

the opportunities and relevancies of the environment are discovered. During the early part of this phase the child does not recognize the independent nature of the environment and deals with it in an arbitrary and unrealistic manner. He tries to force the environment to be what he wants it to be. The limitations of this approach are soon realized, however, and the child gradually learns to accommodate himself to the objective properties of the environment. The uniformities of development throughout the successive phases are due to maturational sequences and to cultural standardization. However, it is impossible to predict with complete accuracy the course of a person's life because the influence of the environment cannot always be known beforehand. Environmental events are pretty much independent of and beyond the control and foresight of the person; they are fortuitous and unpredictable. Predictions may be made on the basis of the laws of personality development but such predictions are merely approximate. One can predict with reasonable accuracy that a young man will eventually enter some vocation, but to foretell exactly what vocation it will be involves considerable guesswork. However, as a person grows older, he becomes more rigid and set in his ways and less open to influences from the environment, so that his behavior is easier to foretell.

Although Angyal acknowledges that regression can and does occur, he feels, like Jung, that regression often serves the forward-going tendency of personality growth. That is, an individual may learn something from regression that enables him to return to his present problems and wrestle more effectively with them.

Angyal also believes that the symbolic functions of the organism, for example, thinking, develop with age and that "the center of gravity of life shifts more and more toward the psychological realm" (1941, p. 77). As a person grows older he tends to satisfy more and more of his needs by means of instrumental psychological processes. That is, he spends more time thinking and less time acting.

Angyal does not espouse or enunciate any theory of learning. He is content to use such terms as differentiation, reorganization, shifting, and the like, most of which are borrowed from the vocabulary of Gestalt psychology.

#### MASLOW'S HOLISTIC-DYNAMIC THEORY

Abraham Maslow, professor of psychology at Brandeis University, has in his numerous writings, a selection of which has been brought to-



gether in his recent book *Motivation and personality* (1954), aligned himself closely with an organismic, or as he calls it, a holistic-dynamic point of view. We shall single out for discussion some of the extensions that Maslow has made to organismic theory.

Maslow upbraids psychology for its "pessimistic, negative and limited conception" of man. He feels that psychology has dwelled more upon man's frailties than it has upon his strengths; that it has thoroughly explored his sins while neglecting his virtues. Psychology has seen life in terms of man making desperate attempts to avoid pain rather than in his taking active steps to gain pleasure and happiness. Where is the psychology, Maslow asks, that takes account of gaiety, exuberance, love, and well-being to the same extent that it deals with misery, conflict, shame, and hostility? Psychology "has voluntarily restricted itself to only half of its rightful jurisdiction, and that the darker, meaner half." Maslow has undertaken to supply the other half of the picture, the brighter, better half, and to give a portrait of the whole man.

He writes as follows.

Now let me try to present briefly and at first dogmatically the essence of this newly developing conception of the psychiatrically healthy man. First of all and most important of all is the strong belief that man has an essential nature of his own, some skeleton of psychological structure that may be treated and discussed analogously with his physical structure, that he has needs, capacities and tendencies that are genetically based, some of which are characteristic of the whole human species, cutting across all cultural lines, and some of which are unique to the individual. These needs are on their face good or neutral rather than evil. Second, there is involved the conception that full healthy and normal and desirable development consists in actualizing this nature, in fulfilling these potentialities, and in developing into maturity along the lines that this hidden, covert, dimly seen essential nature dictates, growing from within rather than being shaped from without. Third, it is now seen clearly that psychopathology in general results from the denial or the frustration or the twisting of man's essential nature. By this conception what is good? Anything that conduces to this desirable development in the direction of actualization of the inner nature of man. What is bad or abnormal? Anything that frustrates or blocks or denies the essential nature of man. What is psychopathological? Anything that disturbs or frustrates or twists the course of self-actualization. What is psychotherapy, or for that matter any therapy of any kind? Any means of any kind that helps to restore the person to the path of self-actualization and of development along the lines that his inner nature dictates (1954a, pp. 340-341).

In a further statement of his basic assumptions, Maslow has added this important one:

This inner nature is not strong and overpowering and unmistakable like the instincts of animals. It is weak and delicate and subtle and easily overcome by habit, cultural pressure and wrong attitudes toward it. Even though weak, it never disappears in the normal person, perhaps not even in the sick person. It persists, even though denied, underground (1954b).

In this eloquent passage, Maslow has made a number of striking assumptions regarding the nature of man. Man has an inborn nature which is essentially good, and is never evil. This is a novel conception since many theorists assume that the instincts are bad and must be tamed by training and socialization.

As personality unfolds through maturation, the potential goodness of man manifests itself ever more clearly. When man is wicked or miserable or neurotic, it is because the environment has made him so through ignorance and social pathology. The good man is made bad by a bad environment although some men may remain good in spite of the influence of a corrupting environment. Of course, the environment can also play a benign role by assisting man in his efforts to fulfill himself, but this assistance is not absolutely required. It is enough to ask of the environment that it stand to one side and not interfere with man's self-actualization. Aggression and destructiveness, for example, are not indigenous to man. He becomes pugnacious and destructive when his inner nature is twisted or denied or frustrated. As soon as the frustration is removed, aggression disappears.

Maslow has propounded a theory of human motivation which assumes that needs are arranged along a hierarchy of priority or potency. When the needs that have the greatest potency and priority are satisfied, the next needs in the hierarchy emerge and press for satisfaction. When these are satisfied, another step up the ladder of motives is taken. The hierarchical order from most potent to least potent is as follows: physiological needs such as hunger and thirst, safety needs, needs for belongingness and love, esteem needs, needs for self-actualization, cognitive needs such as a thirst for knowledge, and finally aesthetic needs such as the desire for beauty. Hunger and thirst always take precedence over a desire for approval or recognition, but the latter are prepotent over the need for beauty. It will be observed that no place has been provided in this hierarchy for antisocial or harm-producing needs. Man may become antisocial only when society denies him the fulfillment of his inborn needs.

Maslow believes that if psychologists study crippled, stunted, neurotic people exclusively they are bound to produce a crippled psychology. In order to develop a more complete and comprehensive science of the human person it is also incumbent upon psychologists to study people who have realized their potentialities to the fullest. Maslow has done just this; he has made an intensive and far-reaching investigation of a group of self-actualizing people. They are rare birds as Maslow found when he was securing his group. After finding suitable subjects, some of whom were historical personages, such as Lincoln, Jefferson, Walt Whitman, Thoreau, and Beethoven, while others were living at the time they were studied, like Eleanor Roosevelt, Einstein, and friends and acquaintances of the investigator, they were investigated clinically to discover what characteristics distinguished them from the ordinary run of people. These turned out to be their distinguishing features: (1) They are realistically oriented. (2) They accept themselves, other people, and the natural world for what they are. (3) They have a great deal of spontaneity. (4) They are problem-centered rather than self-centered. (5) They have an air of detachment and a need for privacy. (6) They are autonomous and independent. (7) Their appreciation of people and things is fresh rather than stereotyped. (8) Most of them have had profound mystical or spiritual experiences although not necessarily religious in character. (9) They identify with mankind. (10) Their intimate relationships with a few specially loved people tend to be profound and deeply emotional rather than superficial. (11) Their values and attitudes are democratic. (12) They do not confuse means with ends. (13) Their sense of humor is philosophical rather than hostile. (14) They have a great fund of creativeness. (15) They resist conformity to the culture.

It appears that Maslow's unique contribution to the organismic viewpoint lies in his preoccupation with healthy people rather than sick ones, and his feeling that studies of these two groups generate different types of theory. Both Goldstein and Angyal, as medical specialists and psychotherapists, have come into contact with defective and disorganized people, yet in spite of this biased sample each has fashioned a theory that embraces the whole organism, and one that applies to the sick as well as to the healthy. Maslow has chosen the more direct course of studying healthy people whose wholeness and unity of personality are readily apparent. As self-actualizers, these people whom Maslow has observed are the embodiment of organismic theory.

## LECKY'S THEORY OF SELF-CONSISTENCY

Although Prescott Lecky did not develop a comprehensive theory of personality, his ideas have so much kinship with organismic theory that some brief consideration of them, as set forth in his little book, *Self-consistency* (1945), is called for. Gardner Murphy in his foreword to Lecky's book (p. 1) says that "Lecky had in his own way developed . . . the conception that the individual must *define for himself the nature of that totality which he is*. He must throughout life assimilate new experiences in such fashion as both to *be* and to *appear* a living unit."

For Lecky, personality is the central, unifying concept of psychology. All psychological phenomena are considered to be expressions of a unified personality. All of man's activities serve the sovereign aim of personality, to maintain self-consistency.

Personality is conceived of as an organization of values which are consistent with one another. Behavior is an attempt on the part of the person to maintain the consistency and unity of these values in an unstable environment. Accordingly, there is only one source of motivation, namely, the necessity to maintain the unity and integrity of the organism, and one developmental goal, namely, the achievement of a unified and self-consistent organization. Lecky believed that the person craves a sense of unification, rather than pleasure, but that as a result of attaining unity the person derives pleasure therefrom. Pleasure is only a by-product and not the actual goal of life.

In general, the individual resists experiences that do not fit his structure of values and assimilates those that do. He always tries to adjust himself to his environment in a manner that will be harmonious with his structure of values. Sometimes, however, a problem or conflict created by an unsympathetic environment may exert so much pressure upon him that in order to reestablish his stability he has to give in to a change in his value system. Development, therefore, proceeds in the direction of assimilating stimuli from the outside world that are consistent with one's values or of reorganizing one's values in order to fit the demands of the environment.

Personality develops as a result of actual contacts with the world and the organization of experiences gained from these contacts into an integrated whole. The problems of life become increasingly difficult as the child grows older. The most constant factor in the individual's experience after himself is provided by the members of his

family. By identifying himself with his parents, the child tries to bring himself and them into a unified and consistent relationship. By the age of five, the child has usually assimilated the customary home situations and he is then ready to begin meeting problems outside the family. During adolescence the need for unity is most acute because this is the great transition period of life when the young person is forced to revise his childish values and take on mature ones.

Lecky, like Maslow, is optimistic about man and his ability to develop a healthy, self-consistent personality. And like all organismic theorists, Lecky places great emphasis upon the potentialities of man. Left to his own powers of growth, Lecky believes that man has the ability to create a unified personality.

## CURRENT STATUS AND EVALUATION

Organismic theory as a reaction against mind-body dualism, faculty psychology, and stimulus-response behaviorism has been immensely successful. Who is there in psychology today who is not a proponent of the main tenets of organismic theory that the whole is something other than the sum of its parts, that what happens to a part happens to the whole, and that there are no separate compartments within the organism? What psychologist believes that there is a mind which is separate from the body, a mind which obeys laws different from those pertaining to the body? Who believes that there are isolated events, insulated processes, detached functions? Very few if any psychologists subscribe any longer to an atomistic viewpoint. We are all organismic psychologists whatever else we may be.

In this sense, organismic theory is more of an attitude or orientation or frame of reference than it is a systematic behavior theory. It says, in effect, that since everything is related to the whole, true understanding results from the correct placing of a phenomenon within the context of the total system. It directs the investigator to take into account a web of variables rather than pairs of variables, to consider the event which he is studying as a component of a system rather than as an isolated happening. To understand the laws by which the total system operates is in fact the ultimate concern of any scientist; it is the ideal towards which he constantly strives. The organismic viewpoint as applied within the province of human psychology asserts that the total person is the natural unit of study. Since the normal, healthy human being, or any other organism for that matter, always functions as an organized whole, he should be studied as an organized whole.

While recognizing that present techniques of research and quantitative analysis may not permit the psychological investigator to realize the organismic goal of studying the whole person, it urges psychology to find the means for doing so. If quantitative methods are not available then qualitative methods should be used. Meanwhile, psychology should address itself to the task of developing methods that will bring it closer to the organismic goal of understanding the whole person. Organismic theory in this sense is much more of a set of directives than it is a system of facts, principles, and laws.

There is not one official organismic theory of personality; there are many. An organismic theory of personality is defined by the attitude of the theorist, not by the contents of the model of personality that is constructed. If the theory focuses upon the whole organism as a unified system rather than upon separate traits or drives or habits then the theory may be called an organismic one. Goldstein, Angyal, Maslow, Lecky, Allport, Murray, Murphy, Rogers, Freud, Jung, and virtually all other contemporary personality theorists adopt an organismic orientation yet there are radical differences among these theories. What Goldstein finds in the organism is not precisely what Allport or Freud finds there, although all three may be classified properly as organismic in their general orientation.

There is little to find fault with in the organismic approach because it is so universally accepted. One can, however, evaluate a *particular* organismic theory such as Goldstein's or Angyal's. Perhaps the most serious charge that has been made against Goldstein's version of organismic theory is that it is not sufficiently holistic. Goldstein treats the organism as a segregated unit which is set apart from the rest of the world. The skin is the boundary between the organism and the world; exchanges take place across the boundary but the organism and the environment are treated as separate realms. A thoroughgoing holistic approach would make no such arbitrary division between what takes place within the skin and what takes place outside of it. The organism should be regarded as a differentiated component of a larger system, a system which includes the whole universe. Goldstein, while acknowledging the truth of this criticism, would reply that the whole universe is much too large a chunk for any scientist to study. The holistic theorist has to be realistic about what can and what cannot be taken into account. It is conceivable that events in outer space affect our behavior but we just do not possess the means of including such events within our scientific ken. Tennyson's flower in the crannied wall, could he but know it "all and all, I should know what God and

man is" is a moving poetic truth, but it is scarcely an attainable goal. Although everything is related to everything else, Goldstein believes that many of the strands making up the total cosmic web are so distantly connected with one another that they can be ignored without doing any serious injustice to our understanding of personality.

Where is one to draw the line, however, and say "Beyond this boundary the effects are virtually zero"? If everything is a component in the grand scheme of nature, how can it be known without making a test what is and what is not relevant? The answer obviously is that it cannot be known. W. A. Hunt in reviewing *The organism* (1940) calls this the organismic paradox. The organismic theorist denies the validity of partitive concepts yet he is forced to use them. If Goldstein is justified in treating a part, the organism, as a segregated whole, then why is another psychologist not justified in considering learning or perception or emotion as holistic processes? Angyal's biosphere is one attempt to broaden the holistic base of organismic theory. According to this conception, the organism and the environment are poles of a larger system. If by environment Angyal means everything in the universe other than the organism, then the total biospheric system is identical with the universe, and the paradox is resolved.

That the question of deciding where to draw the limits of one's system is not an academic one is indicated by the diverse hypotheses that have been put forward to explain man's conduct. For example, serious attempts have been made to show that the course of the stars influences human behavior, that remote historical and prehistorical happenings as well as future events have a bearing upon present behavior. If clairvoyance and mental telepathy should prove to be true—and there are many today who believe that they are authentic phenomena—the limits of the holistic system to which a person belongs would be greatly extended. In the light of these considerations Goldstein's critics may well ask: Why stop at the skin, or even at the boundary of the near environment?

A number of more or less specific criticisms have been raised regarding Goldstein's theory. He has been criticized for not distinguishing sufficiently between what is inherent in the organism and what has been put there by the culture. Kattsoff (1942), for example, has raised this question. Goldstein's concept of self-actualization has been regarded as being too general in character to be useful for making specific predictions. Skinner (1940) considers self-actualization a metaphysical concept because it cannot be put to an experimental test. Some psychologists object to Goldstein's apparent disregard of statisti-