

THE CONCEPT OF MENTAL MATURITY.¹

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THE events of bodily growth, though not entirely observable, are usually beyond dispute. The fact of its completion, though there may be differences of judgment concerning the time at which it happens, must eventually be unmistakable. In contrast, mental maturity is not so easy to recognise or to describe. The few psychologists who have studied it seem to have conceived it variously, and perhaps in so doing they have manifested their own mental make-up and culture-pattern. So it may be interesting to examine some of the differences between their concepts. In Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary* 'mature' and 'ripe' "imply fullness of growth"; 'mature' "emphasises the completion of a development", 'ripe' "suggests rather readiness for use or full fruition".

Work upon this problem is complicated by the current use of two terms: 'maturity' and 'maturation'. Maturation often seems to be reserved for an event occurring in relatively early periods of life, e.g. certain co-ordinated performances are impossible to a baby because the nerves have not yet acquired their myelin sheath, i.e. are not mature. Indeed Dr. Charlotte Bühler's *From Birth to Maturity*² appears to equate maturity with completion of physiological sexual development.

More complicated notions of mental maturity are conceivable. There are, apparently, still psychologists who regard life chiefly from its cognitive aspect, and their view might be that a child is mature when its mental age has ceased to increase. Yet the use which a person makes, in a special social situation, of the kind of intelligence measured by current 'intelligence tests', is sometimes more important than its degree;³ indeed, further

¹ Amplified from notes of a lecture delivered in The John Rylands Library, Manchester, on the 8th March, 1944.

² London, Kegan Paul.

³ Cf. J. C. Hill, "A Criticism of Mental Testing", *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 1938, Vol. XVII, pp. 258-272.

consideration of the nature of mental maturity may cast much needed light upon the validity of the concept of 'mental age'. A mature person may be one who, confronted with a particular situation and knowing 'what is what', can carry out the wisest rather than the smartest action.¹ Such a choice may be complexly related to considerations of short and long term policy. Here the concept of mental age overlaps with that of culture-pattern.² Maturity³ is obviously related to individual temperament and character.⁴ It involves the growth of sentiments (especially master-sentiments) and their integration.⁵ In some existing civilisations it might even be regarded by us, viewing it from afar, as resulting from integration of complexes as well as sentiments; the shaman who might be judged highly neurotic by our own psychiatrists may be the respected wise man of a Siberian community.

Obviously, maturity is an ethnocentric concept; indeed, in the English culture-pattern it seems that some writers in discussing it have unconsciously taken certain norms of the Christian religion as criteria.

It seems remarkable that about such an obviously important subject so little has been published. But a recent remark by an R.A.F. officer upon my little book, *The Maturing Mind*, illustrates one relevant fact. A woman cadet had asked him to suggest books upon education for young adults. Among others, he mentioned mine. She answered, "*The Maturing Mind*? That doesn't apply to me. Would 'they' have considered me for a commission if my mind was immature?" This illustrates that during this war, maturity is being judged with reference to certain values which are taken for granted. After the war,

¹ T. H. Pear, *The Art of Study*, Kegan Paul, pp. 3, 4.

² Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, Harrap; T. H. Pear, "Culture Patterns in Modern Life", *Biology and Human Affairs*, Vol. X, No. 1, 1944, pp. 3-10.

³ For the rest of this article 'maturity' will mean mental maturity, unless otherwise stated.

⁴ Cf. G. W. Allport, *Personality*, London, Constable; Kretschmer, *Physique and Character*, London, Kegan Paul; W. McDougall, *Character and the Conduct of Life*, London, Methuen.

⁵ T. H. Pear, "The Modern Study of Personality", this BULLETIN, 1938, Vol. XX; *Religion and Contemporary Psychology*, Oxford University Press; *The Maturing Mind*, Nelson.

if the experience of 1919 is anything to go by, persons whom the Government regards as mature (it refers to 'men' of 18½, while refusing them the vote) may be judged immature by peace-time standards. Dr. Edward Glover has said that war is essentially a schoolboy affair, conducted by boys for boys. It will be interesting to see if the present participation of so many women in warfare will alter the popular views of war when peace comes.

'Maturation' is occasionally used to designate merely a stage on the road to maturity. For example, Professor Arnold Gesell and Dr. Helen Thompson,¹ studying identical twins, trained one, T, for six weeks to climb some steps. The other, C, was not practised in this way. After 4 weeks' training, T climbed without help, but at 53 weeks, C climbed without any training. Moreover, at the end of the practice period, T's climbing was chiefly crawling, while the unpractised C walked up the steps. The dependence of successful learning upon the level of maturation is said to be even more pronounced with intellectual than with physical activities.

Professor Cyril Burt employs the concept of maturation in reference to school-leavers. He cites the non-physiological signs of maturity; the individual is regarded as a new man rather than as an old child, he is independent of parents (sometimes really and sometimes in phantasy), he shoulders an adult worker's responsibilities, meeting equals, superiors and the opposite sex in a new way. It is significant that when teachers at different types of institution were asked to give the average age of mental maturity their answers were 14, 17-18, 19-21 and 22-23.² This throws light upon the differences of opinion which arise among tutors in colleges and universities.

Dr. Marie Jahoda, an Austrian social psychologist, who spent some months in a West of England factory,³ was impressed by the influence of industrial life upon the value-system of young English girls. At the age of fourteen they came straight

¹ "Learning and Growth in Identical Twins", *General Psychology Monographs*, Vol. VI, 1929, Worcester, Mass.

² *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1943, Vol. XX, pp. 127-8.

³ *British Journal of Psychology*, 1941, Vol. XXXI, pp. 191-206.

from the school into the factory. In school the 'right' standards had been intelligence and undisguised cleverness ; since scholarships and examination success meant so much to the pupils, distinction was reckoned by intellectual achievement. While it was 'right' to respect elders because of their age, 'wrong' standards included attention to one's personal appearance except for purposes of cleanliness and tidiness.

Factory life contradicted this value-system at every single point. The child of fourteen was expected to feel superior to the older woman with less nimble fingers. This feeling was linked with pity, but not with respect. Much time and money were spent upon personal appearance. Too hard work by an individual might make matters difficult for others. A complicated half-unfriendly attitude towards foremen and forewomen was expected. The school-leavers learned the new code by imitation completely in a couple of months, yet the new value-system did not completely destroy the old one. If one of these new workers were to join a girls' club or political party she might share two or three types of behaviour, possibly without realising the fact. Such a system leads to conflicting group loyalties ; an important fact scarcely studied as yet.

Dr. Alan Maberly¹ uses the concept of social maturation. He points out that at present the English school is dominated by academic standards within the conventional teacher-pupil framework. This is acceptable only to highly intelligent pupils for whom these standards are valid. Consequently such children are often late in maturing. For the group of average and low intelligence, prolongation of life in such an atmosphere entails feelings of enforced inferiority and inadequacy, together with a probable hold-up in emotional and social development, especially in normal direct unconscious adaptation.

He considers that this raises two questions ; whether the conscious approach to citizenship is the right one for the majority, and whether class-work is the best method of education for the average adolescent. Since some forms of juvenile delinquency are obvious manifestations of social immaturity,² his views on the subject are suggestive.

¹ In an unpublished paper to the British Psychological Society.

² Cf. also The Vineland Scale of Social Maturity.

Dr. May Smith illustrates the concept of emotional maturity in her *Introduction to Industrial Psychology*.¹ Two types of emotionally immature people occasionally find their way to high administrative places. One, for obvious reasons, she calls the 'Peter Pan' type. He works off his emotions immediately, regardless of time and place. The other, 'Jack Horner type,' requires an audience but cares little about its constitution or quality. An emotionally adult executive, she writes, is sympathetic, but if necessary can be stern. Such ideas are developed more fully in her joint production with Professor Millais Culpin in *The Nervous Temperament*.²

The view of a mature person as one who can command and control others is widely held in England. An argument often advanced on behalf of the public schools, or of the feudal-village pattern of English country life, is that no other system has produced boys who have such special capacity for leadership and self-reliance.³ About a year ago, to an inquiry concerning the fitness of the present-day public school product for commissioned rank in one of the Forces, the answer was given that they are usually much more 'mature' (the term was undefined) than the average 'other rank'. They usually make better officers because they have high 'general intelligence' ('g', in the technical sense of modern psychology) and probably because they are already more used to responsibility. They also have a higher level of literacy—and verbal and arithmetical tests correlate better with proficiency at almost any 'service job' than do non-verbal 'g' tests or tests of mechanical aptitude. The poorest 10 per cent. as selected by these verbal and arithmetical tests were described by the instructors as 'dull and flat'.

To some, this view may seem based upon self-evident truths, yet it has been criticised. For example, Dr. F. H. Spencer, late Chief Inspector (Education) to the L.C.C., writes in his recent book,⁴ *The Public School Question*, that he has done his

¹ London, Cassell, 1943.

² 1930, Report No. 61 of the Industrial Health Research Board, H.M. Stationery Office.

³ Cf. T. H. Pear, "Psychological Aspects of English Social Stratification", this BULLETIN, 1942, Vol. XXVI.

⁴ London, Pitman, 1944, pp. 18 ff.

best to get the evidence for this claim and has concluded that it cannot be established in any comprehensive form. Though we cannot discuss personalities here, he does, and concludes that our present leaders did not derive their power of leadership from the public schools . . . they got it by the gift of nature, and probably by heredity as well as money-provided opportunity. He continues :

Were qualities of leadership derived exclusively or predominantly from the public schools, then the Navy would be without leadership ; for, in the normal case, the officer in the Navy or the Merchant Navy is not a public school product. For the Navy he has been trained at the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, or its predecessor at Osborne. His training, shorter than that of a public school, has a strong technical bias. In fact, the Navy, in which initiative and powers of leadership are characteristic from top to bottom, provides the supreme example of the success of a vocational institution. In producing leadership its direct cultivation in naval education seems to excel the indirect methods of the public school.

Further, naval education helps us to realise how by segregation and suitable training we can turn the normal boy or girl in almost anything we like to make him or her. This is at once a vital and a dangerous fact, which in England we have not fully realised ; but it has been realised and acted upon by the International Gangsters of Europe. We must leave this tempting topic, asking the question : Who has more definite power of leadership than the master of a tramp steamer, and where was *he* educated ?

Even if all the kinds of leadership necessary to-day in the fighting forces be regarded as the highest (this view, comprehensible in war-time, has seldom held its own in peace) it should be remembered that the present war and the events leading up to it have demanded many types of leader. The Russian Army has not drawn its officers from institutions resembling English public schools. There have been brilliant Nazi leaders. Mussolini's powers of direction were highly praised by some, even in England, until Italy attacked France. In that country millions regarded Pétain as a highly successful leader. Apparently he achieved emotional maturity at least sixty years ago.¹

In contrast, a few maintain that some of our public schools and universities induce permanent adolescence in many of their products.

¹ Cf. Janet Flanner ; *Pétain the Old Man of France* (Simon and Schuster).

In *Enemies of Promise*,¹ Mr. Cyril Connolly writes :

Were I to describe anything from my feelings on leaving Eton, it might be called The Theory of Permanent Adolescence . . . that the experiences undergone by boys at the great public schools, their glories and disappointments, are so intense as to dominate their lives and to arrest their development. When I first left Eton . . . the nightmare took the form of everyone, after my place had been filled, my gap closed over, having to pretend they were glad I had returned. As time went on, nobody remembered me, and the dream ended with my ejection. I have found other old Etonians who have had the same experience ; some dream they are back in their old rooms, while their wives and children hang about outside to disgrace them.

. . . We enter the world, trailing clouds of glory ; there follow childhood and boyhood and we are damned. Certainly growing up seems a hurdle which most of us are unable to take, and the lot of the artist is unpleasant in England because he is one of the few who, bending but not breaking, is able to throw off these early experiences, for maturity is the quality that the English dislike most, and the fault of artists is that, like certain foreigners, they are mature. (Even the Jews in England are boyish, like Disraeli, and not the creators of adult philosophies, like Marx or Freud.) For my own part, I was long dominated by impressions of school. The plopping of gas mantles in the classrooms, the refrain of psalm tunes, the smell of plaster on the stairs, the walk through the fields to the bathing places, or to chapel across the cobbles of School Yard, evoked a vanished Eden of grace and security ; the intimate noises of College, the striking of the clock at night from Agar's plough, the showers running after games of football, the housemaster's squeak, the rattle of tea-things, the poking of fires, as I sat talking with Denis or Charles or Freddie, on some evening when everybody was away at a lecture, were recollected with anguish, and College, after I left, seemed to me like one of those humming fortified paradises in an Italian primitive, outside which the Master in College stood with his flaming sword.

Let us try to get this view in perspective. It seems certain that in some persons character can be prematurely hardened at an adolescent level. It would merely take our own culture-pattern for granted to deny indignantly offhand that this may happen in some products of those excellent institutions the Scouts and the Guides. Yet some of their features, e.g. the cult of youth as such, were eagerly borrowed by the Nazis with results which everybody now sees, though disquieted English observers (including Scouts) reported this as early as 1938.² And, as Professor D. W. Brogan remarks, "the difference between the Boy Scouts and the Fascist Boys' organisations is not merely

¹ Routledge, 1938.

² Cf. D. W. Brogan, *The English People*, London, Hamish Hamilton, p. 243.

obvious, it is significant. . . . No drill, no toy guns, no military emblems, no preaching of national arrogance. . . . General Baden-Powell was less of a professional soldier in his tastes than Corporal Mussolini or Corporal Hitler. He was a countryman of the author of *Alice in Wonderland*, not of Baldur von Schirach."

Nazi leaders who visited England shortly before the present war reported enthusiastically upon some of the public schools they saw, affecting to see resemblances between some of their methods and those of the Nazis.¹ Indeed, Herr K. H. Abshagen² interpreted the difference in appearance and bearing between English boys from public and elementary schools respectively, in terms of a race-theory, now the subject of widespread condemnation, but in part only an exaggeration of views fairly widely held here before 1938. In their least offensive form they implied the belief that England possesses a class of 'natural' leaders. Yet any country blessed with a large number of such people would need, as material upon which their talents could be exercised, millions of equally naturally 'leadable', i.e. plastic persons. And if we attach even a restricted meaning to the term 'national character',³ plasticity may be Germany's most dangerous national trait, but one which might be used for desirable ends.

We are led towards a problem, discussion of which must be postponed at present: how far mental maturity involves a considerable degree of independence of the opinion and esteem of others. For clearly we cannot be mature *in vacuo*. Now, among the few books using the concept of maturity are Dr. Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*⁴ and *Growing Up in New Guinea*.⁵ In the latter, describing the brown sea-dwelling Manus of the Admiralty Islands, north of New Guinea, she writes, concerning their motor 'maturity':

. . . For the first few months after he has begun to accompany his mother about the village the baby rides quietly on her neck or sits in the bow of the canoe while his mother punts in the stern some feet away. The child sits

¹ T. W. Worsley, *Barbarians and Philistines*.

² *Kings, Lords and Gentlemen*, London, Heinemann.

³ As Professor Morris Ginsberg does in the *British Journal of Psychology*, 1942, Vol. XXXII, pp. 183-204.

⁴ Pelican Series.

⁵ Pelican Series.

quietly, schooled by the hazards to which he has been earlier exposed. There are no straps, no baby harnesses to detain him in his place. At the same time, if he should tumble overboard, there would be no tragedy. The fall into the water is painless. The mother or father is there to pick him up. . . .

So the child confronts duckings, falls, dousings of cold water, or entanglements in slimy seaweed, but he never meets with the type of accident which will make him distrust the fundamental safety of his world. Although he himself may not yet have mastered the physical technique necessary for perfect comfort in the water, his parents have. . . . So thoroughly do Manus children trust their parents that a child will leap from any height into an adult's outstretched arms, leap blindly and with complete confidence of being safely caught.

Side by side with the parent's watchfulness and care goes the demand that the child himself should make as much effort, acquire as much physical dexterity as possible. Every gain a child makes is noted, and the child is inexorably held to his past record. There are no cases of children who toddle a few steps, fall, bruise their noses, and refuse to take another step for three months. The rigorous way of life demands that the children be self-sufficient as early as possible. Until a child has learned to handle his own body, he is not safe in the house, in a canoe, or on the small islands. His mother or aunt is a slave, unable to leave him for a minute, never free of watching his wandering steps. So every new proficiency is encouraged and insisted upon. Whole groups of busy men and women cluster about the baby's first step, but there is no such delightful audience to bemoan his first fall. He is set upon his feet gently but firmly and told to try again. The only way in which he can keep the interest of his admiring audience is to try again. So self-pity is stifled and another step is attempted.

. . . The test of this kind of training is in the results. The Manus children are perfectly at home in the water. They neither fear it nor regard it as presenting special difficulties and dangers. The demands upon them have made them keen-eyed, quick-witted and physically competent like their parents. There is not a child of five who can't swim well. A Manus child who couldn't swim would be as aberrant, as definitely subnormal as an American child of five who couldn't walk.

In other aspects of adapting the children to the external world the same technique is followed. Every gain, every ambitious attempt is applauded; too ambitious projects are simply ignored, but important ones are punished. So a child who, after having learned to walk, slips and bumps his head, is not gathered up in kind compassionate arms while mother kisses his tears away, thus establishing a fatal connection between physical disaster and extra cuddling. Instead the little stumbler is berated for his clumsiness, and if he has been very stupid, slapped soundly into the bargain. Or if his misstep has occurred in a canoe or on the verandah, the exasperated and disgusted adult may simply dump him contemptuously into the water to

meditate upon his ineptness. The next time the child slips, he will not glance anxiously for an audience for his agony, as so many of our children do ; he will nervously hope that no one has noticed his *faux pas*. This attitude, severe and unsympathetic as it appears on the surface, makes children develop perfect motor co-ordination. The child with slighter original proficiency cannot be distinguished among the fourteen-year-olds except in special pursuits like spear-throwing, where a few will excel in skill. But in the everyday activities of swimming, paddling, punting, climbing, there is a general high level of excellence. And clumsiness, physical uncertainty and lack of poise, is unknown among adults. The Manus are alive to individual differences in skill or knowledge and quick to brand the stupid, the slow learner, the man or woman with poor memory. But they have no word for clumsiness. The child's lesser proficiency is simply described as "not understanding yet". That he should not understand the art of handling his body, his canoes well, very presently, is unthinkable.

Absence of *gaucherie*,¹ both bodily and mental ; respect for property ; how important they seem, too, as criteria of maturity in the upper classes both in this country and in the U.S.A. ! Yet they may be merely aspects of culture-patterns familiar to us.

The possibility of attributing maturity to a nation is a theme about which some Americans have written lately. Describing the "Face of America" in *Transatlantic*, Clifton Fadiman says :

While we are on the subject of immaturity, I wonder how many British visitors to our country would agree with me in my feeling that in the faces of a great many middle-aged Americans it is almost eerily easy to discern the boys they once were. I have tried this game hundreds of times in trains, theatres, omnibuses, and feel sure I am not indulging a fancy. I think the same thing is, to a much smaller extent, true of Englishmen and not true at all of Europeans and Asiatics. The boy in the face of Mr. Roosevelt or Mr. Wilkie is recognisable ; there is no boy at all in the face of Mr. Stalin.

A different problem, perhaps, concerns the mental maturity of a social group. While I find it impracticable to work with the concept of a group-mind, that of the average level—so far as this can be discovered—of a mental characteristic in a community seems more promising. One yardstick immediately offers itself ; the extent to which the average person can deal with abstract ideas, as distinct from concrete things and persons. Though as many dwellers in universities suspect, a mere idea-manipulator can be grotesquely, tragically or pathetically

¹ Cf. T. H. Pear, "What is Clumsiness", *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1941, Vol. XI, pp. 99-108.

immature,¹ it is true that the ability to form, to relate and to describe concepts comes relatively late in the development of any individual, and to some seems denied. One of the chief arguments for education, as distinct from mere technical training is that it develops this ability. It usually does much more—this will be readily conceded—but let us consider for a moment an aspect of life in which school education seems definitely to have failed to produce maturity in millions of people.

Characteristic feature of present-day social life, much more significant than the scholarly type of citizen may realise unless he has joined the fighting forces, are the 'comic strips' of the popular newspaper. They are common in England, but I know of no data concerning the number of people who read them here. Their effects, however, are possibly trivial; fulfilling the artists' intention. Since they form an important source of the American's enjoyment, I turn to the United States for evidence,² trusting that any American reader of this page will recognise that the small numbers of their publications that arrive in England at present are my only source of facts, and that some comments to follow certainly apply to my country as well.

Milton Caniff's strip, *Terry and the Pirates*, is syndicated to 175 newspapers. Their combined circulation is 17 million. Two years ago in his strip he staged the death of a leading woman character: Raven Sherman. He received 1400 letters of sympathy and a number of floral offerings. "A Pennsylvania newspaper (not a subscriber to the strip) published the death as a news item. Caniff was interviewed on the radio concerning his motives for this action; on the day Raven Sherman was buried in the hills north of Chungking, 450 students of — College paid tribute to her by gathering on their campus and facing east for one minute of silence."

According to public opinion polls by Dr. George Gallup and others, comic strips are read regularly by well over half of

¹ A fable, current in common-rooms, is "There was once a professor who was so stupid that, after a time, his colleagues noticed it".

² From John Bainbridge's article in *The New Yorker*, 8th Jan., 1944. (I need not remind you that the *New Yorker* is a serious humorous periodical with no English analogue.)

the country's adults and by two-thirds of the children over six, i.e. by about 65 million people. Only one daily newspaper in the U.S.A., the *New York Times*, manages to exist without comic strips. Mr. Bainbridge observes, "The American disposition to prefer comic strips to columnists is regarded in some musty quarters as a sign of cultural infantilism. Who knows?"

When the comic strips began to appear in the States more than a quarter of a century ago "they were supposed to be funny, and sometimes they were". Then they were judged by a simple standard; if they were funny, they were popular. Now, however, fun is aimed at obliquely, if at all. Recently in Congress, a representative making a laudatory speech about *Terry and the Pirates* seriously suggested that some of the verbal matter in this strip should be read into the *Congressional Record*. "It is deserving of immortality", he said, "and in order that it shall not be lost completely, I present it, wishing only that the splendid cartoons in colour might also be printed here." Mr. Bainbridge adds, "After finishing with the funnies, the Congressman and his colleagues went on to consider other legislative business".

Perhaps the most important psychological aspect of the American 'funnies' is that they are vehicles of powerful political propaganda. The uninstructed Englishman, hearing of "Little Orphan Annie", may imagine her as a pathetic-comic figure. Perhaps she began like that. But at the time of Bainbridge's article, Annie was attacking the New Deal and organised labour, "moaning for a return of the good old days". So, more formally, did Westbrook Pegler, a newspaper writer. Yet, while Pegler writes for only 10 million, Annie's pictures are seen by 20 million. "Annie is, it appears, exactly twice as effective as Westbrook Pegler in shaping the main currents of Conservative thought."

For the Liberals, Samuel Grafton, a 'columnist', has opposed appeasement, argued for racial tolerance and supported the administration. He appeals to about 3 million. His synonym in pictures, Joe Palooka, reaches 30 million and has received the support of the American and British Governments. "One reason why comic strips have more influence than

syndicated thinkers in the U.S. armed forces is that they are more accessible. In opening its publication to cartoonists and closing them to columnists, the Army is simply doing the decent democratic thing—providing what the majority wants. Surveys say that comic strips are first with the men in the Army, the Navy and the Marines and that in this country (U.S.A.) comic books, which are comic strips in concentrated form, outsell the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Life* and the *Reader's Digest* combined by a ratio of ten to one in the post exchanges. There is thus some ground for believing that the brave new world is being built by men whose minds are nourished on the funnies."

Political maturity is a theme disturbing to some writers. After the Abdication in England a thoughtful German congratulated me upon belonging to a politically mature nation. Subsequent events soon demonstrated the political immaturity of Germany, but did our country seem particularly 'grown-up' between then and 1939?

Let us turn to subjects suggested by the consideration of individual mental maturity. Those discussed in 1938 in *The Maturing Mind* were: the wisdom of acquiring education; reasons why one should still learn after twenty-five; the needs and wants of adult learners; when is one too old to learn?; the nature of willingness and unwillingness to learn; the process of acquiring 'background'; conversation; differing with others; learning how to discuss; education, propaganda and the adult mind; the relation of broadcasting to adult education and the nature of the mature personality. In this list of themes, after the lapse of six—and six such!—years, none seems out of date.

The last chapter of the book was a summary, with comments, of Professor G. W. Allport's views on mental maturity in his *Personality*.¹ In his opinion, the mature personality should have these attributes: richness, congruence, a variety of autonomous interests, extension and objectivation of the self, a unifying philosophy of life which represents to oneself one's place in the scheme of things and gives a long-range perspective.

¹ London, Constable.

Applying his doctrine of functional autonomy,¹ he holds that as a person grows older his introjected values themselves become motives.

Regarding Freud's general theory as illuminating but insufficient, he comments :

Freud says, "the Super-ego answers in every way to what is expected of the higher nature of man". Certainly a man is not mature unless he respects the codes of the society wherein he lives, acts with good taste and abides by the laws, suffering pangs of conscience when he violates the rights of others and when remiss in his prescribed duties. But is this activity of the Super-ego all there is to the "higher nature" of a man? Left to itself the Super-ego would produce a personality completely caked with custom and shackled by tribal mores. Conventionality is not the same as maturity.

The genuinely mature person has an Ego-ideal as well as a Super-ego. In psycho-analytic theory the poor Ego has no recourse but to surrender to one of its two tyrants, the Super-ego or the Id, or to compromise as best it may. The Ego-ideal on the contrary is the plan of the developed personality for defeating, by transcending, both the unsocialised urges of the Id and the dullness of the Super-ego, leading thereby to a new level of personal freedom and to maturity. Intelligent and perspicacious planning for the future is always a significant feature of any mature life. Every mature personality travels towards a port of destination selected in advance or to several related ports in succession, the Ego-ideal holding the course in view.

Here he mentions Dr. Charlotte Bühler's *Der Menschliche Lebenslauf als psychologisches Problem*,² suggesting a limitation in it, that it deals so exclusively with geniuses, who of necessity are distinguished for their *Bestimmung*. Insight, the practical index of which is the ratio between what a man thinks he is and what others (especially, perhaps, the psychologically gifted) think he is ; and the capacity for objective humour—to be distinguished sharply from the cruder sense of the comic—are important signs of maturity. "People less intelligent prefer humour derived from their own repressions and reflecting marked thematic elements. If one knows one's inferiorities, jealousies and unsocial desires, one is less likely to take pleasure in their artistic triumphs through a mere joke." A unifying philosophy of life and (for Allport) a religion which grows out

¹ Explained with comments in the present author's "Are there Human Instincts?" This BULLETIN, 1942, Vol. XXVII.

² Summarised in English by E. Frenkel, *Character and Personality*, 1936, Vol. V, pp. 1-34.

of, and in part abolishes, human anxiety are also necessary. Perhaps, therefore, at the present time with so many values changing, it is unusually difficult for anyone to be mature. Compare Mr. Gladstone's tasks, for example, with Mr. Churchill's.

Let us now consider reasons for the immaturity of some, perhaps all, specialists. Señor da Madariaga, criticising the works of Pio de Baroja, writes that the study of medicine is likely to impede literary expression. Doctors tend to interpret humanity in terms of its bodily phenomena, and when dedicating themselves to letters, "wield the pen as if it were a scalpel". They develop the habit of contemplating human misery with medical eyes. "What medicine cannot achieve is a living synthesis." This is no news to a medical man confronted with the problem of psychiatry, but there are more glaring examples of the immaturity caused by specialism in other directions.

As we have seen, some have maintained that certain forms of English education prolong immaturity or produce several varieties of unduly limited, unadjustable maturity. Some who describe the older universities mention this prolongation of adolescence either angrily or in nostalgia for the years which left them

Magnificently unprepared
For the great littleness of life.

Yet this problem bristles with subtleties. Some years ago, talking with an Austro-American psychologist, I said, a little querulously perhaps, that some psychological writings from modern Americans appeared to me two-dimensional, lacking background, seeming to assume in advance that the reader ought to be interested, not trying to fit the new idea into a wider scheme or to render it attractive to him. I was gently informed that in this same conversation I had praised the grit of the young American student who spent his long vacations earning money for his college education. But, I was reminded, for this reason he can't travel to older countries, meet many varieties of mind, read novels and poetry, listen to music, laze, day-dream and talk clever nonsense. Thirty years later if he writes in a way which seems pedestrian, worthy and "totally devoid of charm",¹ why grumble? I apologised.

¹ The phrase is borrowed from a favourable American review of an erudite book.

There are different conceptions of maturity in different universities. When I was a student at Würzburg, some of my Continental friends found it exceedingly difficult to understand how any grown man would willingly join an institution where he had, at least in theory, to be inside walls by 10 p.m., to wear a silly medieval costume (these students regarded the caps and ribbons of corps-members as equally foolish) and to undergo other restrictions which they considered an indignity. In some Scottish universities the distaste of numerous men students for living in hostels still survives all arguments based upon the civilising effects of community life.

A bitter expression of this view is the famous description of some dons as 'pickled undergraduates'; meaning presumably that their adolescent views and behaviour have been preserved for years by the luxury, stylised intercourse and general protection which their colleges afford. In his *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*,¹ Wilfrid Trotter suggested that society ought to protect its 'sensitive, unstable' minds, if unusually intelligent, from the rigours of natural selection, on the off-chance that they might make new discoveries. This obviously is the policy of some ancient colleges, where after a few decades some of these minds become stabilised to an amazing degree, towards their unique social environment. Occasionally the queer behaviour of brilliant scientists is described in detail and used as an argument for preserving their immature unspottedness from the world. This is one aspect of the vexed problems of the 'purity' or 'freedom' of science; ambiguous phrases which incidentally hide important questions such as the purity of motive and the freedom of action, of scientists, both practical and theoretical.

Now it seems beyond dispute that while planning and carrying out his research the scientific thinker must be single-minded; even simple-minded. Yet he is seldom a simpleton. Researchers know that their increasingly expensive work has to be paid for. The buttered side of their bread is seldom lost to view. A few scientists have even discovered that the popular idea of themselves as simple is a useful smoke-screen

¹ London, Fisher Unwin.

behind which work, 'pure' in no sense of the term, can be done.

Some scientists may be described as immature in another, less derogatory sense, when they retire from this world into play with complicated apparatus or with imagined plans of unreal events, as a refuge from what Professor A. N. Whitehead calls "the urgency of contingent happenings". There is a benevolent conspiracy to shelter them.

Recently, a leading physicist described the "new attitude of mind" as of "complete submission to nature as judge of whether one's conclusions are right or wrong; a distrust of the powers of the human intellect to decide by logic what the world is like". With the second part of this statement none could disagree, but it is difficult to convince oneself that the 'nature' in this statement is more than a segment of the Nature which often enough declines to give a simple answer to the question, "Are my conclusions right or wrong?" For this Sphinx-like Nature includes humanity, including even the human being who is asking the question. Perhaps, therefore, Nature includes, in its family, one member capable of answering a straight question and other less obliging 'natures'. If so, the attitude of mind which excludes contemplation of the problem of man's experience and behaviour, even of the causes which in the last 300 years have made him want to be scientific, is immature as compared with that of a philosopher.

A criterion of maturity is the possession of a self-regarding sentiment sufficiently integrated and powerful to prevent its possessor from being unduly influenced, in thought or action, by apprehension concerning the opinions of him which others may hold, and the possible change of emotional attitude which they may display towards him as a result of his deliberate action in important though disputable matters. Here we may perhaps cautiously employ Freud's speculations about parent-complexes, and Adler's about inferiority-complexes. It has been noted that this sufficiency of the self-regarding sentiment is the sign of the stoic, or the prig, a remark which left the stoic William McDougall with unwrung withers. Perhaps the difference between the psychological systems of Freud and Adler may be

traced to their relative sentimental maturity. Freud withdrew himself from general society at an early age. Adler, if I read aright his books and the testimony of friends, would cheerfully risk occasionally looking foolish if he thought he could help a fellow-creature. May some people be reluctant to grow up mentally because they wish to avoid the awful coolness of complete emotional self-sufficiency, or even doubt if it is attainable?

Here, perhaps, we reach the psychological boundaries of our subject. Whether 'tis better to continue enjoying such youthful delights as are possible, caring little for those who might call us silly, or to attain the serenity of not caring? Whether to be guided in our life-work by the opinions of elders, perhaps dead these many years, or to set one's own course? All these and similar uncomfortable questions involve values—and those I leave to the philosopher.