

Seymour M. Farber and Roger H. L. Wilson (Eds.)

Man and Civilization: Control of the Mind

New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961. 1 vol., 340 Pp. \$2.95

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MIND REVISITED

Ours is the Age of Paper. Scientists are admonished: Publish or perish.

An efficient way of continuing to teach, administrate, committee-meet and correspond, and at the same time "author" a book, is to get money from some foundation, conduct a symposium on an "important" topic, choose an attention-getting title, invite a number of "names" to participate, and publish the papers as a book. The chairman of the symposium can turn over the papers to his secretarial staff for editing and, magic of magics, he is the author of a book! (For obvious reasons publishing houses reinforce this procedure.) However, since there are not enough "names" to go around, one begins to find the same story in each of several books with slightly different metaphors. The burden placed on scholar and student by such overlapping, redundant material begins to mount. Economy publishing without indexes further increases the burden to scholars.

In the scramble for imposing titles, there seems to be a return to all-encompassing pre-scientific terms which imply that a particular symposium has mastered problems which puzzled the ancients, had been shelved as insoluble or had been broken into more manageable sub-problems.

The use of the term mind as a noun instead of a verb in the title of this symposium is a case in point. Mind as a noun, an object, a subject of scientific investigation has rightfully disappeared from the scientific literature as its function has been broken into smaller and smaller sub-parts for scientific analysis. In 1961, Psychological Abstracts contained 7,353 references, with only seven indexed under mind, but 32 under performance. The 1961 Psychopharmacological Abstracts, with 3,206 references, had no entry for mind but indexed performance 130 times. The American Handbook of Psychiatry (1959) has only 11 entries for mind in a 90-page subject index. These data demonstrate that mind is not useful as a scientific term, yet it still seems useful as an attention-gaining title for books and symposia (e.g., J. Schar, Theories of the Mind, 1963.) So it looks like we must again revisit mind.

What of the revisitation in January 1960 by 26 eminent men at the San Francisco Medical Center of the University of California? A familiar mid-twentieth century bias operated in the selection of these renowned authorities: over thirty percent came from the University of California. Although it may have been necessary to assemble an havel

funds, it is nevertheless regrettable that so many of the specialists on such a wide topic came from a single institution.

What of the bias concerning field of speciality? Of the 26 participants in the symposium, five were educators, four psychiatrists, three psychologists, three physiologists, three novelists, and one each from the fields of pharmacology, law, theology, sociology, business, journalism, history, and philosophy. The 14 major contributions were a little less biased towards the non-scientific disciplines: there were three contributions from psychiatry, two from physiology, two from psychology, two from the novelists, and one each from history, law, theology, journalism, and education. With the exception of D. O. Hebb, there was very little representation of the behavioristic approach which has recently been applied so successfully in the United States. From this biased and rather sketchy coverage of such a vast topic, some very interesting papers emerged. However, it is regrettable that they are buried under this extremely general topic of "mind." Arthur Koestler's creative treatment of the creative process, for example, is exciting reading which would be better in a collection of papers on creativity.

In general, the more expert the contributor in his field, the more conservative he was both in his formal presentation and in the panel discussions.

Throughout the discussions there was a running battle between psychiatrist J. G. Miller and the neurophysiologists as to whether computers are useful as brain models.

The three papers on the influence of drugs on the individual, given by Seymour S. Kety, J. G. Miller, and Jonathan O. Cole, are among the best and most factual in the book. In general, these experts agree that drugs are not the answer in controlling behavior. Cole summarized the possibility of using drugs for "brainwashing" as follows: "I see no reason to believe any drug would be more effective than social and psychological pressures or physical discomforts in producing changes in an individual."

A member of the audience of the panel discussion on restriction and freedom of the mind shared this reviewer's reaction. He suggested: "A more appropriate study than that of complete control of the mind (repugnant as such a concept was) might be a study of the various factors which influence behavior."

Although every article in this symposium contains a few interesting points and bears

reading, it is difficult to summarize without abstracting the entire book. Several of the articles would be more efficiently contained in symposia on other topics. In general, one gets the feeling of having been on a very cultured and posh journey on the sunny side of the ship -- Port Out and Starboard Home. At the end of the book, home we are! And mind you, we are little different for our pleasant journey. It is difficult to recall exactly where it was we went and what important things we discovered. So it has always been with the revisitation of mind. Do you have time to mind?