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Psychological concepts of Thomas Jefferson

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PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

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by

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R. D. Y.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction. It is of interest to trace the origin of certain psychological and philosophical assumptions underlying our present-day American system of thought. Furthermore, it is of importance to select a typical representative to study.

Statement of the problem. This particular research project was a study of the psychological beliefs and assumptions of Thomas Jefferson. For the purpose of this thesis, the discussion was divided into the following topics: Psychological Concepts, Nature versus Nurture, Mind and Intelligence, Individual Differences, and Emotional Behavior. The study presented an attempt to find in the original statements made by Thomas Jefferson ideas regarding the above psychological concepts.

Perhaps a chapter on the history of the problem should have been included; however, the literature on this specific subject was extensive. Philosophers, historians, and literary scholars have given more than ample coverage to the historical aspect of Thomas Jefferson's life. Therefore, it seemed quite practical to concentrate all possible effort in this particular psychological study on the basic concepts of Thomas Jefferson.

This study was considered to be neither a moral nor an ethical evaluation, but merely an objective discussion of statements on psychological problems related to Thomas Jefferson's interaction with his environment.

Previous Research on the Problem

For many years philosophers, historians, and literary scholars have reflected on that period of history commonly referred to as the "Renaissance," with its many heirs and contributors; for instance, men of the caliber of Leonardo da Vinci.

> The drama of human history as searched and researched by the authorities on that period has revealed one immutable truth: that ideas, opinions, and attitudes are much more lasting than anything else in man's universe. Moreover, that in man's civilization modern minds are rooted in the immemorial past. . . . Thus, it is through the mind, and with ideas that man has attached himself to his remote predecessors. . . . Ideas are living, and all that lives has an environment in which it must exist and to which it must be adapted. This is especially true in America, which owes its very existence to the art, science, religion, and ideals prevalent in the culture of early Greece and Rome.[1]

Western civilization is the product of those generations of men chiefly in northwestern Europe, who lived after the ancient Roman Empire had entered into a social and

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[1]John Herman Randall, The Making of the Modern Mind (Massachusetts: The Riverside Press, 1926), pp. 46-49.

intellectual disintegration after the decline and fall of Rome.[2] However, it is "The Revolutionary Age of Giants," with its many altruists and patriots, providing the setting for the research and the investigation of this thesis.

Importance of the Study

On the basis of objective evidence obtained by the historical research method and reasoning by analogy, researchers of this period tried to find and to identify the causal factors underlying it. It was concluded that "The natural equality of all human beings is not intrinsically moral, nor legal, it is psychological."[3] Moreover, the relationship that exists between man and God is also both moral and psychological. Fortune, early colonial surroundings, and critical experiences apparently contributed to creating the circumstances and expressed sentiments of the (so-called) radical Americans.

Research has shown that the oligarchical power from which this country was destined to escape on July 4, 1776, supplied the predisposing cauldron of universally accepted

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Eleanor D. Berman, Thomas Jefferson Among the Arts (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1947).

revolutionary causes. The precipitating situations were met as they arose by psychologically right, just and rational ideals which created and perpetuated a spirit of worldwide revolution in the New World as well as on the continent of Europe.[4]

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[4] Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE RESEARCH

Methods Used in the Investigation

Jefferson's biographers have probed all aspects of his life; they have tried to give a fair picture of his basic character and of his genius. There is a great array of books, pamphlets, and articles with titles such as the following: "The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson," "Thomas Jefferson's Views on Religion," "Thomas Jefferson Man of Letters." There are penetrating studies on the mathematician, the anthropologist, the archaeologist, the linguist, the jurist, and the scholar Jefferson. His interests in art, in gardening, in cooking have also been exposed. His personal contacts with men of his time have been the matter of special monographs and articles. His correspondence with John Adams, Dupont de Nemours, George Ticknor, and various French ladies have also been explored.

Jefferson was a lawyer, politican, revolutionary, the author of the Declaration of Independence, wartime governor of his native state, writer of epoch-making bills, American minister to France, secretary of state, vice-president, and, for two terms, President of the United States, founder and directing spirit of the University of Virginia. He was an

assiduous farmer in the extensive manner of big eighteenth century landowners, supervising not only agriculture but also a sprawling home production of almost everything needed in a community of several hundred people.[1]

He was a great builder and creative architect, a manufacturer of nails, an enthusiastic gardener who gave much of his time to procuring plants and experimenting with them. He was a student of mathematics, an inventor of practical devices and gadgets, a naturalist, a meteorologist who made observations year after year, and a collector of records about the American Indians.[2]

Jefferson assembled the biggest private library in America and perhaps of his age, and he gave much time to organization and cataloging. He wrote so many letters that those hitherto published fill a score of volumes; he estimated that in one year their number amounted to twelve-hundred.[3]

Moreover, in addition, Jefferson was a devoted head of his family, paying much attention and dedicating much

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[1]Karl Lehmann-Hartleben, Thomas Jefferson, American Humanist (New York: Macmillan Company, 1947), pp. 9-10.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

time to the education of its younger members. He loved society, enjoyed good and long conversations, and indulged in a hospitality so extensive that it contributed to the growing financial difficulties of his later life. Thus, all of this is the record of only part of Jefferson's major interests and abilities.[4]

As a lawyer, Jefferson's law partner, George Wythe, said, "He is a very able practioner. Jefferson knows the legal statutes and his interpretations of them is good."[5]

As governor of Virginia, Jefferson was considered as being highly inconsistent in his administrative policies. Edmond Pendleton, Virginia statesman, once said, "Jefferson should be recalled."[6]

As a mathematician Jefferson was considered more than able. John Adams and George Small often asked for Jefferson's opinion on problems in advanced integral and differential calculus.[7]

As a naturalist and farmer, Buffon, the eminent French naturalist, often wrote to Jefferson asking his opinions on American plants and animals. Jefferson was helpful to

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[4]Ibid.

[5]E. Martin, Thomas Jefferson: Scientist (New York: Henry Schuman, Inc., 1952), pp. 9-11, 216-218.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

Buffon in aiding the latter's reclassifications of some rare varieties of American plants and animals.[8]

Chastellux, one of Jefferson's visitors at Monticello, applauded Jefferson's applications to meteorological observations. Chastellux said, "Of all the branches of philosophy, meteorology is the most proper for the Americans to cultivate."[9]

The word "philosopher" was applied to Thomas Jefferson as a term of derision by his enemies and of honor by his supporters. "His enemies," said Jared Ingersoll, "will not allow him to be anything else but a philosopher; his friends extol him as a sage."[10] In Jefferson's day the words "philosophy" and "philosopher" had a different implication from the one that they have today. The term "philosopher" might designate a man who loved and pursued all branches of learning. In a more specific sense "philosophy" denoted science, and to be a "philosopher" was to be a scientist and a psychologist.

The words "philosophy," "psychology," and even "science" had also gathered some bad connotations, particularly injurious to a man's career. Therefore, to call Jefferson a "philosopher"

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

or a "psychologist" in the latter sense was to imply that he was dangerous, politically unreliable, and an enemy of religion. A system of "philosophy," or "psychology," or science could then signify an unwholesome prying into the secrets of nature for the purpose of discrediting the Bible, promoting atheism, encouraging a harmful nationalism, a deistic naturalism, materialism, the wildest ideas of enlightenment, chaotic and uncontrolled speculation, impracticality, confused and fuzzy thinking, tedious, trivial and indiscriminate discussion, and a modernism which could destroy the finest psychological values of the past.[11]

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[11]Eleanor D. Berman, Thomas Jefferson Among the Arts (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1949), pp. 150-160.

CHAPTER III

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

The subject of the discussion in this chapter is "Psychological Concepts of Thomas Jefferson." This is an attempt to find some of the psychological principles and assumptions of Jefferson. Moreover, an attempt will be made to report some of his psychological statements concerning himself and his relation to his environment.

Jefferson was an eighteenth century deist and believer in natural religion. He connected nature and nature's God inseparable through all of his works. Thus, Jefferson said:

> I am against all egoists; for God has formed us moral agents. . . . Egoistic morality in its communication to life and self-love definitely has no part in psychological morality. . . . Ego is the sole antagonist of psychological virtue. . . . It leads us constantly by our propensities to self-gratification in violation of our moral and psychological duties to others.[1]

He stated further:

> It is against this enemy that we erect the batteries of moralists and religionists as the obstacles to the practice of true morality. . . . Take from man his selfish propensities, and he can have nothing to seduce him from the practice of

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[1]Karl Lehmann-Hartleben, Thomas Jefferson, American Humanist (New York: Macmillan Company, 1947), pp. 101-109.

> virtue. . . . Or subdue those propensities by education, instruction or restrain, and virtue remains without a competitor.[2]

Therefore, as Jefferson wrote to young Peter Carr, ". . . the moral sense of conscience is as much a part of a man as his leg or arm. . . . I sincerely believe with you in the general psycholgical existence of a moral instinct."[3]

Natural Mind and Ideas

Jefferson said:

> There is a real world which corresponds to our ideas. Our senses tell us of this world and they are justified in saying that it exists. . . . We may not be able to say much about the source of our sensations, but we are able to say that the sensations are caused. Thus, the real world is the cause of our sensations. For example, man has an idea of white. This idea is not born in us, but is caused. From this we can reason that the real world contains something which causes in us an idea of white. However, even of this we cannot be absolutely certain. . . . Our knowledge of this world is probable. . . . Therefore, we can never have a world of innate ideas.[4]

He continued:

> The source of these ideas, the cause of sensations, and thus the cause of all ideas is God. We cannot see or perceive God, but we can perceive the effects of His work, ideas. . . . Nothing in the universe existed unless it was perceived. I am sitting in my room; I look about and see chairs, a table, books, and other objects. They form ideas in my mind. However, if I

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

> leave the room do these objects vanish, or do I carry them out of the room in my mind? No, they may exist in some other mind; if other people are in the room, they may exist in their minds. Yet, if there are no other people in the room, then they may still exist in the mind of God. But all the time they are ideas and not material objects.[5]

Consequently, Jefferson stated:

> Common sense tells us that a real world exists as the cause of our sensations and ideas. Therefore, we may speculate all we want, but we will not be content to deny what common sense tells us. . . . Those things which we perceive distinctly by our senses exist, and they exist as we perceive them. . . . There is a real world, out there, corresponding to our ideas. Tables, chairs, and the like do exist independently of our ideas of them. Common sense tells us that this is so, and we cannot deny common sense.[6]

According to Jefferson, man's reason is established as the ultimate of everything in the universe. He maintained that an outer world exists, and God exists and has created that world. Jefferson attempted to prove all of this in such a way that it will be reasonable. It should be clear that human reason for Jefferson became the final test of revelation. With Jefferson, then, Christianity became a rational religion and thereby lost its mystery.[7]

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Nathan Schacher, Thomas Jefferson, a Biography (New York: Thomas Yoseloff & Company, 1957), pp. 154-155.

> The definition of the subject matter as "experience dependent on an experiencing person" was accompanied by the doctrine of psycho-physical parallelism which Titchener took over specifically from Wilhelm Wundt.
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> . . . . . .
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> Thus, out of the elements--sensation, image, and passion--is made the whole structure of the psychic life; and in this notion is implied the general plan, the basic architectural scheme of psycho-physical parallelism. . . . Edward Bradford Titchener, an eminent English psychologist, of the Wundtian school, believed that experience did depend on an experiencing person. Consequently, a person is directly and immediately aware of his sensations through the ether waves that explain them. . . . Objects in the physical world are constructed on the basis of the sensation and are known only through the sensation.[8]

The mind-body dualism of Jefferson most certainly conforms to Titchener's psycho-physical parallelism in that the psychological processes and physical processes run along side each other as parallel streams. Neither one causes the other; there is no interaction between them, but a change in one is always accompanied by a change in the other. Therefore it is possible to refer the one to the other.

Summary of the Psychological Concepts

Jefferson believed that God prevailed throughout everything in nature. Moreover, Jefferson took a stand against all

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[8]Edna Heidbreder, The Seven Psychologies (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1933), pp. 96-127.

egoists because he felt that the ego actually stood between man and his concepts of God and nature. Thus, for Jefferson ego was the sole enemy of virtue, since it led men away from their duty to others. Therefore, a sense of moral conscience is a vital part of any man.

Summary of Natural Mind and Ideas. Jefferson thought that there was a real world which corresponds to ideas; therefore, the senses reveal this world to us. Thereby, for Jefferson all sensations have a cause. Jefferson believed that there was no world of innate ideas if there was cause and effect. Moreover, Jefferson thought that knowledge of objective reality is subjective. However, the true source of ideas, sensations, and stimuli was God. Jefferson thought that man's reason is the way of thinking and accepting objective truth; consequently, reason becomes the final test of revelation. Therefore, for Jefferson even Christianity lost its mystery. Psycho-physical parallelism is the doctrine that attempted to explain these elements, sensations, and images as they appeared to Jefferson.

Nature and Nurture

It is only after we are born that our environments differ a great deal. They then differ with respect to social as well as purely physical and psychological details.[9]

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[9]Norman L. Munn, The Fundamentals on Human Adjustment (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1951), pp. 91-95.

Through our social environments man is subjected to language, customs, and other aspects of the culture.[10]

Thomas Jefferson was an environmentalist, and he believed the following to be true according to his letter to Peter Carr:[11]

> Dear Peter, -- I received, by Mr. Mazzei, your letter of April the 20th, I am much mortified to hear that you have lost so much time; and that, when you arrived in Williamsburg, you were not at all advanced from what you were when you left Monticello. Time now begins to be precious to you. Every day you lose will retard a day your entrance on that public stage whereon you may begin to be useful to yourself. However, the way to repair the loss is to improve the future time. I trust that with your dispositions, even the acquisition of science is a pleasing employment. I can assure you, that the possession of it is, what (next to an honest heart) will above all things render you dear to your friends, and give you fame and promotion in your country. When your mind shall be well improved with science, nothing will be necessary to place you in the highest points of view, but to pursue the interests of your country, the interests of your friends, and your own interests also, with the purest integrity, the most chaste honor.
>
> The defect of these virtues can never be made up by all the other acquirements of body and mind. Make these your first object. Give up money, give up fame, give up science, give up the earth itself and all it contains, rather than do an immoral act. And never suppose, that in any possible situation, or under any circumstances, it is best for you to do a dishonorable thing, however slightly so it can never be known but

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Peter Carr (Paris: August 19, 1785).

to yourself, ask yourself how you would act were all the world looking at you, and act accordingly. Encourage all your virtuous dispositions, and exercise, as a limb of the body does, and that exercise will make them habitual. From the practice of the purest virtue, you may be assured you will derive the most sublime comforts in every moment of life and in the moment of death. If ever you find yourself environed with difficulties and perplexing circumstances, out of which you are at a loss how to extricate yourself, do what is right, and be assured that that will extricate you the best out of the worst situations. Though you cannot see, when you take one step, what will be the next, yet follow truth, justice and plain dealing, and never their leading you out of the labyrinth, in the easiest manner possible. The knot which you thought a Gordian knot, will untie itself before you. Nothing is so mistaken as the supposition, that a person is to extricate himself from a difficulty, by intrigue, by chicanery, by dissimulation, by trimming, by an untruth, by an injustice. This increases the difficulties tenfold; and those, who pursue these methods, get themselves so involved at length, that they can never turn but their infamy becomes more exposed.

It is of great importance to set a resolution, not to be shaken, never to tell an untruth. There is no vice so mean, so pitiful, so contemptible; and he who permits himself to tell a lie once, finds it much easier to do it a second time and a third time, till at length it becomes habitual; he tells lies without attending to it, and truths without the world's believing him. This falsehood of the tongue leads to that of the heart, and in time depraves all its good dispositions.

An honest heart being the first blessing, a knowing head is the second. It is time for you now to begin to be choice in your reading; to begin to pursue a regular course in it; and not to suffer yourself to be turned to the right or left by reading anything out of that course. I have long ago digested a plan for you, suited to the circumstances in which you will be placed. This I will detail to you, from time to time, as you advance. For the present, I advise you to begin a course of ancient history, reading everything in the original and not in translations. First

read Goldsmith's history of Greece. This will give you a digested view of that field. Then take up ancient history in detail, reading the following books in the following order: Herodotus, Thcydides, Xenophontis Anabasis, Arrian, Quintus Curtius, Diodorus Siculus, Justin. This shall form the stage of your historical reading, and is all I need mention to you now. The next will be of Roman history. From that we will come down to modern history. In Greek and Latin poetry, you have read or will read at school, Virgil, Terence, Horace, Anacreon, Theocritus, Homer, Euripides, Sophocles. Read also Milton's Paradise Lost, Shakespeare, Ossian, Pope's and Swift's works, in order to form your style in your own language. In morality, read Epictetus, Xenophontis Memorabilia, Plato's Socratic dialogues, Cicero's philosophies, Antoninus, and Seneca. In order to assure a certain progress in this reading, consider what hours you have free from the school and the exercises of the school. Give about two of them every day to exercise; for health must not be sacrificed to learning. A strong body makes the mind strong. As to the species of exercise, I advise the gun. While this gives a moderate exercise to the body, it gives boldness, enterprise, and independence to the mind. Games played with the ball, and others of that nature, are too violent for the body and stamp no character on the mind. Let your gun, therefore, be the constant companion of your walks. Never think of taking a book with you. The object of walking is to relax the mind. You should therefore not permit yourself to even think while you walk; but divert yourself by the objects surrounding you. Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk far. The Europeans value themselves on having subdued the horse to the uses of man; but I doubt whether we have not lost more than we have gained by the use of this animal. No one has occasioned so much the degeneracy of the human body. An Indian goes on foot nearly as far in a day, for a journey, as an enfeebled white does on his horse; and he will tire the best horses. There is no habit you will value so much as that of walking far without fatigue. I would advise you to take your exercise in the afternoon: not because it is the best time for exercise, for certainly it is not; but because it is the best time to spare from your studies; and habit will soon reconcile it to health, and render it nearly as useful as if you gave to that the more precious hours of the day.

A little walk of half an hour, in the morning, when you first rise, is advisable also. It shakes of sleep and produces other good effects in the animal economy. Rise at a fixed and an early hour, and go to bed at a fixed and an early hour also. Sitting up late at night is injurious to the health and not useful to the mind. Having ascribed proper hours to exercise, divide what remain (I mean of your vacant hours) into three portions. Give the principal to history and the other two, which should be shorter, to philosophy and poetry. Write to me once every month or two and let me know the progress you make. Tell me in what manner you employ every hour in the day. The plan I have proposed for you is adapted to your present situation only. When that is changed I shall propose a corresponding change of plan. I have ordered the following books to be sent to you from London to the care of Mr. Madison: Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon's Hellenics, Anabasis and Memorabilia, Cicero's works, Baretti's Spanish and English Dictionary, Martin's Philosophical Grammar, and Martin's Philosophia Britannica.

I will send you the following from hence: Bezout's Mathematics, De la Lande's Astronomy, Muschenbrock's Physics, Quintus Curtius, Justin a Spanish Grammar, and some Spanish books. You will observe that the last four are not in the preceding plan. They are not to be opened until you go to the University. You are now, I expect, learning French. You must push this because the books which will be put into your hands when you advance into mathematics, natural philosophy, natural history, & C., will be mostly French, these sciences being better treated by the French than the English writers.

Our future connection with Spain renders that the most necessary of the modern languages after French. When you become a public man, you may have occasion for it, and the circumstance of your possessing that language may give you preference over other candidates. I have nothing further to add for the present, but husband well your time, cherish your instructors, strive to make everybody your friend; and be assured that nothing will be so pleasing as your success to, Dear Peter,

Yours affectionately,

Summary of Nature and Nurture. Man differs environmentally only after he is born; therefore, Jefferson was an environmentalist, consistent with his foregone belief. In a letter to his young nephew, Peter Carr, Jefferson pointed out the importance of conditioning oneself (exercise) in the environs. Furthermore, he pointed out how to go about it in a prescribed manner; consequently, Jefferson maintained that a great requirement for success is an honest heart and a wise head.

Mind, Intelligence, and Education

> Science is more important in a republican than in any other government. . . . And in an infant country like ours, we must much depend for improvement on the science of other countries, longer established, possessing better means and better advanced than we are. . . . To prohibit us from the benefit of foreign light, is to consign us to long darkness.
>
> I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among peoples. No other sure foundation can be devised, for the preservation of freedom and happiness. Preach, my dear Sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law, for educating the common people alone can protect us against these evils, and that the tax which will be paid for this purpose is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to the kings, priests & nobles who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance.[12]

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[12]Adrienne Koch and William Peden, The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Letter to George Wythe, August 13, 1786, Vol. IV (Boston: Random House, 1944), pp. 268-269.

Concerning education and local government, Jefferson said in a letter to Governor Tylor, May 26, 1810:

> I have indeed two great measures at heart, without which no republic can maintain itself in strength: 1. That of general education to enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom. 2. To divide every county into hundreds, of such size that all the children of each will be within a central school in it. . . . These little republics would be the main strength of the great one. We owe to them the vigor given to our revolution in its commencement in the Eastern States.[13]

In a letter to F. C. Cabell, January 31, 1814, Jefferson stated the following with reference to mind and intelligence:

> There are two subjects, indeed which I shall claim a right to further as long as I breathe, the public education, and the sub-division of counties into wards. . . . I consider the continuance of republican government as absolutely hanging on these two hooks. Of the first, you will, I am sure, be an advocate, as having already reflected on it, and of the last, when you shall have reflected.[14]

Williams summarized Jefferson's views on primary education as follows:

> 1. To give to every citizen the information he needs to transact his own business.
>
> 2. To enable him to calculate for himself and to express and preserve his ideas, contracts, and accounts in writing.
>
> 3. To improve, by reading, his faculties and morals.

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[13] Ibid., p. 96.

[14] Ibid., pp. 453-455.

4. To understand his duties to his neighbors and his country, and to discharge with competence the functions confided to him by either.

5. To know his rights; to exercise with order and justice those he retains; to choose with discretion the fiduciary of those he delegates, and to notice their conduct with diligence, candor and judgment.

6. An, in general, to observe with intelligence and faithfulness all the social relations under which he shall be placed.[15]

Summary of Mind, Intelligence, and Education.

Jefferson maintained that the study of science was more important in a republican form of government than in any other; moreover, the most important bill in the American code is the one for the diffusion of knowledge among all peoples. Jefferson thought that knowledge was the only sure foundation for the preservation of freedom and happiness. Furthermore, the effort and the tax paid for education of the masses are more than worth it. Jefferson thought that every man must have a general education in order to protect himself. The object of primary education is self-protection, self-betterment, and individual perspective concerning the environment.

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[15]J. S. Williams, Jeffersonian Principles (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1928), p. 124.

Individual and Racial Differences

That people differ from one another is especially apparent from their physical appearance. That differences are likewise present in the abilities of man is also a commonly recognized fact.[16] In his treatise, Notes on Virginia, Jefferson set forth the full importance and nature of the variation between people.[17]

Concerning the Indian of North America, Jefferson wrote the following:

> I can speak of him somewhat from my own knowledge, but more from the information of others better acquainted with him, and on whose truth and judgment I can rely. From these sources I am able to say, in contradiction to this representation, that he is neither more defective in ardor, nor more impotent with his female, than the white reduced to the same diet and exercise; that he is brave, when an enterprise depends on bravery; education with him making the point of honor consists in the destruction of an enemy by stratagem, and in the preservation of his own person free from injury; or perhaps, this is nature, while it is education which teaches us to honor force more than finesse; that he will defend himself against a host of enemies, always choosing to be killed rather than to surrender, though it be to whites, who he knows will treat him well; that in other situations, also, he meets death with more deliberation, and endures tortures with a firmness unknown almost to religious enthusiasm with us; that he is affectionate to his children, careful of them, and indulgent in the extreme. That his affections comprehend his other connections, weakening, as with us, from circle to circle, as they recede from the center;

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[16] Norman R. Maier, Individual Differences (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955), pp. 181-186.

[17] Thomas Jefferson, Notes on Virginia (Paris, France: published by Jefferson, 1784), pp. 221-265.

that his friendships are strong and faithful to the uttermost extremity; that his sensibility is keen, even the warriors weeping most bitterly on the loss of the children, though in general they endeavor to appear superior to human events; that his vivacity and activity of mind is equal to ours in the same situations; hence his eagerness for hunting and for games of chance. The women are submitted to unjust drudgery. This I believe is the case with every barbarous people. With force is law.

Before we condemn the Indians of this continent as wanting genius, we must consider that letters have not yet been introduced among them. Were we to compare them in their present state with the Europeans, north of the Alps, when the Roman arms first crossed these mountains, the comparison would be unequal, because, at that time those parts of Europe were swarming with numbers; because numbers produce emulation, and multiply the chances of improvement, and one improvement begets another. Yet I may safely ask how many good poets, and how many able mathematicians are there.[18]

Jefferson wrote the following material with reference to the American Negro:

Emancipate all slaves born after the passing act. The bill reported by the revisors does not itself contain this proposition; but an amendment containing it was prepared, to be offered to the legislature whenever the bill should be taken up and farther directing, that they should continue with their parents to a certain age, when they should be colonized to such place as the circumstances of the time should render most proper. Extend to them our alliance and protection, till they have acquired strength; and to send vessels at the same time to other parts of the world for an equal number of white inhabitants; to induce them to migrate hither proper encouragements were to be proposed. It will probably be asked, Why not retain and incorporate the slaves into the State, and thus save the expense of supplying by importation of white settlers, the vacancies they will leave? Deep rooted prejudices entertained by the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances will divide us into parties, and produce

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[18] Ibid, pp. 221-237.

convulsions, which are political, maybe added other objections, which are physical and moral. The first difference that strikes us is that of color, the difference is fixed in nature, and is as real as if its seat and cause were better known to us. The circumstance of superior beauty is thought worthy of attention in the propagation of our horses, dogs, and other domestic animals; why not in that of man? Besides those of color, figure, and hair, there are other, there are other physical distinctions providing a difference of race. They are at least as brave, and more adventuresome. But this may perhaps proceed from a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present. When present, they do not go through it with more coolness or steadiness than the whites. They are more ardent after their female; but love seems with them more eager desire than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation. Their griefs are transient. Those numberless afflictions, which render it doubtful whether heaven has given life to us in mercy or in wrath, are less felt, and sooner forgotten with them. In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. Comparing them by their faculties of memory, they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could hardly be found capable of tracing through and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull and tasteless. However, most of them, indeed have been brought to, and born in America. Thus, many of them have been confined to tillage, to their own homes, and their own society; yet many have been so situated, that they might have availed themselves of the conversation of their masters. Among the Negroes is misery enough, God only knows, but no poetry.

Love is the peculiar oestrum of the poet. Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. Religion, indeed, has produced a Phyllis Wheatley[19] but it could not produce a poet.

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[19]Phyllis Wheatley's poems were published in London in 1773.

> Her compositions are below the dignity of criticism. Ignatius Sancho[20] has approached nearer to merit in composition; yet his letters do more to the heart than the head. The improvement of Negroes in body and mind, in the first instance of their mixture with the whites, has been observed by everyone and proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life. Notwithstanding these considerations which must weaken their respect for the laws of property, we find among them numerous instances of the most rigid integrity, and as many as among their better instructed masters, of benevolence, gratitude, and unshaken fidelity. The opinion that they are inferior in faculties of reason and imagination, must be hazarded with great diffidence. To justify a general conclusion requires many observations, even where the subject may be submitted to the anatomical knife, to optical glasses, to analysis by fire or by solvents. How much more then where it is a faculty, not a substance, we are examining; where it eludes the research of all the senses; where the conditions of its existence are various and variously combined. Where the effects of those which are present or absent bid defiance to calculation, let me add, too, as a circumstance of great tenderness, where our conclusion would degrade a whole race of men from the rank in the scale of beings which their Creator may perhaps have given them.[21]

Summary of Individual and Racial Differences. That people differ from one another in many respects is obvious; however, the main differences arise in the differences in individual abilities. Jefferson thought that the American Indian was good, intelligent, brave, affectionate, strong,

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[20] Ignatius Sancho, born in 1729 on a slave ship, was a long-time resident of England. His Letters, with Memoirs of his Life, appeared in 1782.

[21] Jefferson, op. cit., pp. 255-265.

and faithful to the uttermost. The criteria of measurement were considered by Anglo-Saxon standards. He indicated that the American Indian was less intelligent than the American white.

Jefferson maintained that all the young of the slaves should be kept together with their parents until they reached a certain age. He further maintained that the slaves should be aided in acquiring their separate entity in other parts of the world. Jefferson believed that deep-rooted prejudices on both sides, resulting from injuries that both had received, would prevent and divide the races and produce serious convulsions later.

He believed that skin color was the main individual difference of the Negro in this country. He further thought that Negroes were as brave as the whites and more adventuresome; however, he felt they were highly emotional and more transient in their feelings than the American whites.

Emotional Behavior

"An emotion is a stirred or mixed-up state of intensity of feeling, expressed both covert and overtly."[22]

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[22]Norman L. Munn, The Fundamentals of Human Adjustment (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1946), pp. 327-333.

According to Munn, the situational aspects of stimuli provoke increased or decreased emotional effectiveness. The common variety of emotions are many: love, hate, fear, anger, grief, shame, and pain.[23]

Thomas Jefferson naturally experienced all of the above-named emotions and others too numerous to mention. However, death of Jefferson's loved ones seemed to place emphasis on the emotion of grief more so than any other throughout his lifetime.[24] Yet, Jefferson was more than reticent about showing or displaying his grief. For instance, in all of Jefferson's letters and papers there is only one mention of the death of his wife Martha Wayles Jefferson. It appears in one of his notebooks under the date of her death:

> September 6th: My dear wife died this day at 11:45 a.m.[25]

Nothing else appears. There is a tradition of his excessive emotion in his grief on this occasion. However, it was his eldest daughter, Martha, who remembered in her maturity: "It does not ring quite true to the character of my father as exhibited in other crises in his life."[26]

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Paul Wilstach, Jefferson and Monticello (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1925), pp. 167-173.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

There is one other lonely entry in Jefferson's Garden Book:

> September 8 and 9: White frost has killed everything in the neighborhood--hills of tobacco in the north garden and everything that I held dear. Thereafter, Monticello remained empty, closed, and dark for many years after this particular fall of 1782.[27]

Jefferson had many varied feelings of nostalgia. While in France, as Plenipotentiary (ambassador extraordinary) he said:

> My habits are formed to those of my country. . . . I am past the time of changing them, and am therefore less happy anywhere else than there.[28]

Jefferson wrote the following to his old friend Baron de Geismer:

> I am savage enough to prefer the woods, the wilds, and the independence of Monticello to all the brilliant pleasures of this gay capitol (Paris). I shall, therefore, rejoin myself to my native country with new attachments and with exaggerated esteem for its advantages, for though there is very little wealth there. There is more freedom, more ease, and less misery.[29]

Begging his friends the Cosways to go to America instead of to Italy to paint, Jefferson wrote the famous Dialogue of My Head and My Heart. This bit of verse

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

illustrates how much ambivalent or psycho-physical parallelism Jefferson suffered in the ethereal battle between reason and passion. It is as follows:

Head. Well, friend, you seem to be in a pretty trim.

Heart. I am indeed the most wretched of all earthly beings. Overwhelmed with grief, every fibre of my frame distended beyond its natural powers to bear, I would willingly meet whatever catastrophe should leave me no more to feel, or to fear.

Head. These are the eternal consequences of your warmth and precipitation. This is one of those scrapes into which you are ever leading us. You confess your follies, indeed; but still you hug and cherish them; and no reformation can be hoped where there is no repentance.

Heart. Oh, my friend! This is no moment to upbraid my foibles. I am rent into fragments by the force of my grief! If you have any balm, pour it into my wounds; if none, do not harrow them by new torments. Spare me in this awful moment! At any other, I will attend with patience to your admonitions.

Head. On the contrary, I never found that the moment of triumph, with you, was the moment of attention to my admonitions. While suffering under your follies, you may perhaps be made sensible of them, but the paroxysm over, you fancy it can never return. Harsh, therefore, as the medicine maybe, it is my office to administer it. You will be pleased to remember that when our friend Trumbull used to be telling us of the merits and talents of these good people, I never ceased whispering to you that we had no occasion for new acquaintances;

that the greater their merits and talents, the more dangerous their friendship to our tranquillity, because the regret at parting would be greater.

Heart. Accordingly, sir, this acquaintance was not the consequence of my doings. It was one of your projects which threw us in the way of it. It was you, remember, and not I, who desired the meeting at Legrand and Motinos.

Head. It would have been happy for you if my diagrams and crotchets had gotten you to sleep on that day, as you are pleased to say they eternally do. . . . Every soul of you had an engagement for the day. Yet all of these were to be sacrificed that you might dine together. Lying messages were to be dispatched into every quarter of the city, with apologies for your breach of engagement . . . etc.

Heart. Oh! my dear friend, how you have revived me by recalling to my mind the transaction of that day! How well I remember them all, and that when I came home at night and looked back to the morning, it seemed to have been a month agone, etc.

. . . . . .

Head. Thou art the most incorrigible of all the beings that ever sinned! I reminded you of the follies of the first day, intending to deduce from thence some useful lesson for you; but instead of listening to them, you kindle at the recollection, you retrace the whole series with fondness, which shows you want nothing but the opportunity to act it over again. I often told you, during its course, that you were imprudently engaging your affections under circumstances that rack your whole system when you are parted from those you love, complaining that such a separation is worse than death.

Heart. But you told me they would come back again the next year.

Head. But, in the meantime, see what you suffer and their return, too depends on so many circumstances that if you had a grain of prudence, you would not count upon it. . . . . .

Heart. May heaven abandon me if I do![30]

In this Dialogue of My Head and My Heart Jefferson brings in his gregarious, socialized feelings concerning personal relationships. Thereby, the objectively expresses the pathos of psycho-physical parallelistic forces, each attempting to dominate the other.

Jefferson considered pain as a necessary counterpart of pleasure, but like Burke made no attempt to predict the emotional value of the one over the other. Jefferson said:

> We have no rose without its thorn, no pleasure without its alloy. . . . This is the law of our existence, and we must acquiesce. . . . . Imaginary examples of virtue and vice raise virtuous emotions which become stronger by exercise and tend to make us virtuous by habit as well as principle.[31]

He continued:

> However, painting and sculpture are more circumscribed, having command of no emotions other than those that are raised by sight. Thus, they are peculiarly successful in expressing painful passions, which are displayed by external signs extremely legible.[32]

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

Summary of Emotional Behavior. An emotion is a stirred-up or mix-up feeling. The emotional experiences of Thomas Jefferson were more in the realm of deep-seated grief for the death of his loved ones. He also suffered strong feelings of nostalgia while in Europe.

As cited previously in his Dialogue of My Head and My Heart, Jefferson expressed feelings of psycho-physical parallelism.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS, RESULTS, AND FURTHER RESEARCH

I. CONCLUSIONS

It was revealed through this study that there were many psychological beliefs involved in Thomas Jefferson's thoughts about himself and his environment. None of these beliefs can be classified in a specific psychological school of thought. The facts and the ideas represent various schools of thought because of the high degree of inconsistency in the man Jefferson, who utilized every school of thought, selecting only those of each that he considered to be the best.

II. RESULTS

The writer feels the following beliefs to be worthy of consideration as final results of the foregone study:

The Concepts of Nature

1. Jefferson believed that God prevailed throughout everything in nature.

2. For Jefferson "Ego" was the sole enemy of virtue.

3. A sense of moral conscience was a vital part of man.

Natural Mind and Ideas

1. For Jefferson there was a real world which corresponded to our ideas.

2. The senses revealed this world to us.

3. Jefferson believed that all sensations had a cause.

4. Jefferson thought that knowledge of objective reality was more subjective than anything else.

5. The true source of ideas, sensations, and stimuli was God.

6. For Jefferson man's reason was the ultimate way of thinking through problems to the objective truth.

7. For Jefferson reason became the final test of revelation.

8. For Jefferson even Christianity lost its mystery.

9. The concept of psycho-physical parallelism attempted to explain the elements, sensations, and images as they appeared to Jefferson.

Nature and Nurture

1. Jefferson was an environmentalist.

2. In a letter to his young nephew, Peter Carr, Jefferson pointed out the importance of conditioning oneself (exercise) in the environs.

3. Jefferson maintained in his letter to Peter Carr that a great requirement for success was an honest heart and a wise head.

Individual and Racial Differences

1. People differ from one another in many respects.

2. Men differ widely in their abilities.

3. The American Indian, by observation, is good, intelligent, brave, affectionate, strong, and faithful to the uttermost by nature.

4. Jefferson thought the American Indian to be less intelligent than the American white man.

The American Negro

1. Jefferson thought that the young of the slaves should be kept with their parents up to a certain age.

2. The slave should be aided in establishing his separate entity in other parts of the world.

3. Deep-rooted prejudices on both sides, resulting from injuries that both had received, would prevent and divide the races and produce serious convulsions later.

4. Jefferson believed the main individual difference of the Negro in this county was skin color.

5. Jefferson thought that Negroes were as brave and more adventuresome than whites.

6. Jefferson thought that Negroes were highly emotional and more transient in their feelings than American whites.

7. The criteria of measurement of these differences were by Anglo-Saxon standards.

Emotional Behavior

1. An emotion is a stirred-up or mixed-up feeling.

2. Jefferson experienced more than his share of emotional grief through the death of his loved ones.

3. Jefferson suffered strong feelings of nostalgia while in Europe.

4. Jefferson expressed the feeling of psychophysical parallelism in the poetic figure that he used in the Dialogue of My Heart and My Head.

III. FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research in this field might relate the concepts discussed to the various phases of Thomas Jefferson's life.

Moreover, Jefferson's writings might be found to supply a psychological basis for modern-day ideas on government, political science, political philosophy, and applied psychology.

It is suggested that studies of the contemporaries of Thomas Jefferson should be made to gain more perspective concerning "The Revolutionary Age of Giants."

It is the further belief of this writer that even if history might by chance repeat itself, there will never be another era comparable to this particular era. Men like Jefferson were the psychological matrix of America as we know it today.

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