

other types that comprise the day-to-day work of theorists in other disciplines (it is not every day that one constructs a new theory). That the editors of "the pre-eminent theoretical journal of the discipline of psychology" (Kintsch & Judd, 1989, p. 3) should be possessed of such an antitheoretical spirit is an indication of how far psychology still has to go before it completely recovers from its peculiar malady.

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## Let's Not Ignore Individuality

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Sampson (June 1989) has nicely distinguished between individualism and globalism and, at least to my mind, has made an excellent case "to show how globalization will compel a change in psychology's current theory of the person" (p. 914). Before enthusiasts (not to mention fanatics!) run away with themselves and seriously sack human individualism, however, let me briefly cite some of its important aspects.

1. Although social groups, as Sampson has shown, truly give individuals a large part of their "personality," such groups are formed by individuals, who imprint a good deal of their specific genetic and other makeup on the group. Thus, groups of pygmies, of giants, and of middle-stature individuals all would tend to behave differently in several important respects, and so would groups whose members are genetically largely phlegmatic or volatile, shy or gregarious, or physically weak or strong.

2. Individuals frequently react quite differently to group teachings and pres-

ures. When encouraged to party or engage in group festivities, innately shy people tend to panic and withdraw, whereas people who are not innately shy often become joyous and more gregarious.

3. Socialization adds immeasurably to people's goals, values, standards, and pleasures, but it also unduly restricts and sabotages the actual and potential productivity and happiness of almost all "normal" people, and particularly of abnormal individuals, mavericks, and perhaps geniuses.

4. What we call human *neurosis* or *emotional disturbance* only partly stems from people's goals, standards, and values, which are largely learned (or gullibly accepted) from their family and social group. It also significantly arises from their own dogmatic thinking—from the absolutist *shoulds*, *oughts*, and *musts* that they individually (and partly genetically) create about these values (Ellis, 1962, 1976; Ellis & Dryden, 1987).

For the foregoing reasons, and many more that could be added, even though (as Sampson has shown) individuals cannot really be completely nonsocial and nonglobal, they clearly can be *partly* "themselves"—and they'd better be! Their individual differences *do* exist, as a vast psychological literature has shown, and (like sociality) can greatly enhance their lives (Breslin, 1984). Conformism—and robotism!—are only partly in their nature. To encourage it too much, or let it reign supreme, can distinctly harm humans and even encourage individual and group suicide.

Sampson, paraphrasing MacIntyre (1988), noted that Aristotle held that "reasoning can occur only by virtue of the context within which it emerges, guided by the *telos* of that context" (Sampson, 1989, p. 918). But let us not forget that Aristotle also upheld the Aristotelian mean between the two extremes and that therefore we had better try to help people retain a good deal of their individuality *as well as* remember that they are social animals who significantly think, feel, and act within and because of the global system in which they exist.

As a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, what attitudes would I suggest that people accept about their individuality and their sociality? I would advocate that they consider middle-of-the-road philosophies such as the following:

1. "I am a unique human who will live for a limited period of time, so I'd better try to discover what I really like and dislike, and engage, within reason, in much of the liking and little of the disliking behavior of which I am capable."

2. "I shall regularly rate or evaluate my behavior—my acts, deeds, and performances—and view them as *bad* or *ineffective* when they sabotage my and my social group's interests and values and shall evaluate them as *good* or *effective* when they abet these biosocial interests and values."

3. "I shall try not to rate or measure my 'self,' my 'totality,' my 'personality,' my 'essence,' or my 'being' at all, for these entities are too vague and global to be given single, overgeneralized ratings. I shall neither esteem nor devalue my 'self' but shall try to accept my aliveness and my potentiality for continued aliveness and enjoyment *whether or not* I perform well and *whether or not* I am approved by others. But at the same time I shall strive to do well, to be approved, and to help my sociality because these goals will probably bring me and it a longer and better existence."

4. "When it comes to choosing between my own welfare and that of others, I shall usually (not always) put myself first but still put others a close second. Why? Because if I generally put others before myself, I shall be assuming that they will also put my welfare before theirs, and that is a rash assumption!"

5. "I shall do my best never to needlessly, gratuitously harm others but in extreme cases, as in real self-defense, I may choose, as a lesser evil, to deliberately harm others in order to protect myself."

6. "While honestly hating some of the things that people do—such as their lying, stealing, assaulting, and murdering—I shall do my best to refrain from damning them totally as individuals. I shall, instead, accept them as fallible humans, who were born and socially influenced to tend to act badly, and who are to be helped and influenced (by me and by others) to act prosocially rather than antisocially in the future."

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