

Personality

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Our practical and theoretical study of the personality is essentially determined by the fact that we do not separate somato-organic development and function from intellectual, emotional and psychic ones, and regard the personality as a close unity. This is in accordance with our concept considering man as a qualitatively new form of the motion of matter. Man in this concept is not separated of the other manifestation forms of motion, but is considered a part of the unity of motion-forms of the world, the earth, the living and lifeless matter. Thus, this motion-form of the "living" matter, changing in the course of many million years into plant and later animal life-formations, took in a sudden developmental phase, about 600 thousand to one million years ago, the motion-form of matter called man. Man, this quantitatively new motion-form of matter, is decisively separated from the previously developed forms. As a new qualitative unit, man contains human consciousness and all capacities, possibilities and properties which are indicated by the concept consciousness. In the course of the 600 thousand to one

million years passed since this formation, man has gone an extremely long way. The essence of this developmental possibility has been based on the relation of the individual and his environment, on the tendency to adaptation to the environment, on the tendency and efforts of man to form a favourable environment. All this means work. These two forces, the adaptation to the environment for the purpose of survival on the one hand, and the activity to so alter the environment that it should ensure favourable life conditions, on the other, are the factors which within certain biological possibilities has formed the individual; which has forced him to develop ever new faculties and to practice the newly developed ones by being forced to live, so that they become fixed and transmissible by inheritance. Several ten thousand years ago nature was the only environment. In the course of human development, a new environmental factor, first a primitive one, later on a more developed, more complex one, an environment of social character had developed. Parallel to human development, this social envi-

ronmental effect has gained more and more significance in the shaping of individual development, and developed the individual's present capacities, dispositions and properties. At present, it is already possible to state that, although according to his origin man is a biological formation, his further development, the development of the individual, depends upon influences of his social environment. At present, since man has reached maturity, he represents a unity of biological and social patterns. Within this unity the development of individual capacities and dispositions, the given biological basis rests on the social characteristics. For the very young individual, the foetal organism, it is the mother who represents the natural environment. In this early stage the individual is a purely biological formation; in the foetal phase of life, no effects reach him directly from the social environment. The maternal organism wards and levels off all such influences, ensuring even at her own cost the most favourable natural conditions for the foetus. The factors of the social environment exert, however, with an ever increasing force their effect immediately after birth. For the infant during the first 2 to 3 months of life, the social effect of the environment is concretized by the organism and personality of the mother. Later, the influences exerted by the other members of the family, the father, the siblings, the grandparents living with the family, become effective as social environmental influences.

The social effects of factors from outside the family assert themselves gradually; those of the nursery, the kindergarten, school, children's collectives, and, at last, every-day society in a broader sense of the word, the street, the effects concomitant to every-day life.

All this means that man, the human individual has never in the course of his development of one million years burst out from one minute to the other as Pallas Athene from the head of Zeus on the stroke of Hephaistos' hammer, totally mature, ready for defense and attack, in full armour with shield and spear. Man developed and develops gradually and continuously within the limits of his specific possibilities and dispositions, in his environment, living in the scope of its effect and affecting it; when he is what we designate by mature, ready, adult man. Childhood and young age within this developmental process is long, comprising about one third of the present average life span. In the course of foetal life, infancy, childhood and adolescence, events of decisive significance take place. This is the time when through experience, the methods of "living life" are learned by the individual, when the "habits" of external and internal life become settled by practice. This way of living is determined by social characteristics. It cannot remain a natural, biological form of life of anarchistic character. In the course of education, the environment instructs, trains the individual and the individual takes up habits,

experience, learns from the environment, by imitating it. This is the way he develops and is shaped.

What is it that develops in this manner that is perceived by his environment as an adult individual, a personality of suitable attitude, having been developed adequately, individually as well as socially?

Numerous theories have been put forward to explain the concept of personality. I do not wish to discuss all these theories, of which none has been accepted by all researchers. On the basis of data in the literature and my own experience, my determination of the personality is as follows.

Personality is the specific totality of the individual properties of the individual and simultaneously its specific organized unity. According to our concept, personality is not only the sum of the individual's psychic properties. The specific sum of individual properties is the unity and at the same time the totality of such congenital and acquired inter-related preconditions, which have developed within the biologically (and thus morphologically and physiologically) given limits and possibilities, *i.e.* which manifest themselves in every individual upon environmental (natural and social) effects. It is through the morphological and functional individual unity and totality, determined by the above described concept, that all actual external and internal stimuli originating in the life of the individual are filtered. The filtration of external and internal stimuli and influences through the

personality determines the intensity of excitement arising in the individual under the effect of these stimuli, determining the position of tension-concentration caused by the excitement, determining their discharge, as also the reaction-mechanism and its quality, by the aid of which the relief of the stimuli-caused excitation takes place. The prevailing personality is at the same time the basis of further personality development. This means that every single man's personality is characterized by the fact that within his biological, physiological and morphological, general and individual circumstantial limits and possibilities, individual somato-organic and psychic connections are present which have developed in the course of the given individual's life and are characteristic of that single individual only. These connections are forming a special system concerning excitability, stimuli-produced excitement and its release, thus the specific reaction of the individual. This system is not static, but a dynamic-energetic system in continuous movement. Possibilities of tension-formation, energy-concentration, energy-transmittants and energy-receivers, energy-transformators and energy storage, possibilities of energy discharge and its inhibition, and forces of energy-manifestations are shaped in this system in a determined manner. It is not an anarchistic system; its organization is characteristic of the individual (dynamic stereotype). This system has its specific quality and specific laws which are formed in the

course of the individual's life, within certain laws valid for every man.

According to this concept, intact biological and, within that, basically and continuously intact anatomical and physiological conditions are necessary for the normal development of the personality. Fundamentally intact anatomical and physiological development provides the foundation of the normal development of the personality. It is, however, indispensable for normal development that from the very beginning of individual life continuous adequate environmental stimuli, adequate environmental effects, should reach the individual, and the excitements caused by both the stimuli and those released by the needs and demands concomitant with life should adequately be satisfied and solved in the course of natural and social life alike.

Thus, personality, according to our definition is the specific dynamic-energetic totality and, simultaneously, the unity of individual organization of events and possible events which have been specialized on the individual's familial biological basis, on his somato-organic (morphological and physiological) and psychic (*i.e.* higher nervous functions) basis, formed by general and local natural and social environmental effects and influences. This includes functionally the individual's relation to the external and his own internal world, to others and to himself; the qualitative individual characteristics comprise the organic, *i.e.* psychic, excitation produced by external or internal stimuli,

the quality and quantity of reactions to the stimuli, the specific character of the relief of the excitation, and even the possibilities of further development.

Thus, personality is the unity of an individual, specific way of living life; the specific living unity which differentiates every individual from all other individuals, of the community which has shaped this individuality and in which the individual lives.

I think that from the above short description of our concept it is clearly seen that, parallel to somatic development, the personality undergoes changes in the course of life. It is therefore incorrect to determine by the concept of personality only the unity of attitudes and manifestations of the mature, adult individual. It is incorrect because then there is no way to determine the manifestations of the infant, the child and the adolescent. It is evident that there are individual differences in the foetus, the newborn, the infant, the young child, the school child and the adolescent. All those who have ever studied man in these developmental phases of life are aware of that fact. It has therefore to be accepted that individuals in all those phases of life have their own unity of manifestations, *i.e.* a personality. For our determination, the personality of these different phases has to be elucidated and studied.

According to our terminology, the personality of the individual in every given life phase will be called actual personality. The actual personalities,

although developing in sequence and depending on one another, are in close relation with each other, but still differ widely. It is unquestionable that the actual personality of the foetus, the newborn, the infant, the young child, the school child and the adolescent, are different. Under healthy conditions these life phases and the attitude of the individual in these life phases are determined by the quality of the personality and the connections and succession of the determinants, and the specific character of these interrelations comprises actually the developmental process of man's personality. The developmental process takes a specific course during which, starting from the foetal phase of life, it arrives at the entirely mature, adult developmental phase of personality. The mature phase is the peak of development and during a certain period of life this form of personality is stable, characterizing the individual. Then ageing starts and therewith the mature adult personality begins to change in a special manner. First, the formation of a transitional period (climacteric), then actual ageing, old age and, finally, the phase of senility set in. In other words, mature adult age and the age of regression are characterized, in spite of their connections, by the corresponding actual personality forms. What then ensures the continuity of the course of the individual's entire life, in spite of the existence of the different actual personality forms, characterizing the single life phases?

It has to be remembered that man is characterized by his possessing a special remembering-forgetting system. I have already pointed out in a previous paper that the function of remembering-forgetting is not only a conceptional and intellectual one, but is valid for the entire organism. It is on the basis of this concept that in the present paper I shall discuss material memory, vegetative memory, memory of states, memory of movement, emotional memory, intellectual memory. I have emphasized that, by means of the remembering-forgetting function, the individual's organic and psychic activity is influenced by events which he has experienced in all the earlier phases of his life. These events exert their influence both morphologically and functionally. Essentially, within the above described dynamic-energetic system of the actual personality, the effect of the memories of the personality of earlier phases depends on several factors. The dynamic possibility of these "memories" never ceases; the individual cannot totally "forget", cannot change these memories into static ones. It is the consequence of the remembering-forgetting function that the personality structure develops in the course of individual life. According to our concept, the following elements exist within the personality structure, the vegetative personality element, the emotional personality element, the kinetic (motor) personality element, and the intellectual personality element. These specific personality elements within the per-

sonality structure are not of a static character, but represent an energy-extension field within the dynamic-energetic system. Within the personality structure the concentration of the excitement before discharge due to the given stimulus in the actual personality, and the internal direction of its relief, as well as the quality of the dynamic-energetic structure depends on the actual dynamic-structure of the personality. The actual manifestation therefore is substantially the resultant of the different structural elements, the different factors forming the structure.

How does function the remembering-forgetting mechanism? It functions essentially by the method of a reflex-chain process, comprising also associative processes. Therefore, the quality of the mechanical possibility of the reaction to stimuli, briefly, the reflex processes, have also to be mentioned. It is a generally accepted fact that if a living organism, like the human one, is affected by a stimulus which exceeds in intensity the stimulus threshold, excitation is produced in the organism. This excitation concentrates in, and is limited to, some part of the central nervous system. It has to be relieved because the nervous system is unable to remain in a tetanus-like state. The relief of the excitation is essentially the response to the stimulus. This response is generally called a reflex, and the process itself a reflex process.

The reflex process, *i.e.* the process starting with some external or internal stimulus becoming effective and last-

ing until the appearance of the "reflex", means a certain internal movement. The direction of this internal movement as regards the relation of the individual and the external world, is directed outward or inward. The latter has been termed by us a reflex process of retrograde direction. An outward directed movement means that the reflex process appears in a form perceptible by the external world, so, for instance, the movement of a limb, the change of the entire position of the body, activity, emotional flare-up, speech, writing, objective production, etc. In case of an outward directed movement, the relief of the stimulus-caused excitation is final. The transportation of energy within the organism during the relief of excitation takes generally the vegetative-emotional-intellectual course, except in the case of memory. In this case the actual excitation is totally relieved. During this process, the significance of excitation becomes conscious, in feeling, phantasy, notion, thought, internal and external speech, eventually writing, or some artistic or scientific creation. This formulation is an already static characteristic, which in the earlier phases of the process had been an event of dynamic character, and which receives simultaneously with its formulation also an abstract "index" value. In the case of a movement directed inward, *i.e.* of one of retrograde character, the relief of the actual excitation takes a different course. In such instances, the displacement of tension during the reflex process takes an

opposite direction, following the intellectual-emotional, vegetative course. The "reflex" resulting from the said process is not directly perceptible for the external world; it means actually a vegetative change in one of the organs or in the entire organism. The tension of the stimulus-caused excitation in the course of this process is not relieved totally, but is transplanted from the intellectual level to the emotional sphere, and finally to the vegetative level. In this manner it causes either a circumscribed vegetative functional change in one of the organs, for instance a circumscribed contraction in the coronary tract of the heart; or ischaemia, later ulcer, etc. in a circumscribed area of the gastric mucosa due to vascular constriction; or else, hypersecretion and hypermotility in the entire gastrointestinal tract, in consequence of which vomiting, diarrhoea or, through the urogenital apparatus, micturition occurs; or, through the excitement concentrating in the corresponding areas of the central nervous system, it causes hypertension, fainting, etc., affecting thus the entire organism. In this process the excitation is not formulated as an "index" of abstract character and does not become static, but remains at the dynamic level and in the retrograde process it may sink back into the vegetative field, as the excitement has not been formulated (unconscious) and remains a dynamic potential. This means that the once exterior stimulus-induced excitation changes into an internal stimulus, sinking from the intellectual system

into systems at a lower level by means of the movement of a reflex-chain process of retrograde "linear" direction. At the same time it becomes a closed circle of reflex-chain-like motion, returning to the starting point in the emotional and vegetative systems, and being there unsettled. It becomes "unsettled" since the circular reflex-chain does not follow the laws of "intellectual logic" and, therefore, cannot be solved "intellectually". Successions of internal movements closely interconnected according to the individual archaic, primitive "emotional", *i.e.* vegetative, logic, take place, owing to the predominance of incessant unsatisfied, faulty, unseizable, intellectually unformulated tendencies, caused by the intervention of emotional and vegetative memories.

I do not wish to discuss the different theories concerning reflexes and reflex processes, only to summarize my own views. There are congenital and acquired reflex processes. It is necessary to point out the fact that the human congenital reflex processes are built upon reflex processes formed and fixed during previous life-formations which provide the basis of human development and which have been shaped in the course of man's development lasting 600 thousand to one million years, as a consequence of the pressure of life, the adaptation to the environment, the tendencies and events to transform the environment, the practice of these tendencies and activities for many hundreds and thousands of years, to the final fixa-

tion which has made them apt for inheritance. In my opinion, the inherited reflex-processes of present-day man had once been formed by the human race in its "historical environment". They were at that time acquired reflex-processes.

Acquired reflex processes can either be temporary conditioned reflex-processes in the classical Pavlovian sense, or else acquired final forms, being the direct response to a short circuit caused by excitation by a direct stimulus. In the sense of the above, the reflex mechanism to an actual stimulus, natural or abstract, is a conditioned reflex process in Pavlov's determination, or else a direct short circuit reflex process mechanism, based on a congenital capacity or an acquired property. In addition, the response of the adult individual can be a "creative response" as I have termed it.

I do not wish to discuss the temporary conditioned reflex-processes in the classical Pavlovian sense, since the reality and laws of these have been proved and are generally known. Similarly, there is no need to deal with the congenital reflex-processes. It is, however, important to discuss in some detail the final form of the reflex-process acquired in the course of individual life. Man in the course of his individual life acquires experiences and these experiences are essentially based upon the direct knowledge of the reality surrounding him. These experiences are reflections of his genuine environment and the processes taking place in that environment, as

well as the interwoven significance and indication of these processes mirroring in the individual's nervous function. Their reflection is basically the result of the process characterizing the congenital reflex-processes and is one of its phases. The experiences are situated and stored in the specific world of memory of the individual. Acquisition of these experiences take their course in the following way. From one of the stimulus-sources of the external world, man becomes affected actually by a direct stimulus; if the intensity of this stimulus exceeds the actual stimulus threshold, the stimulus becomes effective, causing excitation in the individual, which is then relieved and this relief is the response to the stimulus, the reflex. Such direct external stimuli are from the point of view of man composed of several elements (stimulus particles). From the given source of stimulus the individual is affected, on the one hand, already from distant stimulus-parts through the intervention of exteroceptors, *i.e.* the organs of vision, olfaction and audition; on the other hand, stimulus-parts become effective by the intervention of close exteroceptors, the sense organs of touch and taste. It may happen that all these stimulus-elements originating from the stimulus source, *i.e.* the whole of the stimulus-source, affect the individual simultaneously, and the excitement as the reaction to the sum of the complex stimulation in the individual's nervous system is essentially the reflection of the reality actually affecting him from

outside, and so experience is stored in his memory. After the acquirement of certain experiences, and in the possession of these, the individual is able to form this uniform reflection of the external world not only when affected by all the stimulus-elements determining the quality of stimulus, but also if only one kind of direct natural stimulus-element exerts its effect on him; for instance, if he is affected by the way of vision, eventually olfaction or hearing only by a single stimulus-element coming from a distant source of stimulus. In this case the total reflection of the environment is made possible by the fact that the function of the individual's nervous system possesses adequate experience and is able to complete the excitement caused by the stimulus-part with the help of memory. Thus, of the actual external reality not only a partial visual, olfactory or auditive picture (a specific sensation) is formed in his nervous system, but the reflection of the actual external world is completed from memory. Following the relief of the direct natural stimulation-totality, or of the excitement caused by a stimulus-part completed by memory, as the ending of the reflex-chain process, there appears the response, the actual reflex in some form of response. The response, the reflex-activity, appears in the form of thought, emotion, a change of vegetative character or in the form fixation. This form of manifestation indicates therefore the actual response to the stimulus, the "reflex". After

countless repetitions the acquired reflex-chain process, discussed in the above, becomes fixed, definite, and so its repeating possibility remains constant until the end of the individual's life. The final form of the acquired reflex process differs from that of the acquired conditioned reflex-process in that the reflex-chain consisting of stimulus-excitement-(relief)-response starts as the stimulus source affecting the individual from the external world; this means that this reflex-chain process starts under the effect of direct natural stimulation, whereas the process of the temporary conditioned reflex can only start under certain conditions, in consequence of indirect stimulus-elements indirectly connected with the stimulus source.

I believe that on hand of this short summary it is possible to follow the action mechanism of the acquired final form of the reflex-process taking place under such laws which characterize also those of the inherited reflex-process. The question may arise why it is necessary to differentiate between inherited reflex processes and the temporary conditioned reflex processes. In my opinion, the necessity of a differentiation of the temporary conditioned reflex process is clear. It is necessary because the acquired form develops in the individual's life only if the individual has had the experience necessary for the formation of these and a certain amount of learning has been done, so that the individual will be in the position to store these experiences in such

manner that in his entire memory world they can be recalled, can be used anew, by "remembering". By remembering, by repeating, they can be included into his own reflex-chain process.

As regards the process of creative response, it should first of all be emphasized that this process is a specific activity of the higher nervous system. When need arises, man recalls of his world of memory his own experience, knowledge, by means of the functions of remembering and association, makes comparisons, and, eventually with the interposition of an emotional process, takes stock of the position and reflects. In the course of this process arises the result of reflection. After coming to the result, he again takes stock of the situation, with the eventual interposition of an emotional process, then takes his decision and first the preformed will is produced, to be followed by the final one. By means of this, the response is developed, to manifest itself in activity, thought, speech, writing, a change of vegetative character or some kind of fixation. The actual human personality is decisively determined by the use of the above response-possibilities in the course of every-day life; in other words, the rate of use of the congenital reflex, the acquired temporary conditioned reflex, the acquired final one and the reflex process of creative character. This means that an actual personality which relieves the stimulus-induced excitement predominantly by conditioned reflex responses differs from

that personality which solves the majority of stimulus-induced excitations by, for instance, creative reflex processes.

Examining the personality elements forming the personality structure as to the quality of reflex-processes playing a role in the manifestations, the following conclusions can be drawn. In manifestations of the vegetative personality determining the individual in the foetal, newborn and early infantile periods, exclusively inherited reflex processes play a part. In personality manifestations determining the individual in the phases of late infancy and early childhood, two kinds of response, inherited and acquired temporary conditioned reflex processes are already present. Acquired temporary conditioned reflex processes are not only built upon, but are, in a way, built-in into the inherited ones. The interconnection of these two kinds of reflex-chain is very close, in spite of the fact that there is a principal difference between them. The possibility of using different reflex-processes in the personality manifestation becomes wider during school age, puberty and adolescence. In these phases, the inherited and the acquired temporary conditioned, as also the acquired lasting reflex-chain processes may assert themselves according to the quality of the individual's development; even responses in the form of the creative reflex-chain process are sometimes encountered. Mature adult age is determined, according to the quality of the personality structure and at the same time

the quality of the total personality, by the kind of reflex-chain process "allowed" by the organism and the personality, *i.e.* the system characteristic of the individual. The dynamism determining the unity, the individual, is in the position to make his choice of the four kinds of reflex process. This choice is in the majority of cases automatic, without the direct interference of the will interconnected by consciousness. The chosen reflex-chain process becomes effective as the result of the choice, upon the effect of the succeeding stimulus. The possibility of effectiveness of the congenital reflex process is greatly

impeded by different inhibitory processes in the mature, well-balanced, strong adult personality, so that the final acquired as well as the temporary conditioned and, in certain instances, the creative reflex processes have a better chance of effectiveness. It has, however, to be emphasized that, in spite of the growth of the personality, the possibility of none of the preceding reflex-chain processes ceases altogether. At and after the age of regression the possibility of reflex-chain processes characterizing childhood and having been almost forgotten, may more and more predominate with the advance of age.

SUMMARY

(i) Somato-organic development and function, and intellectual, emotional and psychic development and function are not considered separately but as a closely interconnected unity; according to this concept, man is regarded as a unit of biological and social formations.

(ii) Personality is the specific totality and at the same time the unity of a definite systematization of individual properties. Personality is therefore not only the sum of the individual's psychic properties, but the totality and at the same time a unity of individually organized dynamic-energetic (morphological and physiological) and psychic (higher nervous activity) events due to general and at the same time specialized and fixed, local natural and social environmental

effects, through the individual's ancestors, developed on a biological basis. This comprises functionally the individual's relation to the external and his own internal world, to others and to himself; it comprises the quality of organic, *i.e.* psychic, excitation in response to external and internal stimuli; it comprises the quality of the relief, in other words the reflex to that excitation and the possibilities of the individual's own development. Personality is therefore the unity of form, attitude and manifestations of the individual's life, differentiating him from all other individuals, causing him to be an individual within the community in which his personality had developed and in which he actually lives.

(iii) For a normal personality devel-

opment, intact biological and, within that, basically and continuously intact anatomic and physiological conditions and their normal development are required. It is, however, also indispensable that adequate environmental stimuli and influences should be exerted on the individual from the beginning of his life, as also that excitement produced by the stimuli and excitations induced by needs and demands concomitant to life should adequately be satisfied and relieved in the course of natural and social life alike.

(iv) Personality, similarly to the organism, develops, changes in the course of life. There are differences between the personality of the foetus, the newborn, the infant, the young child, the school-age child, the adolescent. The personality of the individual in a given phase of life is termed actual personality.

(v) The single phases of life, the attitude of the individual in these periods, are determined by characteristic qualities (actual personality); connection and succession of these determinants, their contents and interconnection comprise the course of development of man's personality.

(vi) In spite of certain differences in the forms of the actual personality characterizing the single phases of life and having a prominent position in the entire process, are connected by the function of memory and

forgetting which thus ensures the entity of the entire process of individual life.

(vii) The personality structure is formed by the function of remembering-forgetting. The personality structure is built up from structural elements. These are the vegetative personality element, the emotional personality element, the motor personality element, and the intellectual personality element.

(viii) The manifestation of the actual personality is the result of the different power factors inherent in the structural elements.

(ix) The system of memory and forgetting acts essentially by the method of a reflex-chain process also comprising association processes.

(x) Reflex processes are congenital or acquired. Acquired reflex processes are temporary conditioned reflexes in the classical Pavlovian sense, acquired final reflex processes, and reflex processes in the form of a creative response.

(xi) The necessity of distinction between the different forms, the characteristics of the acquired final reflex-form, and that of the creative response are discussed. It is described which form of the different reflex-processes is predominant in the internal mechanism of personality manifestations in the different phases of life (actual personality) of the individual.

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