The International Library of Psychology

THE A B C OF PSYCHOLOGY

Founded by C. K. Ogden

The International Library of Psychology

THE A B C OF PSYCHOLOGY

Founded by C. K. Ogden

The International Library of Psychology

GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY
In 38 Volumes

I	The Neurosis of Man	*Burrow*
II	Creative Imagination	*Downey*
III	The Caveman Within Us	*Fielding*
IV	Men and their Motives	*Flugel*
V	The Mind in Sleep	*Fortune*
VI	The Mind and its Body	*Fox*
VII	Practical Psychology	*Fox*
VIII	Man for Himself	*Fromm*
IX	The Law Within	*Fuller*
X	The Nature of Laughter	*Gregory*
XI	Readings in General Psychology	*Halmos et al*
XII	The Psychologist at Work	*Harrower*
XIII	The Psychology of Philosophers	*Herzberg*
XIV	Emotion	*Hillman*
XV	The Foundations of Common Sense	*Isaacs*
XVI	The Psychology of Consciousness	*King*
XVII	The Sciences of Man in the Making	*Kirkpatrick*
XVIII	The Person in Psychology	*Lafitte*
XIX	Man's Unconscious Passion	*Lay*
XX	Psychological and Biological Foundations of Dream-Interpretation	*Lowy*
XXI	Nervous Disorders and Character	*Mckenzie*
XXII	An Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology	*Murphy*
XXIII	Modern Theories of the Unconscious	*Northridge*
XXIV	The A B C of Psychology	*Ogden*
XXV	The Psychology of Thought and Feeling	*Platt*
XXVI	Introductory Psychology	*Price-Williams*
XXVII	Empirical Foundations of Psychology	*Pronko et al*
XXVIII	Psychotherapy	*Schilder*
XXIX	The Psychology of Time	*Sturt*
XXX	The Origins of Love and Hate	*Suttie*
XXXI	Art and the Unconscious	*Thorburn*
XXXII	The Elements of Psychology	*Thorndike*
XXXIII	Telepathy and Clairvoyance	*Tischner*
XXXIV	Human Psychology as Seen Through the Dream	*Turner*
XXXV	The Psychology of Self-Conciousness	*Turner*
XXXVI	The Psychology of Economics	*Weisskopf*
XXXVII	The Measurement of Emotion	*Whately Smith*
XXXVIII	How to be Happy Though Human	*Wolfe*

THE A B C OF PSYCHOLOGY

C K OGDEN

First published in 1929 by
Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd.

Reprinted in 1999, 2001 by
Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Transferred to Digital Printing 2006

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

The A B C of Psychology
ISBN 0415-21036-4
General Psychology: 38 Volumes
ISBN 0415-21129-8
The International Library of Psychology: 204 Volumes
ISBN 0415-19132-7
Printed and bound by CPI Antony Rowe, Eastbourne

CONTENTS

This page intentionally left blank

PREFACE

A FEW years ago the word Psychology was a technicality covering a field of inquiry in which none but specialists and perhaps a few enterprising teachers were expected to take an interest. But at the present time it would be hard to find a general reader of current literature who has not at any rate browsed through one or more of the books on psychological topics which appear every other day.

There are, however, among these readers many who feel a difficulty in comparing and combining together the views, opinions, and information thus casually obtained. Although interested, they have no leisure for the study of voluminous works on first principles. They would like to read Shand's *Foundations of Character*, Marshall's *Consciousness*, Mitchell's *Structure and Growth of the Mind*, Wundt, Lipps, and Stumpf, Hobhouse's *Mind in Evolution*, Dumas' *Traité*, the *Analytic Psychology* of Professor Stout (having dipped

perhaps into a volume with almost the same title by Dr Jung), Urban's exhaustive treatise on *Valuation*, Baldwin's *Thought and Things*, or the late Professor Ward's *Psychological Principles*; but they have no ready means of discovering which is about what.

It seems probable, therefore, that many who are seriously approaching Psychology for the first time, and who are vaguely aware that many hundreds of important volumes have appeared since the last of these works was written, will welcome a brief account of the nucleus of accredited opinion from which the growing science is tending to develop. In what follows will be found an endeavour to deal with the subject in the simplest possible language, in the light of the most recent advances; and to deal with it more concisely than has been done by any comprehensive introduction hitherto.

My object, however, has not merely been to cover the field on accepted lines. No conscientious teacher could to-day put his own Outline forward without taking account of the existence of admirable summaries such as those of Woodworth, McDougall, Pillsbury, and Yerkes. Each of these has its own advantages, and it would be no service

to the public to attempt to combine their distinctive merits, or to forget that the two volumes of William James' *Principles* are generally accessible for reference with their abundance of unsurpassable descriptions. Nor can the physiological side of sense-perception, or the statistical handling of intelligence tests, for example, be usefully described in brief compass. For these the reader will be better advised to go direct to the original authorities, and I have therefore appended a short Bibliography of works available in the English language for his guidance in fuller reading.

It would be gratuitous to pretend that psychologists as a body are agreed on many fundamental issues. On this point the pages of *Psyche* or *The Psychological Review,* or the first hundred volumes of " The International Library of Psychology, Philosophy, and Scientific Method ", on which much of the present work is necessarily based, are alone conclusive. The reader who compares this Outline with right- and left-wing works such as Fox's *Educational Psychology* (1926) on the one hand, and Watson's *Behaviorism* (1925) on the other, will also be able to judge to what degree departure from tradition or

undue conservatism is in evidence in the following pages.

There remains always the probability that some apparent differences of opinion are actually but differences in formulation ; this aspect of the problem, however, has already been discussed in *The Meaning of Meaning* (3rd Edition, 1930), to which the present work might serve as a stepping-stone for the linguistically inquisitive. On this occasion I have had the advantage of discussing numerous points with my former collaborator, Dr I. A. Richards of Magdalene College, to whose *Principles of Literary Criticism* I also owe much.

C. K. OGDEN.

MAGDALENE COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE.

June, 1934.

THE ABC OF PSYCHOLOGY

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

Reasons for the Study of Psychology. There are four and a half good reasons for studying Psychology seriously.

There are many more reasons for studying it in other ways. It may help us to pose more readily as profound thinkers, to write more telling advertisements—or resist being taken in by them—to detect failings in our friends, and to discover new Wonders in our Offspring. But none of these things will carry the student through two hundred and fifty pages. Fortunately there are stronger motives.

1. WHAT ARE WE? Psychology is the only means by which this momentous question can ever be fully answered. Conchology cannot do it, nor yet Ontology: nor Physics. Physiology can only help us in part. Only by a study of that portion of us which we call the

mind can we ever learn what the mind is. This may seem a simple saying, but its significance has only lately been generally accepted. Psychology is the youngest of the sciences, and the most attractive :

> " O latest born and loveliest vision far
> Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy "

says Keats in his " Ode to Psyche ". The study of the psyche, of mental processes, besides its universal appeal, has this further advantage that we each carry perpetually about with us all the subject matter which it requires.

2. WE GO WRONG. Even if we do not, we are always in a position to say with Richard Baxter : " there, but for the Grace of God, goes Richard ". And psychology is beginning to point out both how we may avoid disaster and how regain the right track. The labours of Gall, Esquirol, Carpenter, Maudsley, Charcot, Ribot, Hughlings Jackson, Stanley Hall, Goltz, Creighton, Ferrier, Havelock Ellis, Janet, Freud, Adler, Rivers, and a thousand others have already made modern psychotherapy a powerful resource against the worst afflictions to which man is liable.

3. WE CAN BE IMPROVED. If the reader was ever a child he will fully realize how much

room for improvement not only we, but our outworn educational methods, allow. "It is quite true," wrote Professor James Harvey Robinson in 1921, "that what we need is education, but something so different from what now passes as such that it needs a new name." And in the last twelve years the Walls of the World, the bounds of human imagination and knowledge, have again been swept back by the further triumphs of Einstein, Eddington, Compton, Rutherford, and Dirac; while at the very heart of our being new and intricate mechanisms and possibilities are being revealed by fresh applications of such researches as those of Pavlov, Bose, Rowe, Cannon, Jaensch, Lashley, and the newer psycho-analysts. At the same time international, economic, and social affairs, and the contacts between minds, between types, races, and classes, which they entail, grow ever more bewildering. When confronted by these problems, or by our ignorance with regard to them, we must confess our inadequacy. We must learn how to learn —and our name is Legion. Democracy must face its problems. New millions of participants in the control of general affairs must now attempt to form personal opinions upon

matters which were once left to a few. At the same time the complexity of these matters has immensely increased. The old view that the only access to a subject is through prolonged study of it, if true, has consequences for the immediate future which have not yet been faced. The alternative is to raise the level of communication through a direct study of its conditions, its dangers, and its difficulties. The practical side of this undertaking is, if communication be taken in its wide sense, education.

4. THE MIND IS A STARTING-POINT. Psychology ultimately provides a basis for all other studies—Ethics, Economics, Æsthetics, Ethnology, Grammar, Politics, and Mathematics. Even Physics is ultimately driven back on hypotheses which are essentially matters of psychological criticism and construction. All our research is the exercise of our thinking powers, and in the long run the test for thinking lies with those whose business it is to study the processes of thought. This has, of course, always been realized by those physicists whom the world acclaims as at once the most prudent and the most daring.

To turn to the science which seems the

most removed from Physics—namely Ethics. As fashions have changed in psychology men's theories of the good have followed them. This is inevitable, for ever since the days of Aristotle it has been agreed that only *experiences* can be 'good' or 'bad'. At this point, however, it is worth warning the reader who is approaching psychology for the first time that he must not be disturbed by the special associations which certain simple terms such as *experience* (='a terrible experience'), *sensation* (cf. 'sensational'), and even *perception* and *adaptation*, have acquired in daily life and in the press. He will soon get accustomed to their more general uses. Experiences, then, are what we are ultimately assessing when we assign ethical values, and in describing the differences between good and bad experiences it is desirable to know how experiences may differ. The most commonplace view—"The greatest *happiness* of the greatest number"—no less than the most transcendental, "*Self*-realization", depends upon discussions which figure largely in every psychological treatise.

Nor is the science of the Beautiful (Æsthetics) capable of being divorced from

Psychology. What we are really talking about when we criticize a poem, a picture, or even a statue are essentially the states of mind (including pleasure, emotion, ecstasy, synæsthesis, and so forth) which they cause in us, so that the central problem of Æsthetics is to decide which of the states of mind that arise as our response to a given work of art are relevant.

Finally, as Mr Belloc wrote:

> "The Path of Life, men said, is hard and rough
> Only because we do not know enough.
> When Science has discovered something more
> We shall be happier than we were before."

If this be really true, Psychology, in virtue of its unique position among the sciences, would gain another half point.

The Subject Matter of Psychology. Clearly, however, Psychologizing is not one of the 'instincts'. It cannot be embarked on *ab ovo*, or from the cradle. Introspection (Lat. *introspicio*=look inward) is its main instrument, and a certain amount of training is necessary in introspection as in most other pursuits. Before commencing a detailed study we may make a brief preliminary survey of the field. The subject matter of Psychology is perhaps best indicated by an example.

As the reader reads these words he will probably agree that many things happen " in his mind ".

He *attends* to the marks on the paper, he *thinks* and *understands*, he takes up an *attitude*, he *remembers*, he is *interested* or *bored* as a consequence, his *instinct* of curiosity is perhaps aroused, or possibly he is *irritated* by the obscurity of the style. He *endeavours* to persevere, until eventually he feels *tired*, and to avoid pain he falls *asleep*. But even then he may *dream*, and on awakening may *forget* his dream—though if hypnotized he may rescue it from the *unconscious*.

All these are psychological events described in current psychological language, and in psychology we are either engaged in classifying such events and elaborating our descriptions of what takes place, or in seeking for their causes, *i.e.*, explaining why just that particular process took place at just that time in just that way.

The first of these, classification, is academic psychology—useful when wanted, but receding in favour of genetic (*Gk. genesis*=origin) and causal treatment. By genetic treatment is meant the treatment which seeks for light upon the things with which it deals

through the study of their origin, their history, and their development. When we thus approach the mind we find that the importance of past history is far greater than it is with physical processes. In fact we never think or feel or act quite freshly and spontaneously, for the character of our thinking, our feeling, and our acting is always due, in part at least, to the ways in which we have thought and felt and acted in the past. What exactly this dependence in any particular case may be is the main question which psychology attempts to answer, and it is chiefly in order to trace these connections more easily that it adopts a special vocabulary.

Technical Distinctions. Popular language in all matters that are connected with the mind is apt to be vague and misleading. Psychologists have therefore felt obliged to introduce terms freer from irrelevant associations than those in ordinary use, and these often make the subject seem dry and abstract to the beginner. But if it is realized that they are only names for what must from the nature of the case be processes familiar to everyone as part of ordinary experience, a little patience is all that is necessary for the mastery of current opinions.

Thus we find *Psychosis* ('state of mind', and sometimes 'abnormal state of mind': much as *phenomenon*='appearance', and sometimes 'abnormal appearance'), *Conation* (striving), *Volition* (will), *Affect* (feeling), *Cognition* (knowing), *Engram* (impression), *Presentation* (sensation), *Ideation* (thinking), *Hedonic tone* (pleasure-pain), *Endo-somatic* (inside the skin), *Cenesthesia* (sensibility of the whole body); and so on. Some of these terms will of course be found in the present work; others are not of much use.

Adaptation. From the most general standpoint, the business of the mind is to adapt the organism to its environment. The process of continual change from adaptation to adaptation is what is known as *Conation* (Lat. *conor*=try). In cases where there is conscious effort this process is popularly known as 'willing'. It is, however, now widely held that there is no essential difference, beyond a difference in complexity, between automatic responses to the environment and those responses which, owing to a conflict of tendencies, seem to involve the efforts of something which may be called the 'Will'. There are difficulties in admitting such an agent as the Will into psychology

as a science, but on the view that all mental change is conative, we must of course admit that we are 'willing' even when we are asleep, and much of the work of modern psychologists, such as Freud, is devoted to showing that we constantly have volitional (Lat. *volo*=wish) processes of which we are unconscious. The 'libido' which now appears so prominently in psycho-analytical writings, is a name for this general striving activity, which throughout life is never suspended.

How this stream of striving proceeds in any individual depends partly on sensations impressed by the external world, but also partly on internal factors. Certain of the latter are of particular importance, because their character determines the direction of the stream. It is to these factors the terms *Instinct, Impulse, Interest, Need,* refer. Pleasantness and painfulness clearly play a great part in controlling our behaviour, and this pleasure-pain aspect of experience is what is generally spoken of as feeling-tone.

Consciousness. Where in such an account does consciousness (Lat. *conscio*=know) appear? It cannot be too clearly realized that much of what is quite properly to be called mental activity is not conscious. Only some

of the elements involved have the peculiar character which we name consciousness. But we should be careful when we use the term 'element'. A mental state is not built up of items as a wall is of bricks. This is an error which has long haunted psychology and is known as associationism or atomism. What were supposed to be the bricks were mental occurrences of two kinds, sensations and images. They have received a disproportionate amount of study because they are the mental events which are most easily introspected. Sensations—and in this statement we are adopting a highly controversial view, the alternatives to which are discussed in Chapter II—are happenings in the nervous system, due to stimuli from outside the body, *e.g.*, in vision, or to the stimulation of one part of the body by another. A toothache, or a colic, is the same in its mode of origin as the sensation obtained, *e.g.*, by clenching the fist. The importance of these sensations, due to the action of one part of the body on another, will be clear when we come to discuss *emotions*; and they have much bearing upon the growth of self-consciousness and of our knowledge of other minds.

It is obvious that not all effects of stimuli

are, or give rise to, conscious perceptions. What may be the difference between effects which give rise to consciousness and those which do not is a matter upon which little light has yet been thrown. Consciousness is supposed to be associated with the higher parts of the nervous system, the bringing in of these higher systems accompanying the act of *attending*. It is plain that attention may make conscious what has hitherto been present but unperceived. If we keep our eyes motionless, we can discover, by merely attending to the edges of the field of view, that we are all the time seeing far more than we are ordinarily conscious of seeing. Similarly with all our senses. Without changing anything in our stimulation we can bring into explicit awareness much that lies ordinarily outside it—*e.g.*, the feel of our clothing on the skin and the rhythmic tension and relaxation of our breathing. Thus at all times there is a large field of inattention (stimulation not attended to) which is affecting us without causing consciousness.

Images. The other kind of 'element' which invites introspection is the *image*, the representative of perception which occurs without the stimulus required for the perception.

A great deal of work has been done on images since Galton's *Inquiry into Human Faculty* drew attention to the vast range of difference between individuals both as to the images they habitually employ, and as to their powers of forming imagery of any kind. To-day, however, psychologists of all schools lay less stress upon images as an essential feature of mental life; and there are some, such as Professor Watson, in his *Behaviorism* (1925), who deny that any kind of imagery is necessary, or indeed occurs at all. There is also an interesting controversy as to how far thought can be conducted without it. But in most people all kinds of imagery undoubtedly occur—visual, auditory, tactual, olfactory, gustatory, motor, kinæsthetic, thermal, and organic. In fact, it is possible to form images corresponding to every kind of sensation.

The reader should discuss imagery with his friends, getting them to describe what they see when they imagine, *e.g.*, a monkey riding a bicycle, and asking them to give the monkey a top hat with a red rosette, etc. He will find that they differ greatly both in the vividness of their imagery and in their power of controlling it. It seems likely that

special powers of imagery in one direction or another are due in large part to early trends of interest; and if, as seems probable, various abilities depend largely on these trends and the imagery to which they give rise, it should eventually be possible to avoid much disappointment and waste of time due to the later selection of unsuitable occupations.

These great differences between the types of imagery which are employed by different people raise a special problem, as to how far people with different imagery can be said to have the same thoughts. If my consciousness is filled, say, with mental pictures (visual images) and your consciousness is filled with the mental echoes of the sounds of words, how can we be said to have the same thoughts? And yet there is plainly a sense in which people who use quite different images can be said truly to be in agreement, to be thinking similarly.

Ideas. This problem, which is very important both historically and theoretically, is the same as the old question, "What is an Idea?" when this question is asked in Psychology. The full answer is very complicated, but an outline may be given which

shows how the difficulty we have raised, which would result from an attempt to identify ideas with images, may be avoided.

For this purpose we require the biological notion of adaptation with which we began. All thinking, all mental activity, occurs in the course of adaptation. When we have an image, the actual occurrence (which appears to us as an image) is a step in an actual or possible adaptation. It is a repetition of a step in a previous adaptation, namely, that which we made when we had the original sensation of which the image is sometimes said to be a copy.

An adaptation involves something to which we are adapting. If, for instance, I am thinking of St Peter's by means of an image of its dome, and you are thinking of it by means of the words 'St Peter's', we shall each be adapted to something. If this is the same, then we can be said to be thinking of the same thing, and so to be having the same thoughts—*i.e.*, adaptations—the same ideas, in spite of the difference in our imagery. Thus an *idea* (an ambiguous word which is synonymous with a 'representation', a 'conception', a 'concept', a 'notion', or a 'universal') is a way of thinking applicable to

something, and as is implied by the term ' adaptation ', all ' thought ' is determined by the necessity of reacting to situations and determines action of some kind or other.

Emotions. We may now, bearing in mind this idea of adaptation, turn to the active side of mental processes, to striving, and consider instincts and the emotions. The distinctive feature of emotional as opposed to other experience is the presence of certain organic sensations, due to physiological changes in the internal organs of the body, such as a quickened pulse and arrested breathing. These, or images of them, give their peculiar flavour to experiences such as anger, fear, love, or wonder.

Instincts. But it must not be supposed that these sensations are all that constitutes such an emotion as anger. We have to examine the causes to which the sensations themselves are due. We then find that there are apparently a small number of primitive drives or inborn arrangements of the organism, which lead it to respond to special situations in a special manner. These are, or may give rise to, the so-called *instincts*. Thus if a jaguar rushes suddenly upon us, our instinctive adaptation takes the form of *flight*.

But to facilitate flight the internal conditions of the body (the heart-beat, the breathing, the glandular activities, etc.) are modified; and these modifications give rise to the sensational part of the emotions above indicated. In other words, we are sorry, as James put it, because we cry, rather than *vice versa*. But a fly in the eye will make that organ water, yet we do not necessarily experience grief. That is to say, it is only bodily sensations, instinctively originated, which constitute emotions, or 'affects', as they are often called by modern writers; and there is much more in an emotion than a mere organic disturbance. Some would maintain that emotions may accompany instincts even when not consciously experienced, but are "in the unconscious" to which we may now turn.

The Unconscious. The recognition, chiefly since the opening of the present century, that most of our mental life has not the character of consciousness, is responsible for much of the present popular interest in the subject. The laws of the interconnections of conscious 'elements' had been elaborately studied a hundred years ago by writers like Hartley, and already by the

time of John Stuart Mill it seemed unlikely that much more could be added. Authorities like Bain were producing definitive treatises on the intellect and the emotions, and, though there were sporadic attempts to found a science of animal psychology, and laboratory methods were being developed, it hardly appeared possible to do more than put the finishing touches on so monumental a structure.

At this point morbid psychology, through the work of medical men and alienists, specialists in the treatment of those who are beside themselves (Lat. *alius* = other), began to force upon the attention of the official representatives of the science the necessity for fresh hypotheses.

As so often, advance was due to the fresh stimulus provided by strange occurrences for which accepted theories could suggest no explanation. Hypnotism, alternating personalities, automatic writing and psychical research, hysteria, phobias and neuroses in general, particularly those relating to sex, became the central points of interest. Resemblances between the phenomena of dreams and those of mental diseases led to a completely new account of what happens in the mind when conscious control is relaxed.

The facts thus brought to light show that only a small part of our mental life is under conscious control, *i.e.*, controlled by processes which are themselves conscious. This has emphasized the fact that consciousness is the exception rather than the rule in the processes studied by psychology. In dealing, however, with 'The Unconscious' which is becoming too ready a resource in psychological difficulties, the first necessity is to decide precisely how we are going to use our language. Most discussions of the unconscious proceed as though there were two distinct realms, the conscious and the unconscious; as when it is said that what was in the unconscious can be brought into consciousness or what is conscious may be repressed into the unconscious. The mind is thus regarded as composed of separate strata, and in addition to the Unconscious we hear of the Subconscious, the Fore-conscious, and so forth. This metaphorical language is convenient for some purposes, but no clear understanding of the problems can be reached unless we are prepared to go behind such verbal devices.

Metaphors and Facts. The result of rash speculations on the contents of the Unconscious has been a revival of almost