

Behavioristic Pigeons Introduce Freshmen to Psychology Ideas

By MERLE JACOB

How long does it take to train a pigeon to bowl? A good pigeon trainer can do it in 30 minutes. And just as pigeons can be trained, so can people be trained out of mental and emotional illnesses through behavioral psychology. Prof. James McConnell of the psychology department said yesterday morning in his lecture on "Men, Machines, and Madness."

McConnell was one of a series of University professors who have been participating in the freshman orientation program of student-faculty discussions.

"Man is a machine which when it breaks down can be fixed by reaching in with the proper tools," McConnell proposed. "Just as biological medicine did not get off the ground until doctors adopted the attitude that man's body was a biological machine, neither did psychology until it started experimenting with the human mind."

Change
In discussing the science of emotional reaction, McConnell explained that behaviorism is just becoming an important part of psychology. If a man had a mental breakdown 200 years ago he was placed in an institution where it was assumed he was out of God's grace and infested by devils. He was beaten and chained in trying to cure him. Around 1900 Freud developed the theory of the id, ego, and super ego which has carried psychiatry up to today, the professor explained.

"However there is no evidence that Freudian psychotherapy has

ever cured anyone," McConnell stated. "Freudians would of course refute this, but looking at the hard core cases in our mental wards would disprove their claims."

Behavioral psychiatry assumes that "there ain't nothin' up there," or in other words there is no mind or soul, only behavior.

Man Machine
McConnell said that men could build a computer that looked like a man and program it to speak, think and act. They could even program it to think it had a soul and free will, but just because it thought that wouldn't mean that the computer had a soul.

"Just because men think they have something inside them like a soul, doesn't necessarily mean that they do," he added.

McConnell explained that just as men can teach pigeons to bowl and mice to run through mazes by rewarding them with food when they do the right things, so psychiatrists can do the same with the mentally retarded and the mentally disturbed.

Sick Children
"Ivar Lovaas, an assistant professor of psychology at UCLA, has done a number of experiments with autistic children with extremely successful results."

Autism is a form of split personality in children in which the child does not speak, is completely withdrawn from the real world, generally sits in the corner and rocks himself, and is very self-destructive.

Lovaas too reasoned that instead of loving and petting these children whenever they started to

injure themselves, the children should be punished. These children had learned that by harming themselves they would get attention.

Cure
Lovaas took a child who had been strapped to a bed for seven years because he was so self-destructive and released him. When the child began to beat himself he was put in a room by himself. Seven hours later the doctors came in, cleaned up the blood, and put him to bed. Lovaas continued this experiment for one week, and by the end of that time the child was no longer beating himself.

"The amazing thing is that Lovaas has cured these children of their wild behavior in a matter of weeks, and in a few months he has taught them normal behavior. Yet when he tried to extinguish this learned behavior it took over a year with some children and never with others," McConnell said.

He concluded the lecture by stressing his point that men are wild and crazy machines, and that the trouble with crazy people is that they act crazy. Behavioral psychology tries to cure this behavior.

McConnell has been famous for his work with flatworms while studying the physiological bases of learning and memory. In 1963, he received the Research Career Award from the National Institute of Health, made on the basis of a nationwide competition.

McConnell graduated from Louisiana State University in 1947 and came here in 1956.

GOALS OUTLINED:

English Composition Seeks Clarity, Cogency

By MEREDITH EIKER

The aim of freshman composition courses is to get students "to write clearly, cogently, and with an awareness of what it takes to write," Prof. Earl Schulze, acting chairman of freshman English classes, said yesterday.

In a brief talk given as part of the series of faculty lectures for freshmen, Schulze explained that the problem of poem writing on a college level is not the result of the student's not being able to write but of his not being asked to write often enough.

Pre-college education is partially to blame, Dr. Schulze explained, since there is not enough emphasis on writing in elementary and high schools. However, because communication today depends more on talking than on writing, students do not receive enough everyday practice in expressing themselves on paper.

Emphasize Issues, Conflict
The freshman English composition courses will emphasize writing on public issues and ideas of conflict so that the student will have the opportunity to analyze a problem and communicate his thoughts. This is the kind of writing which students are asked to do on essay examinations and papers throughout their college careers.

Dr. Schulze also informed the freshmen of a new Writing Lab located in the Bureau of Psychological Services. Organized last year on a small experimental basis, the lab will enable the student who is weak in grammar, spelling, or vocabulary to master these areas on his own. After taking a diagnostic test the student will attend the lab as often as he feels is necessary in order to gain competence in a particular area.

While the Writing Lab is open to all students at the University and residents of Ann Arbor, only limited facilities are available and therefore mostly freshmen will be encouraged to take advantage of them. Dr. Schulze estimated that some ninety students will be using the lab this semester.

Writing—Art, Discipline
Dr. Schulze further discussed writing as both an intellectual discipline and an art which requires a capacity to handle information and to analyze it. He said that there are "few really good writers around" because good writing needs both an awareness of the audience being addressed and a control of subject matter and language. For this reason writing done in freshman composition classes will be strictly expository so that the student will be well acquainted with the rhetoric of definition and persuasion. However, Dr. Schulze assured the freshmen that they will need a great deal of imagination in the course in order to see and to understand an issue and to recognize a feasible approach to the problem assigned. Knowing the values of

the audience—the instructor and fellow students—also needs an imagination.

Dr. Schulze suggested that the course be thought of as one in thinking with words and using language as a tool for self-expression and not merely as an exercise in grinding out 700 words every two weeks.

Frosh Hear 'Moral Crisis' Analyzed

By PETER SARASOHN

A University political science professor told a group of approximately 80 freshmen yesterday that "the sickness of the 20th century is the sickness of moral confusion, intellectual anarchy, and spiritual despair."

Prof. Thomas Chapman was speaking as one of the participating lecturers in a series sponsored by the University Activities Center of the Union-League. His lecture was titled "The Internal Crisis of Western Democracy."

Man today is "gripped by fear, as a result of alienating himself from God and discrediting the reason with which he was endowed by God," he said.

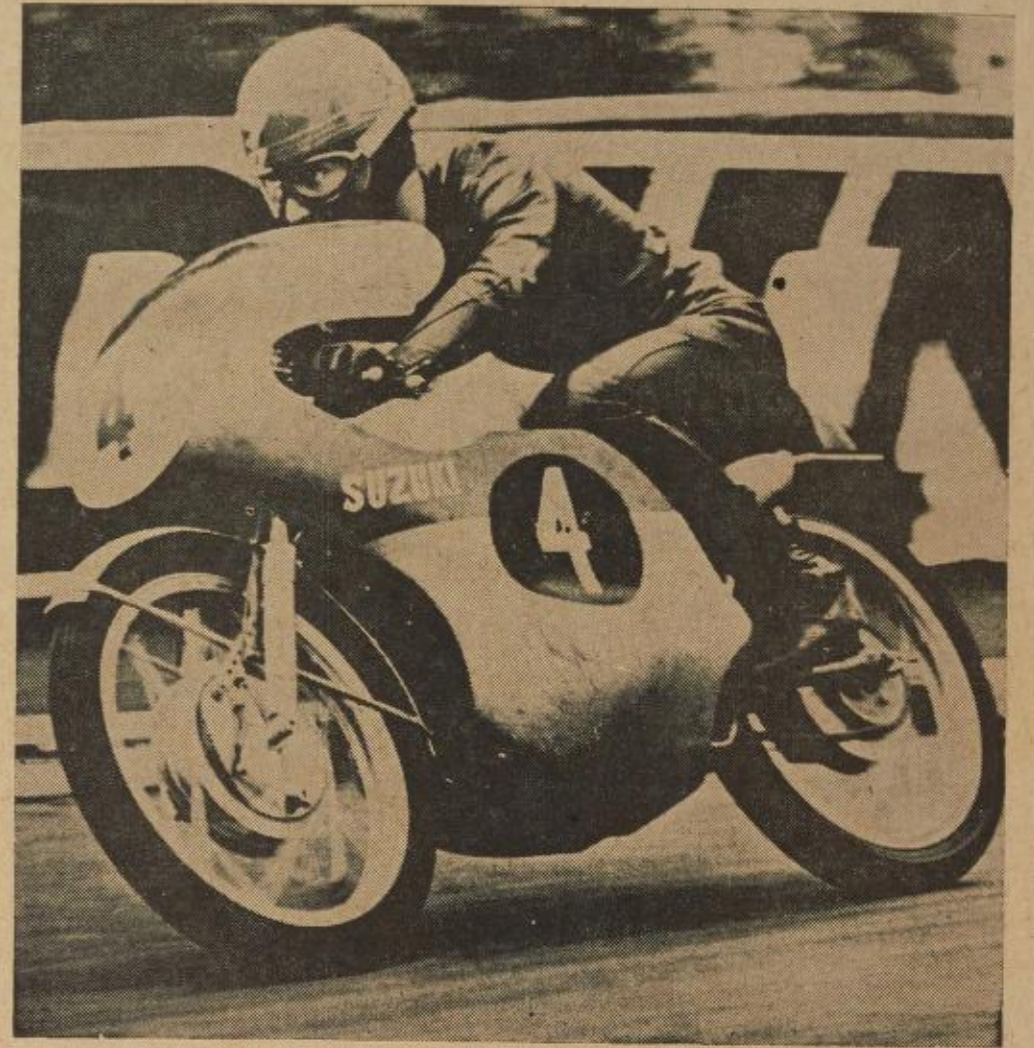
The tragedy is, he emphasized, that "in his anxiety to escape from utter futility and meaningless existence he is tempted to give up his most priceless heritage—his freedom—to any man who promises deliverance from insecurity." Man is tempted to put his faith in the most absurd doctrine, to submit his will to the most brutal dictator, if only he can find a meaning to his existence, he added.

He pointed out that alienation as a feeling of being "cut off from society," is documented in modern art as "it has no beginning, no end, and no focus." He also cited plays by Edward Albee and Tennessee Williams and William Faulkner's "Sound and the Fury" as examples of this alienation.

"Some people hold that the democratic ideal of equality is the root of the problem," Chapman said. However, if the masses have come to power as some philosophers believe and "where the tastes and the judgments of the masses become the standard of public life, the result is the standardization of taste and judgement at the lowest common denominator and conformity to the average of attitudes and opinions."

"Modern man is primarily a consumer and in our present day system, capitalism provides the greatest number of goods to the greatest number of people," he said. But few question why men should have more goods. "Economic activity has increasingly become an end in itself to which the spiritual nature of man is subordinated."

"Ours is a fragmented society," Chapman said. Man has been "analyzed out of existence; he has lost his identity with society."



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