Book Reviews

Science and the Psyche: Getting Ourselves Together

Psychoanalysis Observed. GEOFFREY GORER, ANTHONY STORR, JOHN WREN-LEWIS, and PETER LOMAS. Edited with an introduction by CHARLES RYCROFT. Coward-McCann, New York, 1967. 165 pp. $4.50.

The Americanization of the Unconscious. JOHN R. SEELEY. International Science Press, New York, 1967. viii + 456 pp. $8.95.

Both these books are extraordinarily good, and they are even better when taken together. They illuminate each other, extend each other, and, on occasion, even collide with each other in an exciting way. *Psychoanalysis Observed* is a very short book, consisting of five well-focused essays by three British psychoanalysts—Charles Rycroft, who also edited the collection, Anthony Storr, and Peter Lomas—and two of their fellow-travelers—anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer and John Wren-Lewis, a theologian and industrial scientist. It is addressed to those who worry and fret about psychoanalysis, about its status, its validity, or both. Seeley's book, on the other hand, very long and somewhat discursive, is addressed more to those who worry about man-in-society and fret about the classical question "What is to be done?"

As if somehow to act out a psychoanalytic thesis, the publishers of Rycroft's book have encased it in a dust jacket covered with deceptive description, implying that the book attacks psychoanalysis and its "whole value in the modern world," and quoting from a review by a doughty rear-guard anti-Freudian, William Sargant: "It is now certain that Freud's methods help very few of the really mentally ill, and his sexual subconscious mind may now well prove to be a mass delusional belief." One cannot tell this book by its cover. Such an implication is about as valid as an accusation that Marshal Tito has become a major shareholder in General Motors. Revisionist the book certainly is; and one would suppose that in the eyes of an orthodox Freudian it is blasphemously heretical. But the book is more usefully viewed as an effort to free Freudian thinking from the inescapable bounds of time and space that limited Freud himself and distorted some of his thinking.

A principal issue that is dealt with, in one way or another, by all five contributors to this volume is the set of errors involved in chaining psychoanalytic theory to the biological, physical, medical framework in which a turn-of-the-century scientist-physician was necessarily imprisoned. Rycroft proposes that psychoanalysis is not—and indeed never was—a quasi-physical scientific theory of causation, but rather a set of discoveries that is better understood from the viewpoint of semantics, and, further, that Freud himself was partly aware of this, as evidenced, for example, by his choosing as a title not *The Causation of Dreams* but *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Storr, too, says that the problem of cure in psychoanalysis, which has led to so much fruitless recriminatory criticism and counterresearch, is essentially irrelevant. In the psychoanalytic enterprise, he says, one moves very quickly away from simplified issues such as the cause of, and relief of, symptoms to much grander issues involving revaluation of one's whole life. Such an enterprise simply does not fit into the category of medical treatment. Lomas, in his exposition of an existential point of view, says that Freud (one would assume unwittingly or "unconsciously") "took the psychoanalytic study of neurosis out of the world of science, into the world of humanities, because a meaning is not the product of causes, but the creation of a subject." And Gorer points out that psychoanalysis is an essentially historical method.

It is Wren-Lewis, however, who penetrates most deeply and most radically into this problem, in his persuasive argument that the scientific materialism, supposedly so liberating, in which Freud's thinking was imbedded, itself shares in the "paranoid metaphysical character" of traditional religion, the "universal neurosis" that Freud exposed so effectively. The Liberator was himself never fully unchained from the basic idea of externalized or uncontrollable causation. Quoting from Bertrand Russell's statement, "Brief and powerless is Man's life; . . . omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way," Wren-Lewis asserts that, on the contrary, scientific actions bespeak man's creativity. "The constant factor in modern science," he says, "is not Omnipotent Matter, but Potent Man: Omnipotent Matter is a metaphysical construct which provides, as Russell's passage shows quite clearly, an admirable excuse for avoiding the responsibility of taking human desires really seriously, exactly as Omnipotent God did in earlier generations." The problem, then, is to further the secularization process that Wren-Lewis traces from the Prophets to Christ to Galileo to Darwin to Freud, in order to overcome "moral sadism" by "love's coming of age."

The fact that the chain holding psychoanalysis to scientific materialism also binds it to a perpetuation of moral sadism is illustrated in a shallower but more entertaining way by Gorer's discussion of Words of Power ("maturity," "adjustment," "genital character") as potent sanctions with which to beat or to praise, and by Rycroft's discussion of the inanity of much psychoanalytic child-rearing advice.

Many of the themes sounded in this small book reappear with variations in Seeley's rich, helical, sprawling collection of essays—the ecclesiastic character of psychoanalysis, the incompatibility of determinism with either culpability or competence, the error of linking psychoanalytic thought with physical or biological science, the guilt-evoking uses to which analytic insights are put. Some of his variations are inversions. Where Gorer dismisses Freud's analysis of artistic creations because it is based on illogical reification of the picture or statue or character, and Storr defends it because, though it doesn't explain the product, it provides a valid, though only partial, interpretation of it, Seeley *extends* the idea even further. Not only is it valid for Freud to see and to interpret unconscious and infantile determinants of a creative work; it is equally valid to see and to interpret unconscious and infantile determinants of Freud's interpretation itself! One might imagine an infinite series: interpretation, interpreta-

tion of interpretation, interpretation of interpretation of interpretation, etc. Seeley goes further and considers the possibility—in his view, the actuality—of unconscious determinants of a career in the social sciences and of the shape and content of a social science project, such as the one he reported in *Crestwood Heights*.

This is a small illustration of the fact that Seeley's is a "What" book, rather than an "Ah, yes" book. Many books enthrall us because they put into words what we believe but have not quite formulated. They make us exclaim, "Ah, yes! That is just the way it is!" The other type, rarer, more difficult, more nourishing, makes us say, "What! How's that? Say that again!" I certainly never thought of *my* projects as having any relationship to any infantile hang-ups, but now I'm not so sure. Maybe. Partly. I can certainly see where *yours* have.

The Paradox of Neutrality

A major theme in Seeley's own book is suggested by his remark that "sociology reencounters itself in its own subject matter." Elsewhere, he sets forth what he calls "the inexhaustibility theorem." This is the idea that "the subject matter of something cannot be exhausted if the first description both alters, and, in any case, increases the subject matter to be described." One cannot, then, in partaking of the activities that comprise the human "sciences," separate oneself from the content of the activity. Artificial efforts to attain neutrality or objectivity can only lead to alienation. Theorizing is itself a form of action. Such activities then are necessarily meliorist, involve the "advocacy of the generalized underdog," are even utopian and revolutionary, because it is revolutionary and has revolutionary effects to redefine and to appeal to new principles and to introduce new values. The psychiatrist and, one supposes, the sociologist, to the extent that they are engaged in overcoming alienation and are not themselves alienated, *are* revolutionaries, however reluctant.

Seeley's second major theme is the relationships and interpenetrations of psychiatry and sociology, whose practitioners he sees as each a "carer-helper-facilitator," one oriented more to individuals, the other more to groups or publics, both in need of unlinking from traditional scientific norms and canons, each in need of the other's insights. He proposes nothing less than a pushing forward together, in a "beneficial encounter," in search of a common theory.

Like one returning from an art exhibit or a world's fair, I feel impelled to instruct the reader-visitor to Seeley's exposition, to say, "Don't neglect. . . . Don't miss . . . ." Space permits me to point to only a few choice examples, without explication. Don't neglect, then, don't miss:

—his constant touching on the theme that "facts" about human beings are dependent on the act of definition and the underlying interest in the particulars of reality that are defined. ". . . the facts are *constituted* by the passionate commitment." Thus, for example, "social problems" are only that when they are so defined and so limited by the definition;

—his brilliant analyses of criminal and mental-health legislation and his demonstration that crime and mental illness are both functional, during which he casually and astonishingly remarks that ". . . the society punishes those—perhaps always those and only those—whom it has previously offended";

—his plea that we educate our children fairly by teaching them "the facts of life," that is, the truth about power and money;

—his analysis of the motivating function of poverty, in which he says that differential poverty has the structure of slavery and says, with respect to the American drive toward mobility and equalization of opportunity, "Perfected, the scheme resembles one in which it is possible (or easy) for slaves to become slave owners. In sharp contrast are schemes directed to the diminution or extirpation of slavery. And still different, of course, are schemes designed to give 'comforts' to the slaves."

Taken together, the two books can be interpreted as an intricate and sweeping prescription for those of us who are in human science–human service activities, a passport that allows us legitimately to come out of the bleachers and into the arena where the action is, free to act even as we are being acted upon, open to influence from that which we try to influence, understanding in order to liberate and liberating through understanding, returning to our common task, which is to help in the unfolding of secular man's true self.

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The LSD Problem

LSD, Man and Society. A Symposium, Middletown, Conn., March 1967. RICHARD C. DEBOLD and RUSSELL C. LEAF, Eds. Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Conn., 1967. xii + 219 pp., illus. $5.

Along with black power and Vietnam, the use of LSD and related drugs has recently been one of the issues tending most sharply to polarize opinion in younger intellectual circles in the United States. That LSD can be a source of transcendent, if sometimes terrifying, experience is denied by few; the issue is whether such experience tends to be seriously damaging to organism, ego, or society. Controversy over black power and Vietnam hinges on different interpretations of historical-political developments and basic disagreements as to social priorities and national morality. One might assume that controversy over LSD would be more readily dispelled by scientific evidence. This report of a symposium held at Wesleyan University early in 1967 indicates that the then-available evidence established LSD as a dangerous substance but still left room for the play of different value premises in deciding on the circumstances, if any, under which the drug might be used.

The Wesleyan symposium was far-ranging, touching upon social-psychological, therapeutic, religious, and legal aspects of the use of LSD on the one hand, and on the pharmacology, neurophysiological actions, and behavioral effects on the other. Unlike some university symposia on the topic, this one contained no proselytizers for LSD. Several of the participants, notably Barron, Kurland, and Pahnke, express the conviction that LSD may serve important positive functions—for expanding consciousness, in the treatment of alcoholics and certain neurotics, and for the attainment of mystical experience in religious contemplation. Those most categorically opposed to any use of LSD, except in limited clinical circumstances, cite substantial evidence of untoward effects, particularly of drug-induced psychoses, in unsupervised use of the drug. Certainly there has been sufficient evidence of the danger of unsupervised "trips" to support strong condemnation of self-experimentation with LSD, but the precipitation of psychological breakdown under well-controlled and supervised circumstances appears to be relatively rare. Direct long-term effects of the drug are essentially unknown, as is the prevalence and