Bryon (Whizzer) White to the Supreme Court: "A 44 year old Colorado Democrat and former all-American football star".

In the artistic world of entertainment there are some emotionally unstable "stars" of the movies and T. V. whose intellect succumbs to the emotional uplift of public adulation of the large crowd of fans. Megalomania may develop and accompany the fabulous ascent to fame. Some of the stars may lose any sense of proportion and forget that their behavior and actions exert a great influence upon their juvenile fans. Other signs of mental immaturity such as multiple divorces, abuse of alcohol and sedatives, suicide attempts with insufficient "overdoses of sleeping pills", superstition, astrology, consultation of quacks, and the like are not unusual in a movie colony.

Mental Hygiene

Mental Hygiene is concerned with the preservation of mental health. *Teachers* in primary and secondary schools are qualified to contribute to it more than any other profession or agency. In the first place, it is their job to eliminate illiteracy found in a high percentage of American children to-day. Inability to read and write precludes any further education and may foster criminal tendencies. Why only American Jonnies can't read whereas teachers of civilized European countries do not even understand our problem of "non-readers" is not to be blamed on any mental inferiority of American children. It is often called "mental block" what keeps the reading level of 25% of junior-high-school children at or close to zero. It is not the children who should be stigmatized by such meaningless term. The bureaucratic school authorities, not the dependent and powerless teachers insist on an unphysiologic method of teaching to read and spell, and must learn the hard way that this method was discarded as unsuccessful long ago. The word recognition

method through identifying the complex visual impression of the printed or written word with the acoustic memory of its sound was tried in public schools of Vienna after the I. World War, under a socialistic government, but quickly abandoned because of its obvious failure.

It is not attempted to elaborate again on the necessity of an extensive reform of our educational system. This has been done by numerous competent critics and by the present writer elsewhere (8). Yet, the main principle of a reform must be based on substitution of common sense for some non-sensical concepts of "behavioral sciences". A few examples may illustrate this situation.

Educationists use the word "readiness" to learn reading and writing. A child must have the "mental age" before he is "ready" for schooling. This is a serious mistake. Increasing criticism is heard of overrating and overreliance on I Q scores. Good teachers are well aware of it. A thorough student of our educational system speaks of our education's "test craze" being largely a crutch for inadequate teaching. In a comparison of the American and European system the selective elimination of scholastically unfit highschool students from advancing to the next grade was called "alien to our American philosophy of education". Such an utterance of a teacher is intended to appear patriotic and democratic; actually it betrays lack of understanding. We certainly need people educated to their individually different full capacity. Yet, the American philosophy of education must strive for excellence not for equalization and mediocrity. Inhibitions controlling physiologically prevalent unsound instinctive and emotional drives of childhood must be created not avoided. Reasonable discipline must be enforced, responsibility encouraged.

Drill and training is indispensable to transmit and increase knowledge of facts, theories and hypotheses; *education* teaches intelligent digestion of this knowledge, teaches logical thinking and critical reasoning. It might have been expected that education too will take part in the mechanistic trend of our machine age. So-called programmed self-teaching with the aid of machines should replace books and personal instruction by teachers. It is claimed to speed up learning and to increase learning efficiency. We wholeheartedly agree with the opinion of an experienced teacher: "Any teacher who can be replaced by a machine deserves to be replaced".

Education must start at home and not stop at the end of schooling. As a matter of fact, not only parents but every citizen privileged to exert his democratic voting right must acquire some knowledge of his environment and the world, and he must keep abreast with its changes. It is the job of our complex communication system to serve him for this purpose. He must be able, however, to recognize and beware of distortions of information by biased political, nationalistic or religious restrictions.

This, of course, is a far cry from desirable accomplishment. Ignorance and stupidity, both individual and collective, in all nations of the world has inspired the publication of many books in different languages dealing with this subject. To-day 49% of mothers in London and Northampton had not heard the expression "welfare state" or could not define it. In Latin America the wealthy class identified "communism" with crime, and for 90% of her people the word "capitalism"

stands for exploitation. How many persons with highschool education in our country can clearly express the concept of socialism, communism, fascism or totalitarianism? The trouble is that they talk about it and don't know what they are talking about.

We as the acknowledged leaders of the "free world" have to know about those other nations that we intend to save from communism. We have to understand their peculiarities and their way of life. To waste our money by pumping it into them without control in order to enforce democracy on them, which they neither understand nor want, is poor reasoning. We must bring along empathy based on information. In his book "A Nation of Sheep" W. I. Lederer castigated our misinformation. He complains about the inadequate qualification of some of our ambassadors in underdeveloped countries who rely on bribed native interpreters, liars and crooks. That's why we so often supported with foreign aid the wrong men and their governments in foreign lands. If we want to impress other nations with our culture (theater, music) we have not always been careful in our selection of the proper material to be presented.

Education of our society to develop the intellectual faculties of each adult member to its maximum and to prevent unnecessary standstill at a lower level, is by no means the exclusive job of professional educators. That's where some of the "behavioral sciences" get into the picture. Journalists, writers, librarians, communication media such as radio, T. V., popular scientific, legal, economic or political lectures, discussions and symposia, and social workers can and do contribute a lot to the maturation of retarded minds. In one respect democratic nations are at a disadvantage compared with totalitarian regimes. To enforce the use of these educational media would be contrary to democratic principles. Indoctrination by brain-washing is compulsory in totalitarian states, training the intellect by brain-enlightening in democratic states is not.

We do not want to enter into a discussion whether "behavioral sciences" deserve to be included into the rank of "sciences". This has been questioned with regard to sociology, journalism, political science, economics and rightfully denied to theology. Verbiage so often encountered in "behavioral sciences" is no substitute for selection of worthwhile projects and their solution with logically incontestable scientific methods. Statistical methods commonly used in "behavioral sciences" disregard constitutional individual differences which exist even in inbred animals. Individualization is imperative not only in medicine or education. Competent judges know that well and beware of bureaucratic application of law. They interpret the meaning and purpose of law according to the individual case and the underlying motivation. They know what Robert Hutchins once pointed out, that the importance of law is not that it is coercive, but that it is pedagogical. It has been shown how unreliable and falsifying data are that have been gathered by questionnaires or personal interviews. Nevertheless they are used for sociological research.

And what are some of the problems social "scientists" are anxious to solve? An editorial of the J.A.M.A. (180, April 14, 1962) coined the word "*scientism*" for those many medical research workers who waste huge sums of money on "doubtful, artificially blown-up, occasionally ridiculous projects". Recently we learned that \$ 1.1 million was granted for a new research institute on alcoholism at Stanford

University, headed by a Ph. D. and former professor of psychology. The study is aimed at "fresh ideas and fresh approaches" to the problem of alcoholism. What are they? Do we need any? Will the grant generate them? Would it not be preferable to use \$ 1.1 million for action rather than for "behavioral research"? Another pertinent example of sociologic scientism was quoted by Admiral Rickover (11): A state education commission recommended "studies of how the last war affected the dating pattern of our culture". One is reminded of little Johnnie's question in his zoology class, who had counted the legs of a millepede.

At last let us take a look how the problem of personality assessment has been tackled by research workers in the Mayo Clinic. They too wanted to be modern and use automation technics rather than brains to solve that problem. A patient has to fill out the so-called "Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory" consisting of 550 statements describing various kinds of human behavior. The evaluation of this inventory is presented by a computer in no time. In the opinion of these workers "of all aspects of the care of patients, clinical assessment of their emotional health by the clinician is perhaps in the most unsatisfactory state and most in need of technological aid... When it comes to evaluation the mental and emotional status of his patient, he (the doctor) has not improved on Osler" (12). I would still prefer Osler's time honored method and feel sure that experienced older physicians, lawyers, judges, poets, playwrights, actors and police officers will continue to use it. Knowing people of different strata and human nature, intuitive empathy and experience are and will always be a more reliable and practical basis for personality assessment than automation technics. "Soul is a wide land" ("die Seele ist ein weites Land") in the words of the Austrian physician-playwright Arthur Schnitzler. It is not a suitable object for exploration by automation.

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SUMMARY

The deterioration of mental health of our population is usually interpreted as the result of the increased modern life stress in our atomic age with its implications of the « cold war ». It is not a greater cultural life stress, however, but rather a lower individual resistance to it that accounts for the increased frequency of psychoneuroses in modern society. The term « mental retardation » comprises two categories: one is caused by genetic factors or acquired intra- and extrauterine diseases of infancy and childhood, the second is due to functional mental retardation if the normal individual genetic endowment has not developed to its full capacity and has persisted in a state of immaturity without any interference of a disease. The characteristics of such functional mental retardation (psychic infantilism) and their manifestation in society

are outlined in detail. Instincts and emotions insufficiently inhibited by intellect determine the behavior of the functionally mentally retarded. Deficient ethics and responsibility are very often consequences of deficient intellect. Conformism is a subterfuge and evasion from personal responsibility. Exuberant imagination and fantasy of an immature mind, uncontrolled by intellect, becoming prevalent in a schizoid personality have eliminated the concept of beauty and this is the essence of aesthetics from creative art, music and literature. Mental hygiene is chiefly the job of the family home and the teachers in primary and secondary schools. Education is more than drill and training. Teachers cannot be replaced by machines. Automation technics, recently used even for personality assessment, are out of place in this field.

RIASSUNTO

Il deterioramento della salute mentale della nostra popolazione viene generalmente interpretato quale risultato dell'aumentato stress della vita moderna in questa nostra era atomica, con tutte le conseguenze della « guerra fredda ». Non è tuttavia, ad un maggiore stress della vita culturale, bensì ad una diminuita resistenza individuale che è dovuto l'aumento di psiconeurosi nella società moderna. Il termine « ritardo mentale » comprende due categorie: una ha come causa fattori genetici o malattie ambientali sia endouterine che extrauterine della prima età; la seconda trova le sue radici in un ritardo mentale funzionale, se il patrimonio genetico dell'individuo normale non si è sviluppato completamente, rimanendo in uno stato di immaturità; e ciò senza l'intervento di una malattia. Vengono dettagliatamente spiegate le caratteristiche di tale ritardo mentale funzionale (infantilismo psichico) e le loro manifestazioni nella società. Il comportamento del ritardato mentale

funzionale è determinato da un insufficiente controllo da parte dell'intelletto degli istinti ed emozioni. Una mancanza di etica o di responsabilità sono spesso causate da una deficienza intellettuale. Il conformismo costituisce un sotterfugio ed una evasione dalla responsabilità personale. Una immaginazione ed una fantasia esuberanti in una mente immatura, non controllata dall'intelletto, e che prevalgono in una personalità schizoide, hanno eliminato il concetto di bellezza (che è l'essenza dell'estetica) dall'arte creativa, dalla musica, dalla letteratura. L'igiene mentale è principalmente compito della famiglia e degli insegnanti delle scuole primarie e secondarie. L'educazione è più importante dell'esercizio e dell'allenamento. Gli insegnamenti non possono essere sostituiti dalle macchine. I tecnici dell'automazione, recentemente usati nella valutazione della personalità, in questo campo sono fuori posto.

RÉSUMÉ

La détérioration de la santé psychique de notre population est généralement considérée comme le résultat du stress augmenté de la vie moderne dans notre âge atomique avec toutes les conséquences de la « guerre froide ». Toutefois, cette augmentation de psychoneuroses dans la société moderne n'est pas due au stress augmenté de la vie culturelle, mais plutôt à une résistance individuelle diminuée. Le terme « retard psychique » comprend deux catégories: la première est provoquée par des facteurs génétiques, ou par des maladies intra ou extra-utérines acquises en bas âge ou pendant l'enfance; la deuxième est provoquée par un retard psychique fonctionnel, si le patrimoine génétique normal individuel n'a pas atteint son développement complet, se traînant dans un état d'immaturité, sans l'interférence d'une maladie. Les caractéristiques de ce retard psychique fonctionnel (infantilisme psy-

chique), ainsi que ses manifestations dans la société sont décrites en détail. Une éthique ou une responsabilité déficiente peuvent être souvent les conséquences d'un intellect déficient. Le conformisme constitue un subterfuge et une évasion des responsabilités personnelles. L'imagination et la fantaisie exubérantes d'un esprit immature, non contrôlé par l'intellect, prévalant chez une personnalité schizoïde, ont éliminé le concept de beauté (qui est l'essence de l'esthétique!) de l'art créatif, de la musique, de la littérature. L'hygiène psychique est principalement un devoir de la famille et des maîtres des écoles primaires et secondaires. L'éducation est bien plus importante de l'exercice et de l'entraînement. Les maîtres ne peuvent pas être remplacés par des machines. Les techniciens de l'automatisme, dont l'on a fait usage récemment pour l'évaluation de la personnalité, sont hors de place dans ce secteur.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Zunahme geistiger Störungen in unserer Bevölkerung wird allgemein auf die Aufregungen und Angst zurückgeführt, die das Atom-Zeitalter mit dem « cold war » mit sich bringt. Diese Zunahme scheint aber mehr durch die herabgesetzte Resistenz gegen die Anforderungen der modernen Kultur bedingt zu sein. Geistige Unreife (mental retardation) kommt in zwei Formen vor. Die eine ist durch genetische Faktoren oder erworbene intra-oder extrauterine Krankheiten bedingt, die zweite beruht auf der unvollkommenen phänotypischen Entfaltung normaler Erbanlagen. Die Zeichen eines solchen psychischen Infantilismus werden besprochen und sein Einfluss auf die menschliche Gesellschaft dargelegt. Instinkte und Gefühle, ungenügend gezügelt

durch Intellekt, beherrschen das Verhalten dieser Menschen. Mangelhafte Ethik und persönliches Verantwortungsgefühl sind sehr oft Folgen eines mangelhaften Intellekts. Konformismus ist eine Ausflucht, um sich persönlicher Verantwortung zu entziehen. Überschwängliche Phantasie schizoïder Persönlichkeiten hat in der bildenden Kunst, Musik und Literatur den Begriff der Schönheit ausgeschaltet und damit die Aesthetik erschlagen. Psychische Hygiene muss im Elternhaus und in der Schule einsetzen. Erziehung ist viel mehr als Drill und muss guten Lehrern vorbehalten bleiben. Maschinen und « Automation » sind kein Ersatz und für die Beurteilung einer Persönlichkeit ungeeignet.