# THE PLACE OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND OF IDIODYNAMICS IN PSYCHOLOGY: A DIALOGUE

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*I have been looking forward to this visit with you. You promised at our last encounter that today you would give me an overview of your general formulation of personality theory—a kind of propaedeutic.*

I have not forgotten and shall do my best. As you already know, my aim is to systematize the implications of clinical psychology for personality theory and, by further implication, for general psychology. For me, therefore, the person must be the central construct: a nexus between the biological matrix, on the one side, and the cultural matrix, on the other. In its full scope the theory tries to account for growth, frustration and creativity. But the role of the individual is the critical point with which to start.

*Am I right in supposing that, like Gordon Allport, you hope to see a more acknowledged place for personal individuality in the scientific inquiries of the psychologist?*

Yes—but as distinguished from Allport (3), who emphasizes the unique structure of the personality in respect to traits, I am inclined to emphasize the forces within the person and their intimate relationships with the so-called "environment." Herein lies the difference between what Allport, following Windelband, called the *idiographic* approach and what I call *idiodynamics*.

## The Individual in the History of Psychology

*Has not the individual always been subordinated in scientific psychology to the generalized human being?*

Not always. At least three phases can be distinguished. In the earliest philosophical and scientific efforts from which the beginnings of psychology are ordinarily dated, abstract laws applicable to the generalized human being did constitute the objective of inquiry. Equally in the speculations of Aristotle and in the experimental studies of Wundt (31), the individual as such was, at most, an embarrassing impediment to the formulation of universal principles. Just as the chemist in his more scientific enterprises has little interest in an individual lemon or orange, these early psychologists were likewise un-

[1]A French translation of this paper in a slightly different version appeared in *Bull. Psychol.*, 1957, 11, 4-16.

interested in the particular human being. Experimental studies of association, sensation, or perception, while necessarily performed with such individuals as subjects, led to inclusive generalizations. In the careful instance, some statement about individual differences was tacked on as a qualification. It was, however, always assumed in such work that individual differences merely demonstrated the fact that any particular subject, because of his special structure or constitution, might not fit the conditions demanded by the general law. Sciences being concerned with the abstract, not the particular, the exceptions merely proved the rule. The individual in such earlier efforts thus became a remainder of little consequence—what was left after the general law had been abstracted from the study of concrete individuals. It is easier to understand on this background that early experimental psychology and philosophical psychology were historically derived the one from the other.

It must, however, in all fairness be recognized that psychologists in this tradition were not unmindful of the individual and had every hope that the general laws they were seeking to discover would, when sufficiently complete and sufficiently numerous, account for the behavior of every particular person. Once the equation could be written in detail, the generalized human being and the individual case would become one and the same. What these forefathers did not stop to consider (in their times which were less self-conscious regarding the nature of scientific activity) is whether the choice of exclusively universal variables and the objective of purely general laws can ever really become complete in the indicated sense; or—to put it otherwise—whether, as in the case of the tracks of the visitors to the lions' den, there is any traversable road back from the general laws to the concrete particularity of the individual. Both implicity and explicitly this question is being answered in the negative by much recent psychological thought and investigation. In these endeavors the tenet is that individuality cannot be left for the last stage of inquiry but must participate in the first.

A second and more recent approach to the individual in psychology dates primarily from Galton's (9) concern with differences among individuals—a concern which seems to represent a definite departure from the objective just sketched. As is well known, this second movement merged gradually, along with other influences, to produce mental tests and psychometric clinical psychology. Statistics was a close handmaiden of these efforts and, again, owes much to the genius of

Galton. This newer approach was closer to biology than to philosophy and had rather immediate applications not only in eugenics but in the psychological clinic where problems of mental health and personnel selection are posed.

A closer scrutiny of this study of individual differences by means of scales and tests reveals that while the individual here has a very different role from that which is his lot when general laws are the objective, the person is still far from the center of scientific concern. In this psychometric attack upon individual differences the essential unit—the one corresponding to the generalized human being of the experimentalist—is the social group or some homogeneous segment of it which can be treated as a statistical population. Another way of stating the matter is to say that the average man, so much like the generalized man, becomes the object of interest. Particular individuals have significance chiefly in their *external differences* from each other as measured by the statistical standards of the group. These measures plot the coordinates of the given person, usually in the form of a psychograph or profile, by referring him to a variety of means and standard deviations which have their basic locus in the group as a whole rather than in the individual personality and its organization. The experimental and the statistical approaches thus appear to have much more in common than might be thought at first glance. In both, the individual himself in his more intrinsic significance has still escaped the psychologist's ken.

This omission is radically corrected in the third and most recent of the approaches to the individual that can be discerned from a survey of psychological theory and practice. Here the individual as such occupies the center of psychological attention. The effort is made to understand him as a unique world of events with an idiomatic language and a phenomenological reality without which the important insights about him in everyday life, in psychodiagnosis, or in psychotherapy are impossible (19). Perhaps the earliest and surely the best single example of this point of view is to be found in the epoch-making book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, with which Freud (8) introduced psychoanalysis and the technique of free association. In it the bizarre, the unsocial, the erratic, and unique fantasies of the person are subjected to observation and analysis by a method that involves few references external to the individual but, instead, proceeds according to clues that arise from within him as the interpretation moves from event to event.

But, it should be added at once, Freud was here fostering *psychodynamics* which is only implicitly idiodynamics. In other words, Freud failed to escape from the biological concept of the individual—that of the individual organism—current in his time; he had no systematic concept of the individual person. He similarly relied on the biological concept of the "environment" where we should prefer to speak of "culture." For us, on the other hand, continuing from where Freud left off, the person is conceived as a universe of psychological events or as a miniature culture and, reciprocally, the culture in its psychological consistencies is a person-in-the-large (27). But you must not equate such a cultural "person" with the outmoded group mind: culture is an *empirical* concept, empirically definable, just as the *idioverse*, of which we must take note presently, is an empirical concept rooted in verbal report, explicit or implicit.

## IDIODYNAMICS AND THE IDIOVERSE

*Is it possible to develop a scientific approach to so complex an entity as the individual person? The individual seems to be full of contradictions—so needful of further analysis before the abstractions of the scientist can be applied to him with any precision.*

The individual is, to be sure, an exemplar of paradoxes—at once invincibly separated from and intimately dependent upon others; created by and yet creating his so-called world; integrated in his every personal expression and yet strikingly disintegrated at unpredictable points from his own ego; identical with himself but ever-changing in the course of time. To give an account of these disparaties in systematic fashion is no easy task. *Idiodynamics*, as we shall see, attempts to face the intricacy of the problem and to suggest that the essential starting point in personality theory must be the unique interrelatedness of the individual universe of events, i.e., the *idioverse*, which conceptually embraces all the foregoing paradoxical disparaties (23, 25, 26). At the same time this approach leaves room for its own complementation by a biological contribution, with fuller emphasis upon universal norms, and a sociological contribution centering upon group norms. The individual is thus recognized to be a matrix or constellation of forces—a world within worlds. We have—to follow and to further Kant and perhaps also Leibnitz—the *stellar* universe first, then, at the other extreme, the *atomic* universe, and finally and most intimately, the *idio*verse. But more to the functional point: in the first instance one must examine the individual universe in its *axial* or

rotational privacy, according to individual norms; but this can be fully understood only from further consideration of its *orbital* revolution in the domains of universal and of group norms. The astronomical analogy is not altogether accidental.

## TYPES OF NORMS

*You have completely outdistanced me by this plunge into interstellar space so I shall have to bring you back to earth with a humble question: What do you mean by norms?*

Norms (20, 22) are the criteria or standards according to which psychological behavior is interpreted, understood or explained. Sometimes, of course, these standards are unavowed but are implicit in the labors of the psychologist—a situation that is very apt to prevail in the work of the experimentalist. In the field of psychometrics, norms, under that very name, are explicitly employed. They are the statistical standards in terms of which individual differences are measured. In the psychotherapeutic analysis of personality, the concept of interpretation looms large, though the concept of norms is not always recognized as such.

*Can one use more than one kind of norm in the understanding of psychological data?*

I suggest that three main types, or some combination of them, are always available, and I propose to designate these as *universal*, *group* and *individual*.

The approach to psychology which has laws of the generalized human being as its objective is characterized by the implicit use of universal norms. It is assumed that there are certain functional criteria of behavior that are applicable universally if the required conditions have been satisfied. Such norms are *absolute* in the sense that they recognize no exceptions.

The second type of norms—group norms—are readily intelligible in terms of the previous exposition of mental tests and the psychometric measurement of differences. Here the psychologist depends upon sampling theory and the normal law of error to provide a basis in terms of central tendency and measures of dispersion for assigning the particular individual to his place in a given distribution by age, sex, psychiatric diagnosis, etc. The group thus empirically affords the standards for measuring the individual's conformity or departure; ordinarily it is the average of the group with which the individual is compared.

Just as when universal norms are employed exclusively the individual is discarded in his waywardness—in his exceptional behavior —so with group norms, the nonconformance of the individual has a negative implication. But the third set of standards refuses to ignore anything about the individual. By the individual norms here invoked the person becomes his own standard of reference—he is to be understood "in his own terms." Such concepts as private world, private language, the individual population of events, self-concept, and phenomenological reality are all intended to highlight the importance of the individual as his own context of interpretation. The method of free asociation was in psychology—as contrasted with literature—the first thorough, though unformulated, application of this standpoint. By such standards "the person is always right," i.e., everything he does is *characteristic* of him, and it becomes the business of idiodynamics and clinical practice to make even the most bizarre behavior intelligible in terms of the individual's experience, needs, and their organization.

*Is one type of norm preferable to the others?*

No—none of the types should preempt the whole job of explanation in psychology. Each type has its particular function.

The chief value of the foregoing distinctions lies less in the separateness they create than in their articulations which at once suggest a reconciliation. In such a reconciliation the pivotal place must be accorded the third approach, since it is by nature the most catholic and least exclusive. It is further postulated that only by beginning with the most concrete and individual aspects of behavior is it possible to build a theory of personality which does justice to them. Since psychology in its ultimate form must account for and aid in the adjustment and fulfillment of the individual person, it becomes of crucial importance to begin with him.

At the same time it is to be recognized that it is impossible to understand the individual without taking note of his relationships to one or more social groups. If we are to escape from a kind of psychological solopsism, it is necessary to face the fact that the individual is enmeshed in group situations of which he is an organic part. One can here fruitfully consider the impact of the group upon the individual and his impact upon the group by assessing the manner in which the two interact dynamically. Such an evaluation would mean that the group is considered in its relationship to the individual not merely in an *external* sense but in terms of the individual's apperception of the

group and the group's apperception of the individual. Nevertheless, it would still be important to invoke certain group norms for their *delimiting* value, even as individual norms are significant for their *semantic* value. The latter make it feasible to understand the individual in his own terms—in the terms of his private language—but the former provide the necessary touchstone for deciding whether any particular behavior of the individual is *more* or *less* characteristic of him. Once this latter question has been answered, it becomes possible to apply the semantic value of the individual norms more soundly.

But universal norms are equally, if not even more fundamentally, important in any complete account of personal behavior. Even in the investigations of Freud where the effort was implicitly one of understanding the individual in his own terms, reliance upon general principles—albeit different ones from those current in experimental psychology—was clearly evidenced. Repression, projection, displacement, transference, etc., are concepts in which general principles are embodied and these are thought to have a universal application provided that the conditions required for their expression have been satisfied. The reason that such general principles are more compatible with individual norms than are the general principles of the older experimental psychology lies in the derivation of the former from observing the individual in his most personal preoccupations and concerns. It hence turns out that general laws of behavior are not only desirable but essential, though these general laws must refer primarily not to abstract *stimulus-response* relationships of only dubious application to the person as such, but must refer instead to the intrapsychic living and development of the individual. Employed in this fashion, universal norms have a *regulative* value comparable to the semantic value of the individual norms and the delimiting value of group norms.

*Can you perhaps illustrate how these three different kinds of norms would be used in some particular area or problem of psychology?*

The projective methods of investigating personality, which have notably advanced clinical psychology by complementing the psychometric approach with individual norms, are replete with examples. An excellent illustration, primarily historical and hence clearer in its perspective, is afforded by the word association method, published by Galton (10) in 1879. Apart from the more general conclusions they afforded, his results forced upon him the realization that his method was fraught with biographical implications, so much so that he commented in wonder at the possibility of any communication among individuals whose associations were necessarily separated so widely by personal experience. Since the technique of word association in Galton's hands was exploratory rather than crystallized, it

was only in later work that the divergence of emphasis which corresponds to the three types of norms became evident.

The first important investigations of word association which derived from the pioneer efforts of Galton were conducted in the laboratory of Wundt at Leipzig. Trautscholdt (30), among others, experimented on relationships between stimulus and response words to verify the well-known laws of association. These studies were, accordingly, an application of universal norms by means of the word association method. Later Kraepelin and Aschaffenburg (4) applied the same point of view to mental patients, showing that, for example, manic individuals are more apt to associate words by clang than are other subjects. While couched to a large extent in the tradition of general laws and universal norms, these investigations were also concerned with diagnostic differentiations among population groups, and, hence, with group norms.

After Freud, through direct or indirect influences, modified the word association technique into the psychoanalytic procedure of *free* association and made discoveries which seemed to Jung in need of laboratory corroboration, the latter reverted to the word association method and attempted to verify the psychoanalytic theories under controlled conditions of observation (11). His concern with complexes and complex indicators was clearly an emphasis upon individual norms in much the same way that Freud's use of the free association method was. That is to say, Jung cared less for the ways in which individuals resembled each other in their word association responses and more about the manner in which idiosyncratic reactions disclosed the subject's particular bias. By noting *departures* of the individual *from his own average reaction time* (individual norms) and by observing the interrelationships among any peculiar associations which were produced, it became possible to diagnose the presence of a complex within the personality—something unique to that individual.

Later work on commonality of responses has lent another tool for delimiting the individuality of reactions. Such investigations are exemplified by the early contributions of Kent and Rosanoff (12) who arranged tables according to the frequency of occurrence of responses by content among a thousand normal adults. These *group* norms illustrate the third dimension of the word association method.

This brief review makes evident how a particular technique—in this instance a projective one—lends itself to emphasis upon universal, group, or individual norms depending upon the interest of the investigator.

*I can see how your analysis of norms is a natural one for clinical psychodiagnosis where the particular person is always central to the inquiry—hence the importance of individual norms. And I react favorably to the reconciliation of these individual norms with group norms and pniversal norms. Is this analysis limited to psychodiagnosis and, in uarticular, the projective methods?*

By no means. It embraces psychotherapy—note the recent attempts to give a phenomenological analysis of the therapeutic situation (17); likewise, experimental psychodynamics: efforts to define psychoanalytic hypotheses under controlled experimental conditions are often, though not consistently, couched in idiodynamic terms (24).

*You have referred several times to idiodynamics. Could you perhaps define the term more precisely?*

Idiodynamics is the name for the orientation which takes the *dynamics* of the *individual* as a fundamental ground of systematization in psychology—the science of the idioverse.

*But since you say "a" ground of systematization, I begin to wonder how you would relate idiodynamics to other systematic positions in psychology.*

Before attempting an answer it would be well to understand more fully what idiodynamics itself comprises.

*Very well. What, then, is the idioverse?*

The *idioverse* is the name given to the *individual's universe* of events. And I hasten to add before you do so that the definition of the *event* is at the heart of the problem. Moreover, I cannot pretend to have solved this part of the problem. The best I can do in the limits of this discussion is to stress the importance of arriving at an empirical definition of the psychological event and then point hopefully to such related efforts as the study of the free association method, the projective techniques, content analysis, semantics, information theory and phenomenology. All these different labels represent a common effort to arrive at a workable and, if possible, quantitative formulation of the psychological event. The verbal report (and the implicit aspects of such reports should not be forgotten) furnishes the starting point. Then we provisionally postulate that it is necessary to include the forces that occasion the events, their repetition and their organization. These events constitute the population of the idioverse and the systematic and quantitative analysis of this idioverse defines the province of idiodynamics.

*In what way, if any, does the analysis of norms tie in with this concept of the idioverse?*

Individual norms are most obviously relevant since in these terms the experiential events which can be fully understood only in their personal bearing have to be appreciated. The classical, though incomplete, example is found in the already-mentioned free association method of Freudian analysis. In it the total experiences of the individual, as these are disclosed in the analytic process, provide a context for internally consistent definitions of particular content—images, beliefs, feelings. But, at the same time—since the individual is conceived not to exist in a world completely separated from the worlds of others—group norms, in terms of shared experiences of a common stimulus, also play a part. Universal norms and general principles based upon them contribute to idiodynamic theory though—to repeat—these general principles differ from the traditional ones of experimental psychology in the extent to which intra-individual organization is emphasized and in the way in which the stimulus is defined "subjectively" by the individual's own performance. The inclusion of group and universal norms, as well as individual ones, is wholly compatible with idiodynamics. To this point of inclusiveness we must return later.

SOME POSTULATES OF IDIODYNAMICS (23)

*But by adopting the point of view of the individual person as primary, even though you acknowledge the importance of group and universal norms in defining the idioverse, you seem to have ignored the fundamental importance of the stimulus and of stimulus-response relationships in systematic psychology.*

You have rightly brought to the fore what I would call, from the idiodynamic standpoint, the postulate of *response-dominance*. Experimental psychology, as well as the psychometric clinical approach, has always proceeded on the assumption that stimulus-response relationships provide the key to the understanding of behavior. In order to build a science of psychology the stimulus had to be a public matter, externally defined, whether by the experimenter or by the examiner. The formulation of behavior principles in which such externally defined stimuli were coordinated to certain regularly expected responses constituted the goal of the traditional experimentalist. Similarly the psychometric examiner effected his measurments by relating the responses of his subject to certain standardized stimuli for which there were pre-defined expectancies of response. With the introduction of the psychodynamic point of view came a revolution in the conception of the stimulus and of its relation to the response. The stimulus was dethroned; the dominance of the response ensued. The relationship of responses to each other in a given individual was now the matter of primary interest.

To the traditional psychologist this new state of affairs represented a decided threat to the objective nature of science. In the new regime he saw the degeneration of psychology into a subjective, impressionistic game whose proponents were at best clinicians and at worst charlatans. To the psychodynamic theoretician and to the projective diagnostician, however, the new approach to the stimulus was imperative since it thus became possible to accord the individual personality its proper place in psychological study and theory (23). What is the answer? The difference between the older, traditional approach and the newer, idiodynamic one is not a matter of *objectivity* but of *objective*. The psychophysicist, the behaviorist and the psychometrician assume certain constant stimulus-response relationships and operate accordingly; the psychodynamic theoretician is interested in the response-response to be found in the given individual. The change is from a search for stimulus-response relationships to the study of response-response relationships. Concurrently the generalized human being yields place to the unique individual in central interest for the psychologist.

Thurstone (29) long ago recognized this shift and discussed it under the heading "stimulus-response fallacy." Writing in 1924, he appealed in his exposition to the "New Psychology"—psychoanalysis—and credited it with cogently empha-

sizing relationships between the impulse or need and the response of the individual, in contrast with the more academic practice of concentrating upon relationships of stimulus and response. In the light of this statement the postulate of response dominance may be more sharply defined. Response-response relationships are significant not only in their own frame of reference but because they also reflect need-response relationships. The translation of manifest to latent content in Freudian dream analysis and the similar interpretations in the projective methods illustrate this type of inference. The role of the external stimulus may also now be clarified. In the formulations which stress response-response or need-response relationships, the stimulus is often merely a trigger, sometimes only an "excuse," for evoking prepared reactions that have already been set in motion by the inner stimulation of an impulse. It is on this basis that the external stimulus is frequently regarded as being *selected* by the individual or by his impulse-nature from a multiplicity of possible external stimuli. Past stimuli, in so far as they have modified the inner organization of the personality, may thus be far more influential in determining present behavior than any environmental stimulus acting at the moment. Roles are thus assigned to need or impulse, inner stimulation, past stimuli, present external stimulus, and response.

It is now easier to appreciate the nature of the general principles, involving universal norms, which in the idiodynamic approach challenge the systematic formulations of behaviorism. Concepts like repression and displacement are obviously considered to have a universal application under the appropriate conditions. But there is a difference between such general principles and the corresponding behavioristic stimulus-response formulations. In the last analysis the conditions for repression and the threat to the ego which make for the operation of this form of defense are to be found in the individual's definition of the stimulus situation according to his own past experience and present attitudes. Moreover, the principle itself is mainly a statement of intra-individual dynamics rather than of any systematic relationship between externally defined stimulus and internally mustered response. For the very distinction between external and internal has been challenged and is gradually being modified by a phenomenological frame of reference in which the "stimulus" and the "response" are interdependent aspects of the subject's universe. Since from the vantage point of idiodynamics the stimulus is regarded as ultimately defined by the response, the former can no longer serve as an infallible and independent guide to the latter.

*Does idiodynamics involve other postulates?*

Yes—the postulate of *configuration dominance*. The twilight of the stimulus is matched by the similar subordination of the part to the whole in the idiodynamic approach. The phenomenological relationship between stimulus and response is paralleled by the absorption of parts into wholes. The important influence of gestalt psychology complements the already indicated influence of psychoanalysis. The wholeness of the subject's behavior lies in the pattern of his responses. The essential totality is, of course, the world of the individual in which "responses" and "stimuli" are mutually definitive. And were there

time, we should now bring out the central place of time itself in the definition of the person. The personality should, in fact, be re-defined as a *temporal configuration*—a persistent unity through time. Much of what is essential to idiodynamics is implicit in this concept. Murray (16, pp. 604-5) has suggested that we equate the personality with the biography and in a rough way he is saying what we have tried to say here more systematically. But Murray also compares the personality to a musical score. This also is a fruitful—and a related—figure. It suggests to us that the melody, carried, let us say, in the soprano part, is a temporal gestalt (as already said of the person in our definition) while the tenor and bass, harmonizing with the soprano, prefigure the covariant depth levels of the personality (18, 21).

## CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO THE INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY

*Idiodynamics is surely not the only approach that attempts to emphasize the importance of the individual in contemporary personality theory and measurement.*

No—idiodynamics is one of several contemporary efforts to do justice to individuality in the theory of personality. A least five others may be recognized and distinguished from it. First, from the standpoint of personality *structure*, emphasis being placed on the interrelatedness of traits or factors within the bounds of the personal "skin," Allport's pioneer exposition of uniqueness and congruence is noteworthy (3). Then, with statistical methodology in the foreground, several quite recent attempts have been made to approach the same objectives via factor analysis; with procedures variously known as inverse factor analysis, Q-technique and P-technique. The chief exponents are Cyril Burt (6), William Stephenson (28) and R. B. Cattell (7). A second contribution was made by Kurt Lewin (13). Starting from gestalt psychology, with perceptual or phenomenological orientation, he subordinated personality structure to the interdependence of person and environment. A central position was accorded by him to the particular *field* from the standpoint of which the prediction of *individual events* should become possible. A third approach, sometimes called "phenomenological," has arisen from the non-directive psychotherapy of Carl Rogers (17). The self-concept looms large in this theory of personality. A fourth position to be noted was earlier than the other three—Freud's implicit recognition of the personal world (8). The free association method and the projective techniques that have developed from it exploit this insight. Finally, mention

should be made of Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology in which the subject-matter of psychology was explicitly stated to be the personal life style, i.e., "the meaning which individuals give to the world and to themselves, their goals, the direction of their strivings, and the approaches they make to the problems of life" (1, p. 48).

Now, idiodynamics attempts to make explicit and to systematize these implications of psychoanalysis and of Individual Psychology while at the same time avoiding some of their theoretical inconsistencies. The formulation further acknowledges the importance of the Lewinian *field* but takes as its province not the individual *event*, which has been foremost in topological psychology, but rather the individual *person*, conceived as a matrix of events.

Idiodynamics agrees in some respects also with the Rogerian phenomenological approach—especially in the emphasis upon the individual world with its interdependent stimulus-response experiences; but the self-concept appears to be heuristically limited to the conscious—or at most pre-conscious—level of personality. It is essentially descriptive, not predictive. To make genuine predictions the phenomenologist must leave his field and enter either social stimulus-situations not yet in that field or else the "unconscious," which he rejects. The relative superficiality of the self-concept approach is repeatedly demonstrated in the empirical methods used by it. Nearly all these techniques are limited to verbal reports of conscious or self-conscious feelings and thoughts. Inferential interpretation employing, among other things, implicit individual norms is sedulously avoided.

As differentiated from the search for the intra-individual organization of traits or factors, idiodynamics stresses the identity through time of dynamic entities, i.e., directions of force, instead of seeking for stable and persisting structures of a more static type. The interrelatedness posited in idiodynamics is an interrelatedness of dynamic strivings, *appropriate content being found or created by the forces in question.* The temporal and developmental organization, clearly assumed also both in psychoanalysis and in Murray's modification of it, thus sharply distinguishes the approach of idiodynamics from that of inverse factor analysis. The main difference from Q (Stephenson), P (Cattell) or even O (Mowrer) technique (15) lies in the fact that idiodynamics (we might call it I!) permits the events—the basic units—of the individual empirically to *emerge.* The idioverse structures itself—defines its own units. The external frame of reference, whether derived from tests or from laboratory observations of predefined variables, is min-

imized; the variables to be employed stem from the content of the subject's own responses. These variables are essentially *ad hoc* in so far as the analysis holds to the idiodynamic goal.

This statement leads us to a recognition that the stimulus (test situation) in personality theory embraces three gradations: the explicit stimulus, the projective stimulus and the implicit stimulus: First there is the behavioristic or literal view that the stimulus must be public and pre-defined. This is also the psychometric concept of the stimulus (test item)—the position adopted by Q, P and O techniques. Second comes the projective orientation according to which the stimulus has a degree of ambiguity or multipotentiality which allows for final definition by the individual subject—as in our earlier discussion of how the response contributes to the definition of the stimulus. But there is a further, or third, degree of stimulus indefinition: here the stimulus is *implicit* and the attempt is to analyze the personality in terms of its "spontaneous" productions. We have now arrived, of course, at the pure clinical approach—the approach that takes the patient or person as one finds him and then by interview, case history or free association in psychotherapy works back hypothetically to the presumed stimuli of the first or second degrees above posited. Offhand one might therefore think that this is a cruder approach which could be much improved by using stimuli of the first or second degree from the start; but further reflection and experience demonstrate that this inference is superficial: the responses emitted by the subject without benefit of either explicit or projective stimuli are more genuinely reflective of the person in his dynamic organization —more strictly idiodynamic. These responses can tell us what the individual has absorbed—has *selected*—from his culture in the past and what he is selecting at present to meet his *needs* and his *interests*. And by studying this *selective responsiveness* we are actually studying and arriving at a knowledge of the stimuli that have been made a part of the idioverse. The individual at this third degree of stimulus definition thus reveals what his responses of *stimulus selection* have been and now are. Provided that we can develop methods that do not make the subject a mere stimulus for the projections of the interpreter, this last stand of the stimulus is the one most consonant with an idiodynamic approach. That such methods are objectively available can and will in the near future be demonstrated. In this demonstration the spotlight will be not on the mainly adaptive but on the intrinsically creative potentials of the individual. In the meantime the pioneer efforts

of Floyd Allport (2) under the rubric "teleonomic description" (where diaries, letters, etc., of one person were used for intra-individual, systematic analysis) may be cited.

*It is impressive to see this array—this recent concentration on formulating a psychology of the individual. But one possible corollary disturbs me. Is the approach of idiodynamics consistent with the usual goal of science—the attainment of general laws?*

In general, yes. But as has been pointed out by Gordon Allport (3) and others, general laws *of* the individual are too often omitted by a purely nomothetic approach. In the name of idiodynamics we may add that such laws must be derived by examining the relationships found within any given idioverse and then seeing whether similar ones prevail in other idioverses. The resulting principles would then be trans-idioverse generalizations. They would not, however, duplicate or necessarily compete with other generalizations, e.g., stimulus-response principles, derived from different areas of observation in psychology.

## IDIODYNAMICS VIS-A-VIS PSYCHOLOGY

*It is growing late but I hope for more closure on the role of idiodynamics in psychology as a whole before we conclude. Do you anticipate that idiodynamics will displace other systematic approaches in psychology—or do you think that it should?*

Your question is a brake, and a merited one, to the enthusiams of my one-sided exposition. Idiodynamics is not a school—it is a self-conscious model for exploiting the ore of the strictly psychological. As such it stands as one among several equally legitimate approaches in psychology. But the term *psychology* has for years bedevilled students into fruitless controversy. It may be of some value to have pushed pure psychology—"subjectivity," if you will—to its ultimate under the name idiodynamics for in so doing its relation to these other legitimate approaches, and their relationships one to the other, may perhaps more clearly appear.

It is a striking fact that psychology, so-called, tends to exist and, even more so, to have developed historically as a handmaiden of the several other disciplines or sciences. The accompanying chart (Fig. 1) provides a resumé. In it is demonstrated that psychology has marshalled its forces over the past century in relation to physics as psychophysics, to physiology as psychophysiology, to biology as psycho-

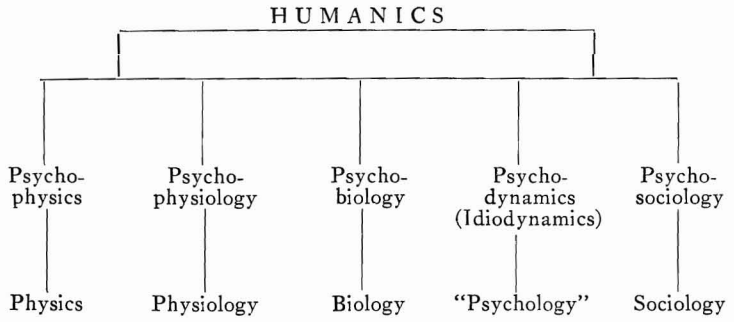


FIG. 1. THE PLACE OF IDIODYNAMICS IN PSYCHOLOGY.

biology (skip psychodynamics for the moment), and, most recently, to sociology and anthropology as psychosociology. (*Social* psychology is the more common designation for part of this last engagement.) The earliest teams were those of psychophysics and psychophysiology (or physiological psychology), fathered by Fechner and Wundt; and it is noteworthy that modern behaviorism with its insistence on stimulus-response formulations (with or even without physiology) is dedicated to this sector of the chart (5). Psychobiology is, of course, the term used by Adolf Meyer (14) but it is here meant to include a larger domain—functional psychology, as it used to be called.

*And psychodynamics?*

The postponement arose from the need for a special explanation and this can now be given. You have, no doubt, also observed that *idiodynamics* has been inserted in the chart to supersede psychodynamics. Now, if one attempts to specify the science, corresponding to physics, physiology, etc., in the bottom row, with which psychodynamics should consort, something vaguely called *dynamics* turns up. If the term *idiodynamics* is substituted for *psychodynamics*, the prefix as well as the suffix comes into question. Rescue arrives with the insight that there is a unique self-consistency in psychodynamics or idiodynamics: it is psychology *sui generis*—one might almost call it *psychopsychology*. For, after all, psychodynamics, and even more completely, idiodynamics, insists upon remaining in its own universe of discourse. While from certain unsympathetic standpoints this insistence may damn the approach, from our standpoint it is both natural and proper. It is a virtue in the hoary sense of that term. Idiodynamics as the discipline of subjective "experience" does, however, have certain unique relations to literature, art and other cultural

expressions. It assumes that man is what man has psychologically been; that the history of ideas, of beliefs, and of culture products generally is a vital part of psychology. We are thus led from culture in the older humanistic sense to culture in the newer anthropological sense. Hence it is that psychosociology adjoins and follows idiodynamics in the chart.

*All this sounds plausible—I shall have to think more about it. But "humanics" still requires explaining. I can guess, of course, that it is in some sense intended to embrace the various separate aspects included under it.*

The designation *humanics* at the apex of the chart is offered in substitution of the common term *psychology*. We have recently seen such terms as "the behavioral sciences" being used for a somewhat similar purpose, i.e., to avoid the uncertain connotations of *psychology;* but humanics recommends itself in preference to these alternatives because, first, it puts the emphasis on *human* nature where it belongs and, second, because it omits the dubious term *behavior*, preempted by behaviorism with its somewhat narrow purview. If the term *humanics* is to replace that of *psychology*, it does so in order to register that what has been called psychology is actually a composite discipline.

*Idiodynamics is then obviously not the whole of psychology.*

It occupies *one* point or position on the gamut, ranged beside other legitimate claimants. Human nature, mind, behavior—whatever you choose to call it—demands a catholicity of awareness in which every contender should be held to only two rules: to push his own approach self-consistently to the ultimate, without blurred eclecticism; and to respect the equal rights of his neighbors in humanics. If, then, idiodynamics is indeed "psychopsychology," its limitation is self-imposed; to surpass the limitation there is humanics—of which idiodynamics is avowedly one constituent.

*Do I sense correctly that the relationship of idiodynamics to humanics —and of the several other sister approaches—is not merely a matter of personal preference or bias? I am thinking of your earlier delineation of the three categories of norms. It would seem that the different sectors of the composite discipline humanics gravitate toward one or another of these norms selectively.*

Well said. Idiodynamics thrives on individual norms—though, as we noted earlier, the universal and group norms are indispensible even

to the definition of the individual ones. The left of the gamut, where we find psychophysics, psychophysiology and psychobiology, have an affinity for universal norms—though these areas of research are finding it necessary more and more to resort to statistics and thus, in a sense, to group norms. Finally, on the right, where we find psychosociology, group norms are the order of the day: what a particular culture may be reasonably said to practice must be put in terms of the statistical mode, once the anecdotal stage of description is left behind. If a complete psychological account of any phenomenon is to be given, all three types of norms must be employed or, saying the same thing in other words, the full gamut of humanics must be brought to bear on the problem.

*Is this not a form of eclecticism?*

A systematic form perhaps—or does system rule out the eclectic? Would you call it eclecticism to include length, width and depth in the measurement of a physical object?

*No, I shouldn't. You have satisfied my doubts—and you have whetted my curiosity on a wide front.*

To attempt more would be to tempt the shade of Socrates.

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