

Culture Considered In Appraisal of Mental Illnesses

By DELOS SMITH
UPI Science Editor

New York — (UPI) — So far as symptoms, frequency, and causes of mental illnesses are concerned, human beings are much the same the world over, argued a psychiatric scientist after studying mental hospital patients of 30 countries.

Dr. Eric Berne of Carmel, Calif., lowered the boom on the "cultural" approach to mental illness with which anthropologists have beguiled psychiatrists and psychologists. It is now customary to consider the culture a person came from, in appraising his mental illness.

The anthropological data seem to indicate the more primitive a society, the fewer the members who break down mentally, and there is much backing for the idea that if a culture okays an act, it is not likely to be at the root of a mental illness, no matter what it is.

For instance, our culture definitely does not approve of parents rejecting their chil-

dren, and parental "rejection," whether real or fancied, is deeply involved in many mental illnesses. In Tahiti, however, parental rejection is not only culturally all right — it is commonly practiced.

Feels Rejected in Tahiti

But it causes mental illness in Tahiti, too. Berne made this point in reporting to the American Psychiatric Association on his study in that South Pacific "paradise" island.

"A child who is sent away by her mother may feel just as rejected in a society which has a relaxed attitude about child-bearing and child-disposition as in a society which is very rigid about such matters," he said.

"And a boy who grows up in a crowded household in a society whose sexual freedom is still publicized may be just as disturbed by too much contact with sisters and parents as a boy who grows up in the slums of a puritan city."

Berne said that if Tahiti had the same facilities for dealing with mental illness as we do, its official rate would be about the same as the American rate. That goes also for the Fiji Islands and other primitive islands which he has visited in his years-long

geographic investigation of the mentally ill.

Symptoms Recognized

The symptoms of mental illness are readily recognized by an experienced doctor no matter the culture he is in, and he can diagnose the various kinds "on medical grounds which are essentially independent of local cultures."

Furthermore, the techniques which he once applied to "the treatment of young women in Connecticut and California, were just as effective in the South Pacific."

The emphasis on cultural factors in mental illnesses, could be "obscuring more important issues," he said. His idea is that in the mental workings of disturbed persons, "culture is on the same level as auto-intoxication, racial prejudice, and economics."

"The patient may be only too relieved to blame his troubles on the intestinal system, the social system, or the economic system, and the biased therapist may help him along with this project of finding a scapegoat."

WRIGHT'S NEPHEW DIES

Riverside, Calif. — (UPI) — Funeral services will be held today for Herbert Wright, 67, nephew of air pioneers Wilbur and Orville Wright.

PAINTER DIES

Arcadia, Calif. — (UPI) — George Ford Morris, 87, noted for his portraits of horses over the past 70 years, died Monday.

Stevenson Draft Simmers; Choice Doubted

By RAYMOND LAHR
Washington — (UPI) — The effort to draft Adlai E. Stevenson for a third try at the White House is still simmering with no apparent cook in the political kitchen.

Nonetheless his supporters expect Stevenson's bid to burgeon if Sen. John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts falls to wrap up the Democratic presidential nomination on an early ballot.

Khrushchev Wins Added Support

Bucharest, Romania — (UPI) — Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev has won the backing of four more satellite Communist leaders for his line that coexistence is possible and war is not inevitable with the West.

In an address to the Third Romanian Communist Party congress Tuesday, Khrushchev clearly repeated his views which are contrary to the Communist Chinese dogmatic Marxist-Leninist line that war with capitalism is inevitable.

That position was endorsed Wednesday by Czechoslovakia's Antonin Novotny, Hungary's Janos Kadar, East Germany's Walter Ulbricht and Bulgaria's Todor Zhivkov, all of whom emphasized the necessity for a "lasting peace" and "peaceful coexistence."

Cows Originated Eight-Hour Day

Elkhorn, Wis. — (UPI) — The eight-hour day is a part of American life today. But who originated it?

Samuel Gompers, the labor pioneer? Or would you give credit to John L. Lewis, George Meany or Walter Reuther?

According to Will A. Foster, it was none of these men. Instead he picks the common dairy cow for the honor.

Foster, a retired dairy company executive and a native of Elkhorn, has studied milking herds for 35 years. He is recognized as an authority on the subject of bovines.

A cow, Foster says, grazes four hours a day and takes 40 to 70 nibbles per minute. (That, incidentally, averages out to 3,300 nibbles per hour; 13,200 nibbles per nibbling day; and 92,400 nibbles per week.)

Bossy spends the next four hours placidly chewing her cud. This she does while stationary — standing or lying down. It's not loafing, though. Her jaws and stomachs are working full time.

Then it's milking time, followed by sleep and then the eight hour cycle begins all over again.

Big Spender Fined For Tossing Money

Boswell, N.M. — Daniel Kelton was fined \$20 for throwing his money around. Arresting officers said the 19-year-old college student threw several coins at a lighted sign and broke the glass tubes.

MILKMAN VS. POSTMAN

Blackwell, England — (UPI) — A milkman had a postman haled into court Tuesday because the postman's dog bit the milkman.



delos Smith
UPI Science Editor

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