

Sheldon's earliest book (*Psychology and the Promethan Will*, 1936) and his latest one (*Prometheus Revisited*, 1975) are broad, provocative and provoking schemes for merging religious humanism with biologically grounded social psychiatry. Between these publications, he worked singlemindedly to propose and refine methods for describing individual human physical structure: to develop a 'biological identification tag'. Best known are his primary components of endomorphy (roughly speaking, the softness and roundness of a physique), mesomorphy (heaviness of bone and muscle development), and ectomorphy (attenuation, 'stretchedoutness'). By measuring the strength of each component in each individual and assigning a three-part index, the somatotype, Sheldon produced a tool which comes much closer to describing and encoding the great range of variations on the basic human body plan than was possible with older, pigeonholing typologies.

Over the years his methods moved through several revisions toward objectivity, and always seeking measures that maximize invariance, that evaluate physique not just as a current manifestation but as a lifelong trajectory. Along the way he has reported associations of somatotype with temperament, delinquency, and mental illness. His reports on physique, health and longevity followed in the surviving veterans of the Spanish-American war (1898), and on the later careers of 200 delinquent boys first studied 25 years ago, will be completed by his colleagues.

Sheldon's studies of some biological underpinnings of behaviour offered a much-needed counterbalance to a psychology one-sidedly emphasising learning and environment. Psychology regarded this offer doubtfully, though the term *somatotyping* found currency in labelling many sorts of physique appraisal methods, much as the term *psychoanalysis* was misapplied to all sorts of appraisal and treatment methods, and even 'schools' of somatotyping developed, like the schools of psychoanalysis (Sheldon found this comparison odious).

A keen observer, Sheldon was thoroughly convinced of the value and accuracy of his observations—an asset in a pioneer researcher, a problem to academic psychologists mistrustful of personal judgements. His irreverence for some of psychology's sacred cows, and his schoolboy's sense of mischief combined with a talent for finding just the right parallel in nature to point up a description of a human structure or action, have needed many a colleague. But Sheldon enjoyed his life. A seven-days-a-week worker, a diner at cafeterias because he could not stand the delays and pretentiousness of restaurants, an inveigher against the poisons in modern life, he was also wholehearted in his appreciation of an idea, a friend, a sparrow on his windowsill, an old coin. (Numismatists knew him as the author of the standard work classifying early American cents.) His work cleared and broadened one roadway into the study of human biology and behaviour that had been an overgrown trial.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Request for Agoraphobic Patients

A controlled trial of imipramine and behaviour therapy in the treatment of agoraphobia is being conducted at the Maudsley Hospital. We would be grateful for referral of patients suffering from agoraphobia who are able to attend on an out-patient basis. The patients would be offered early assessment interviews, and those found suitable would begin treatment in the near future. Referral letters should be addressed to Dr I. M. Marks or Dr R. S. Stern, The Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 8AZ.

The Priory, Roehampton, London

The management of The Priory, Roehampton, have recently opened an extension at Galsworthy House, on Kingston Hill, which is a specialist unit for the private treatment of alcoholism and drink

problems in general. Treatment is based on the basic concept that alcoholism or associated drink problems are illnesses which impair all aspects of an individual's life.

The programme is under the direction of Dr Max Glatt, and includes the comprehensive philosophy successfully proved over the years by Alcoholics Anonymous. Patients must recognize their alcohol dependence or drink related problem before they are admitted, and hence the co-operation of the patient's physician or psychiatrist, family, friends and colleagues is actively sought.

The professional staff includes physicians and psychiatrists, counsellors on alcoholism, therapists, recovered alcoholics, and the support of The Priory's experienced psychiatric staff and facilities. A four-week residential course is followed by intensive out-patient care and induction to Alcoholics Anonymous.