

Value and Psychology

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Control of a Science by Social and/or cultural values is an unacceptable condition. Unified science, by definition, is to be culturefree. Universality in the applicability of facts from the body of reliable knowledge comprising science is necessary. Dr. Charles Morris (1), writing in the "International Encyclopedia of Unified Science," states the following: "The incorporation of the mathematical method within the empiricist temper and the break-down through experimentation of the dichotomy between theory and practice is discernible in the Hellenistic period and the late Middle Ages. It becomes clearly evident in Galileo, reaching a definite expression in Newton. By the late 17th century the great scientists, whatever their philosophical differences, have found a place within scientific method for careful and systematic observation, mathematical theory and experimental practice. Since that time, no fundamental change in the conception of scientific method has taken place, and science has reaped a rich harvest from its attitude of mathematical experimental empiricism."

Dr. Morris does not stop here. After pointing out that science walks on three legs, theory, observation and practice, he goes on to make the following statements. "It is clear that any adequate account of science must take account of the psychological, methodological and sociological aspects of scientific practice. It should be clear that practice in all three senses of the word is not an unessential factor added to the theoretical and empirical aspects of the scientific enterprise, but an equally essential factor, since, at the minimum, confirmation is a concept which contains irreducible pragmatical features. If this is so, it would be well for scientists to become fully aware of this factor of practice, and, in becoming aware of it, to assume the entailed responsibilities. The same point may be given an alternative formulation in terms of the notion of value. It is often said that science gives only facts and has nothing to do with values. There is an element of truth in such a statement, since the pragmatical factor in language cannot be reduced at a given moment to the empirical, and since life is more than knowledge. But this is hardly the usual import of this statement, which is often made against a background which involves a sharp distinction between the natural sciences and the sociohumanistic sciences."

Currently, it would appear that psychology is beginning to manifest the assumption of the responsibility linked with "practice." First, with the rise of professionalism in psychology, values in a way have become important. Let me call your attention to the publication by the American Psychological Association entitled "Ethical Standards of Psychologists." (2) In this sense, value and psychology interact. More importantly, however, the practice of psychology has, and is, bringing intense pressure upon this science from the standpoint of scientific evaluation of behavior and values. As recent as September, 1959, a sharp, dramatic expression of values and their impact on behavior was manifested—namely at the American Psychological Association meetings in which a group of learned scien-

tists discussed "sin." In addition to coincidentally serving to give the "rat psychologist" a symbolic shock treatment, it emphasized the apparent need in psychology for a scientific concern over good, bad, right and wrong.

Hopefully, a science of behavior has as its ultimate goal the human being as its target. Prediction, control and understanding of human behavior would appear a rational scientific goal. At this point in our development, values would seem to be becoming extremely important insofar as the content of our science is concerned. By logical reduction, we can trace directly to the cause of why we must talk about sin at a meeting of scientists by a simple glance at theory. Kurt Lewin (3), in his "Topological Psychology," talked in terms of the person and his life space, the life space being made up of the external situation (the environment) involving the geographic or physical environment and the socio-cultural environment.

Clearly, a large part of the person's psychological field, when viewed as a dynamic on-going process, involves socio-cultural factors. Socio-cultural factors are permeated with good, bad, right and wrong. To understand, to predict and control the behavior of the person in a life space would imply systematic acquisition of facts (science) which have to do with values mediated by a part of the overall psychological field.

Freud (4) is a historical figure who in his theory of personality placed great emphasis on values. He called that aspect of personality mediating values the super-ego. Recognizing its importance to human behavior, he established certain principles upon which his "scientific psychology" was practiced in the analyst's office. Gordon Allport (5) also talked in terms of values, stating that character is "personality evaluated," although he does not pursue this direction assiduously in his theory of personality structure.

As far as the writer's knowledge is concerned, there do not appear to be any systematic or programatic approaches to the area of values and behavior. For some reason, psychologists have not generally concerned themselves with this part of the psychological field, perhaps feeling that this is the province of sociology, or cultural anthropology, or theology or philosophy.

Alfred Kinsey (6) is an example of an individual who imposed the scientific method on the study of sexual behavior in the male and female. From this work have come many suggestive hypotheses with regard to the relationship between sexual activity and certain value sectors in our society. This type of programatic yet somewhat actuarial data collecting would seem quite significant from the standpoint of shedding light on values in our culture enshrouding sexual behavior and the actual normative behavior of adults.

Eric Fromm (7), for example, attempts to throw some mild light on conflicts within personality, and cultural conflicts. This very small bit of information advanced by him is quite significant. He feels there is conflict within our culture based on the Christian value of "turning the other cheek" and another cultural value of being aggressive, extroverted, and dominant.

Dr. Abraham Maslow (8), in his book "Motivation and Personality," talks about self-actualizing people (these are good, healthy people) and

in reporting his researches states that there is a relationship between values and self-actualization. He states, for example, "A firm foundation for a value system is automatically furnished to the self-actualizer by his philosophic acceptance of the nature of his self, of human nature, of much of social life, and the nature of physical reality." These statements clearly are loose, very molar, and have limited generalization or applicability.

These are some symbolic psuedo-pods existing in our field. However, I submit that there should be increasing rigor and that we begin to use scientific procedures in order to approach this problem of values within our culture and how they relate to man's behavior as we study him as an object.

Some Suggestions:

First, we should attempt systematically to classify values dealing with good, bad, right and wrong. Perhaps classification might be as follows:

- (a) Those values that are mediated by the religious component of our culture.
- (b) Values that are mediated by the civil component of our culture, (e.g. paying taxes, civil rights, etc.)
- (c) Values that are linked with our society, such as making money, doing good for the underprivileged, etc.

Some form of classification might provide the beginning point, with an attempt to establish hierarchies.

Second, we might attempt to classify consistencies within our culture and inconsistencies. We can focus culturally determined conflicts at the value level, conflicts due to cultural unintegration.

Third, more sharp, clear-cut studies could be conducted in order to understand the ontogenetic processes linked with the conscience structure or the super-ego. Further, studies should be designed to explore the area of change that takes place within the conscience structure within the overall personality organization. This has been done, for example, in the field of interest measurement and has met with some degree of success.

Fourth, we might begin to ask questions and to design studies to ascertain the conditions under which learning takes place with regard to values. In addition, to explore the nature of the motivation operating at those times when critical learning is being experienced. Continuation of studies, very spotty insofar as current knowledge is concerned, which explore the relationship between perception and values would seem extremely fertile. McGinnes (9) and Bruner (10) have done some work in this area.

Fifth, an attempt to establish norms wherein one sets up limits; for example, does one group of adults have a different norm for a given value from another.

My thesis is that values are a part of the content of psychology. We would seem deficient in our acquisition of reliable data.

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