

Survey on Psychopedagogy¹

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Psychopedagogy is a young doctrine. Its primary aim is to influence the child and eventually the adult. It not only calls upon the natural aptitudes and the faculty of memory of the pupil—which has been the general practice of the educational system and particularly the public school system up to the present—but it calls upon the entire individuality of the pupil, taking into consideration his deep psychic structure and the deep emotional layers.

This new science is the product of two pre-existing human sciences which are:

1. Pedagogy: the art of raising and educating children—a science as old as civilization itself.

2. Depth Psychology or Analytical Psychology: closely related to the idea of psychical analysis as formulated somewhat more than half a century ago by Freud and Adler.

Being a recently born science, psychopedagogy is presently seeking the range of its possibilities, its orientation, and its technique. It may even be said that it is still in search of its own denomination and terminology, since it is presently designated by various names such as: psychagogy—there is an institute in Geneva bearing that name; psychodidacty—a term freely used by Professor Laignel Lavastine; or psychopedagogy—a medico-social definition adopted by the school of Montpellier, a name which shows an affinity with medicine and sociology.

Carving an ideal out of the anticipation of the future and at the same time out of the philosophical theories actually in existence, each epoch has had its own pedagogic system. In ancient Greece, the emphasis placed upon the development of bodily qualities through constant practice of sports and the worship of aesthetic beauty and patriotic devotion represented the educative ideal. In the Middle Ages, the ancient Greek pattern of education was abandoned and the goal of education rested entirely upon the supremacy of spiritual life; the deepest concern of life in the medieval period was the preservation of

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the purity of the soul in order to gain eternal salvation. During the Renaissance, there was a tendency to reconcile the ancient ideal and the Christian ideal. Since the French Revolution of 1789, the scientific and rational aspects of the educational problem seem to have assumed first importance. No wonder, therefore, that our epoch, so rich in discoveries evolving from psychopathology and so deeply preoccupied by all social problems, has tended to solve a number of the educational problems through a successful merger of the two doctrines: pedagogy and depth psychology.

This modern educational trend has had its precursors: men endowed with psychological common sense, who wanted to free formal education from the absolute and unquestionable authority of the teacher and the book and to attach greater importance to the personality and the spontaneity of the child. The protagonists of this new school of thought have striven to adapt education to the possibilities and capabilities of the child to the largest possible extent, taking their data from the given principles of physiology, psychology and philosophy.

Among these early educational reformers, we may number Rabelais, who, during the 16th century, was already preaching his "do as you wish" (*foy ce que tu voudras*), and Montaigne, who, in his *Essais* demanded that educators should have "a good head on their shoulders" rather than a head imbued with book learning.

Komensky, called Comenius, a Moravian moralist of the 17th century, organized education with the aim of improving the condition of humanity, considering schools as "workshops of humanity."

In the 18th century, Pereire, the inventor of the new method called Dactylogy, whereby the possibility of understanding words through the sensory power of touch was brought to the deaf and dumb, promotes the theory of sensorial education. The influence of Pereire and his theory upon J. J. Rousseau will be found in the latter's philosophical ideas. In the 19th century, the advent of Condillac's doctrine of sensationalism—the mind is a "collection" of sensations—gives rise to the idea of improving the psychic conditions of backward children by training their senses. Itard, doctor of medicine, and his pupil, Seguin, educator, work together on the elaboration of various exercises to train the different sensory powers: touch, sight and hearing, and last, taste and smell. They insist upon the importance of the education of the hand and the sense of touch, and in general upon the individualization of the methods of teaching. Influenced by the teachings

of Seguin, Bourneville created the first department for backward children at the *Hopital Bicetre*, (Paris) where Mrs. Montessori perhaps found some inspiration which helped her in the elaboration of her own educational methods.

In 1898, Binet and Simon established the method of Tests, published in 1905, related to the power of memory, of comparison, of imitation, the ability to define objects, the power of observation, description, thought, the critical mind, children's imagination, their ability to define abstract words, to interpret pictures, and their faculty of ready judgment and opinion. This method which is somehow a "previous deduction" of the dynamics and the eventual development of the personality (identical to the medical method of sampling a bodily substance for the purpose of laboratory analysis) has found a large number of followers in the United States. Research in this direction is being carried on in Europe as well as in America in order to discover the possibilities of this technique and to expand and multiply the methods of its application.

Nowadays, in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, Claparede, pedagogue of the *Institut Jean Jacques Rousseau*, advocated a "custom-made" school, and a functional education given to the children, while Piaget preaches an operative pedagogy attempting to bring to light the intellectual operations taking place which allow the child to acquire the notion of time, space, substance, volume, weight, etc.

Ferriere demands that educators should have full confidence in the spontaneity and the creative power of the child.

In France, his pupil Freinet, creates the method called "printing in school."

The French pedagogue Cousinet highly commends work done in a group rather than individually.

In Belgium, Decroly acquires a full grasp of the various aspects of the problem of education through his repeated contacts with and careful observation of abnormal and "problem" children. He recognizes the necessity to constantly individualize all problems. The formulas: "Prepare the child for life through life" and "Organize the milieu so that the child will find therein all the adequate stimuli to develop his favorable natural tendencies," have emerged from these experiences. Around 1907, Decroly opened his first school for normal children in Brussels. His pedagogic and methodological conceptions called for a school that provided a natural environment where the child could be a daily witness of the phenomena of nature. The num-

ber of students attending the school was limited to 20 or 25 students of both sexes per class. The classrooms were not conceived for the audience-type classes, but rather were like small workshops or laboratories, with work-benches, collection shelves (collections of plants, insects, minerals, etc.), dispensers of water, heat and electricity. He insisted upon the importance of the students' participation in the maintenance in good order of the premises, the equipment, and the various collections. He called upon the sense of responsibility of the student by placing them in charge of the garden, the dressing room, the animals, etc. He organized trips to the seashore to catch all sorts of small aquatic animals, excursions for hunting insects, and visits to various factories.

Decroly's main objections to traditional education lay in the over-emphasis given to the subjects that can be taught verbally and the resulting negligence of the manual and technical aspects of education, thus depriving the children of the opportunity to develop their personal activities and their spontaneity.

His teaching method is based upon the four principal needs of the human being: the need to feed himself, to struggle against the inclemencies of nature, to defend himself against the dangers of various enemies (individual needs), and the need for action: of working in a group, of finding entertainment and relaxation, and moral elevation (social needs).

In the German-speaking countries, Pestalozzi, born in Zürich in 1746, a great admirer of J. J. Rousseau's ideas, became the pioneer of intuitive education in Switzerland, and he rejected book education completely, perhaps excessively. His pupil, Froebel (1782-1832) opened a kindergarten in Germany, where he codified the use of toys according to the age of the child. All "abuse of brutal force" upon the child was discarded. Kerchensteiner (1855-1932) established a close tie between the school of character and personality improvement and the trade school. By developing a spirit of cooperation through work in groups, he hoped to unite moral and civic education to professional education. His doctrine was based upon a philosophy of values set up under the influence of the philosophers N. Hartman and H. Rickert. They understood education to be the initiation into a system of values which brings about a complete development of the human personality. "The aim towards a higher culture is the best sign of a cultivated personality. This aim becomes apparent with the subordination of physiological instincts to concepts of moral value, and then

through the subordination of inferior values to higher values. If the first stage takes place under the guidance of adults, the second one is the effect of the autonomy of the person which is formed outside of all supervision. It is essentially self-education."

Each human individual has three groups of functions: physical or bodily (vegetative and motor), psychic (sensations, representation, sentiments, volition) and spiritual (the creative functions which enable the human being to create his cultural, theoretical, aesthetic, religious, political and social goods. Each individual formulates for himself a system of values according to his own nature, and is characterized by a certain form of "spiritual" life (Spranger). The access to the world of values is possible only in a society. The aim of the educational effort is to open up this world of values to the individual.

In 1907, Mrs. Montessori, doctor of medicine, opened her first *Casa dei bambini* in Italy. Sensory exercises and rhythmical dancing, as practiced in the ancient Greek education, formed the basis of her method. These exercises were delightful children's games. The teacher must be an observer who carefully watches the natural activity of the child, supplies the necessary implements, but under no circumstance, either willingly or by compulsion, assigns a given path to be followed. A great variety of objects were put at the disposal of the child in order to stimulate his interest and train his intellectual faculties. The child learned by himself how to handle frames with various fastening devices (preparatory exercises to train the child to dress himself), to distinguish various fabrics through touch while blindfolded, to judge the weight of different objects, their composition, their volume, etc. He learned to recognize and name the eight colors, and in each color the various nuances from the lightest to the darkest. He learned how to differentiate the geometrical form of objects by following with his fingers the outline of wooden squares, triangles or lozenges (preliminary step to learning to write). He practiced his manual skills through the tower and staircase games (cubes of various sizes). This method first solely intended for tots has since evolved and is actually being tested for its efficiency in respect to older children.

In the Anglo-Saxon world, the pedagogical works of John Dewey deserve particular attention. His educational philosophy can be summed up in the two following principles: "Learning by doing," and "Education is life; school is society."

"Begin with impulses and tendencies that are naturally social, train them by engaging the child in social activities so that the impulses and

tendencies once developed and made intelligent become habits that will form the constitution of his personality." Such was the program of education as formulated by Dewey. Stress was placed upon the activity that develops latent tendencies. He emphasized the task of education insofar as social education is concerned, and he inaugurated the idea of children's villages and children's republics. The duty of the educator was to integrate the child into the community, an ideal democratic community. He recommended self-government after elections by and amongst the students.

Friend and pupil of the American philosopher William James, Dewey adopted in his theory a reflection of James' pragmatic philosophy which takes for the criterion of truth the practical value of an idea tending towards action. Truth is an instrument for intellectual work as well as a guide for action. We are chiefly concerned with the practical consequences of our actions and of our discussions. Emphasis was placed upon the value of the accomplished facts, the results, the consequences, rather than the origin of things, the essence, the basic principle.

These different theories all carry one common idea: they all tend to do away with authority. They strive, through diverse methods, to stimulate, to cultivate, and to amplify the natural qualities of the child in order to prepare him for a better social future. Depending upon the various doctrines, this aim is to be achieved either by sensory exercises, through work, work done in a group, an adequate environment, miniature self-government and social organizations, or community life in a republic.

Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams (Traumdeutung)* published in 1900, and his book on psychopathology of daily life published in 1904, drew the attention of the world of thinkers upon the presence of an "unconscious" in the psychic nature, and its various aspects, and upon the importance of traumatism in early childhood. Even though Freud never attacked the subject of psychopedagogy, he did not fail to point out the importance of that doctrine, considering the "wonderful prospects it offers to the future." His daughter, Anna Freud, makes up for her father's negligence in this field and applies the theories of psychoanalysis to psychopedagogy. Melaine Klein follows the same path.

Childhood is a difficult stage of life. The child must in that short time absorb, understand and accept a civilization that took thousands of years to be elaborated. He must learn to master his instincts and

to adapt himself to the conditions of the society he will live in. The child cannot by himself accomplish these changes upon himself; it is to a large extent the duty of education to compel him to do so; and this coercion creates disturbances. Education must inhibit, prohibit, and repress a program which has at all times too readily been carried out. But an analysis indicates that it is the constant repression of the instincts of the child which is the cause of neuroses.

The inculcation of the cultural values into the child seems but coercion and constraint to Freud.

Adler, however, saw a stimulating and salutary process in the integration of the individual into the community; in the progressive adaptation of the child to his environment. This domestication of the instincts, of the various body organs, tracts and systems—even when an inferiority exists, and often because of the inferiority of the organ—takes place as a result of the social feeling and through the compensation or over-compensation mechanism, the importance of which is underlined by Adler in the biological and psychic life. To this doctrine which he expounds in his *Study of Organ Inferiority and Its Psychological Compensation* (1907), he subsequently adds his conception of the shaping of life-patterns by the child in the first years of his life under the constant environmental influence of the family relationships and under the socio-economic influence. The failures apparent in the process of adaptation of the child can always be attributed to the child's lack of understanding of the rules and regulations of society and of the requirements made by society upon him. The psychopedagogue will be able to make the child aware of his erroneous, unsocial or anti-social attitude by clearly explaining the situation to him, thus helping him to find and develop social attitudes in harmony with himself and the world in which he lives.