

THE “SCIENCE” WITHOUT A SOUL

One of the essential problems with psychology today is its reliance upon psychiatric or biological behavioral models—a far cry from its foundations. Psychology once followed early philosophy and initially meant the study of the soul—*psyche* (soul) and *ology* (study of). The general thought was that the mind and body were separate entities. Thus, each man and woman was regarded as a composite of soul, mind and matter.

In 1829, *Webster’s International Dictionary of the English Language* defined “psychology” as “a discourse or treatise on the human soul; the doctrine of the nature and properties of the soul.” In 1892, *Webster’s High School Dictionary* said “psychology” related to “the powers and function of the soul.”

However, all this changed in the late 1800s when German psychologist Wilhelm Wundt established the first “experimental psychology” laboratory in Leipzig University, officially rejecting the existence of the soul and declaring—without a shred of evidence—that man was merely a product of his genes. In his words, “If one assumes that there is nothing there to begin with but a body, a brain and a nervous system, then one must try to educate by inducing sensations in that nervous system.” In a Wundt textbook, translated into English in 1911, Wundt declared, “The...soul can no longer exist in the face of our present-day physiological knowledge....”¹

The idea of the spirit being “a sensible being, separable from the body,” a belief held by a large percentage of civilized man, was “scientifically” relegated to primitive races.²

Websters Dictionary once defined *soul* as “An entity conceived as the essence, substance, or actuating [impelling] cause of individual life...it is the subject of the experience mediated by his body; it is not the mind, but that which thinks and wills. Second, the soul is identified with the totality of conscious experience....”

However, with Wundtian psychology impacting on the culture in the early 1900s, *Websters* stated: “Recent psychology, for the most part, dispenses with the concept of the soul as an entity....”

Thomas Hardy Leahey, author of *A History of Psychology*, noted the results of this: “Traditionally, psychology meant *psyche-logos*, the study of the soul. But the supernatural soul had no place in naturalistic science, so to continue pursuing psychology along traditional lines would bar it from science....However, by insisting that the nervous system is the basis of all mentality, and defining psychology as the

investigation of the physiological conditions of conscious events, the new field of physiological psychology could establish itself as a science.”

By 1961, *Merriam Webster's 3rd International Dictionary* defined “psychology” as “the science of mind or mental phenomena or activities; the study of biological organism (as man) and the physical and social environment.”

With the soul eliminated, psychologists set about manipulating behavior and “training” an individual much like one would train a bear, a dog or any other animal.

Although this man-is-an-animal theory is easily debunked (dogs do not drive cars, horses will never paint masterpieces and concertos have yet to be performed by an orchestra of monkeys), psychology drew heavily on Wundt’s theories and declared Man a victim of his environment.

Tana Dineen, Ph.D., points out: “The horrific suffering that some victims bear cannot be trivialized, nor can it be implied that people never carry scars.” Some people do need help in living with life’s experiences. But, Dr. Dineen says, the psychology industry profits from turning people into victims “to benefit” itself. While people can manifest remarkable resilience, psychology has been “largely responsible for the creation of a world in which people live in fear that they will crumble.”³

In placing man as the direct and unknowing effect of an authoritarian and soulless philosophy, those psychologists supporting this view are promoting the idea that one’s mental health depends upon an adjustment to the world rather than its conquest. This presumes that man cannot, therefore, effect positive change on the world around him but must submit to its random will. Implicit also is the belief that he cannot even be responsible for his own mental healing, as his behaviors are entirely the product of the functions or malfunctions of the brain. In other words, that like dogs, men are basically stimulus response mechanisms.

While Man is capable of great evil, there is an inherent decency in us all that makes us want happiness for ourselves, those we hold dear, and even those we hardly know.

The good is there to be cultivated.

It cannot be nurtured in a world where psychiatric doctrine and thought permeate our culture with the philosophy that we are mere animals who have no hope of finding happiness outside of a medicine cabinet.

¹ Wilhelm Wundt, *Introduction to Psychology*, (MacMillan Company, New York, 1912), English version, original written in 1911, p. 192.

² Wilhelm Wundt, *Ethics: An Investigation of the Facts and Laws of the Moral Life*, (The Macmillan Co., New York, 1897), Translated by Julia Henrietta Gulliver, Edward Bradford Titchener and Margaret Floy Washburn from the second German edition (1892), p. 104.

³ Dr. Tana Dineen, *Manufacturing Victims*, (Robert Davies Publishing, Quebec, Canada, Third Edition, 2000), p. 65.