

THE PRACTICE AND ETHICS OF A PSYCHOLOGIST WORKING FOR THE C.I.A.

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I am here today because John Gittinger has been too much involved in controversy over the past three years. He didn't care to participate so he asked me to do it. I was privileged to learn his PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (1) over the years as he was developing and refining it. It's an elegant Psychology of Individual Differences and historically fills a huge gap in that aspect of American psychology.

Indirect assessment I take to mean the development of formulations about an individual's personality and behavior from observations in informal, non-test situations. Gittinger's P.A.S. concepts lend themselves to that effort which for me contributes to the important goal of having every citizen able to use and benefit from the concepts and methods of Social Science. In a democratic society this process involves challenging some of the traditional, elitist, exclusive and esoteric behavior of scientists and professionals.

Robert Hyde was a Psychiatrist who innovated and carefully studied many new treatment and management methods in the care of mental patients. He was the first person to ingest and research L.S.D. in this country. His work and that of John Gittinger in connection with the C.I.A. has been highlighted in the press in recent years. They have been two of my most enduring, respected teachers, colleagues and friends since 1946 and 1955 respectively. In careful review of my own knowledge and experience, I am sure their work was appropriate in the context of the times. They contributed to legitimate defensive plans of the United States and not to offensive drug use or generalized "mind control" as dramatized by some interpreters of the data available.

Another important factor determining my knowledge of the C.I.A. is the compartmentation which is based on a strictly enforced "need to know" system. This is described clearly by Allen Dulles in his book "THE CRAFT OF INTELLIGENCE" (2). There are people here today who know much more than I about various aspects of the working of this agency of government in projects such as M. K. ULTRA. I was never an "insider" of the M. K. ULTRA and related projects.

There were four phases of my involvement with the C.I.A.:

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1. The first experimental, systematic study of L.S.D. in this country was conducted at Boston Psychopathic Hospital (now the Massachusetts Mental Health Center). Begun several years earlier, I joined the project in 1954 when it was funded by the Geschichter Foundation which served as a conduit for C.I.A. funds without the knowledge of the multi-discipline research staff, including myself. It was there in 1955 that I met John Gittinger who served as a consultant to the project. His participation was almost exclusively in teaching us the descriptive system he was still in the process of formulating; later called the Personality Assessment System.

To my knowledge there were no unwitting administrations of the drug under this project. I was in a good position to know because I was supervisor, under Dr. Hyde, of the day-to-day mechanics of planning, conducting and following up each series of experiments. The B.P.H. team published frequently, with many papers initially written in quarterly or semi-annual reports to the Geschichter Foundation. Thus, virtually all the basic data was available to the scientific professional community and the public (3,4).

The second phase of my involvement was at Butler Health Center in Providence, Rhode Island, which reopened in 1957 after closing due to financial difficulties, characteristic then of many of the very old, private mental hospitals. Dr. Hyde took on the job of Superintendent with much support from N.I.M.H. At Butler we all had clinical responsibilities as well as research. John Gittinger's continued visits there included seminars on the P.A.S. open to the whole clinical staff as we began using the P.A.S. in clinical work at the center.

Another difference is that in this phase of the work I was aware that the alcohol studies were funded by the C.I.A. through the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology, about 1960 renamed the Human Ecology Fund. This study at Butler was a relatively small part of my work since I served as Psychology Department Head and co-investigator on several N.I.M.H. grants. In 1959 I presented a predictive study (5) we had done at B.P.H. to the Rhode Island Psychological Association.

Press reports that patients at Butler were administered L.S.D. are untrue. We had no formal L.S.D. experimentation there. Several professionals who wanted an L.S.D. experience to increase their own understanding, including 2 or 3 from the C.I.A., were individually administered the drug with the protection and support of an experienced staff to see them through their trip. Again, I knew then and know now of no unwitting administrations of that drug.

3. The third phase of involvement with the C.I.A. began in 1960 when I left Butler to go into private consulting work for various agencies developing and conducting N.I.M.H. research and demonstration projects. I contracted with John Gittinger to spend about one-third of my time under funding from the Human Ecology Fund as a consultant.

From 1960 on I was not involved with L.S.D. in any way. My experience or advice was never called upon during subsequent agency involvement. Later, in 1966 and on, when I returned to Mental Health Center work, my experience was invaluable as L.S.D. had hit the streets, hysteria about the drug was rampant, and other clinicians were unfamiliar with its effects and management.

My role as consultant to H.E.F. from 1960-1962 was twofold, primarily library, technical research connected with development of the P.A.S. I compared it with other methods of assessing individual differences in personality such as Cattell's trait system, Sheldon's physiological types, the M.M.P.I. and Leary's Interpersonal Diagnosis. I began to develop check lists and guides to behavioral observation so that a P.A.S. formulation could be derived from social observation without use of the Wechsler battery on which the rational is based psychometrically (6). At the Human Ecology Fund I infrequently attended project review meetings, primarily concerning personnel training and assessment projects.

*Where
are they?*

4. The fourth and final phase of my C.I.A. involvement was from 1962 through 1965. In this phase I worked directly for John Gittinger at Psychological Assessment Associates in Washington, D.C. This firm was set up by the C.I.A. as a cover and liaison setting for certain psychological and social science activities.

The initial arrangement was that I worked about one-fourth of my time consulting on whatever I choose, with any remuneration turned into the company. The rest of the time was to be split evenly between continued developmental research work on the P.A.S., including tests of its operational reliability and validity, and routine agent assessments.

Immediately after President Johnson's "Guns & Butter" speech (?/65), all Federal budgets were cut. Exactly as in Mental Health Agencies, pressure mounted for direct service which meant cutting back on P.A.S. research and operational critique of its use and effects. Because of that I left P.A.A. in January 1966 to work for N.I.M.H.

We can now focus the issues of indirect assessment and my motives in working for the C.I.A.

The process of psychological assessment in an intelligence agency is essentially no different than in any medical, social, or industrial business context (assumption). It includes obtaining various kinds of data about the person and about the situation he or she is expected to perform in. Usually there is an identification of the "fit" between the person and the situation, with consideration of strengths and weaknesses of the individual, along with types of stress and rewards inherent in the situation. The general goal of the assessment is to identify how the individual might be able to perform relative to situational norms with adequate personal satisfaction.

In the context of the C.I.A., I served as a psychological assessment specialist. In the C.I.A., the Case Officer is the person responsible for recruiting, guiding and managing foreign agents, including concern for their personal-social adjustment and motivation. They are responsible for estimating the reliability of information, obtained from agents, presumed to be of use to the U. S. Government for its protection and the security of its citizens.

a) In cases where the foreign agent came to this country to be trained or when a defector came for permanent residence here, I would test and interview and make a routine report for the Case Officer.

b) The other assessment situation was when the Case Officer would be abroad and would send in personal-social, biographical and behavioral data from which we constructed a P.A.S. profile and then wrote up an assessment report. In this connection, I participated with several other psychologists in regular in-service training sessions where the P.A.S. concepts and symbol system were thoroughly gone over. The kinds of behavior observable and relevant to deriving a P.A.S. formula were specified and case studies in indirect assessment were done and critiqued. This teaching was very similar to what I now do in a graduate course on P.A.S. This gave them one frame work to order their observations, but they reported behavioral data in the field, not a formula themselves when requesting an indirect assessment.

The paper I gave at A.P.A. Symposium in Philadelphia in 1963 describes how I tested formulation of Wechsler profiles from observational-situational data using P.A.S. concepts and compared those profiles with a person's actual Wechsler scores, independently obtained. Predicting test scores of this type from non-test data worked out remarkably well and there was significant correspondence between predicted and actual Wechsler scores (7).

An ethical question can be raised as to how a psychologist can legitimately assess a person's behavior he has never seen. In one aspect that situation is very common in professional practice. Case consultation and supervision, for example, is a service where a psychologist or other professional provides consultation to members of their own or another agency's staff. They go over the other staff member's client situation as the consultee reports behavioral observations and

inferences about relationships. In this process the consultant-supervisor makes suggestions for client management, whether that be student, employee or client.

Another common practice is where a professional sends a client's M.M.P.I. or Strong Inventory out to be scored and receives a print-out with typical statements which have been found to be frequently associated with a given profile. The psychologists programming and running the computer set-up never see the client or the professional.

In any staff-consulting relationship of a professional nature and particularly in assessment and diagnostic work, the conditional nature of any particular observation or interpretation must be specified, always subject to translation and direct checking by the person or people using the assessment in the actual situation. There are few categorical, diagnostically valid assumptions about behavior that always characterizes a given situation.

For me, we should have more, not less, "indirect" participation of psychologists where that means a sharing of important useful repertoires of concepts about behavior and where responsibility and interpretation as to their suitability in a given situation is left to the involved participants who have the primary data in that situation.

I believe the social scientist and practitioner should build in methods for finding out how useful and appropriate any methods or concepts he uses or suggests have been, with as constant feedback as possible. In whatever setting, I have always worked for systematic client input to individual case and program evaluation. In the C.I.A., I developed a simple case officer feedback system to determine which aspects of the assessment were accurate, inaccurate or irrelevant in their experience.

Exactly as in Mental Health operation of services, pressure for direct service and Institutional Imperatives took precedence over this important aspect of service program evaluation. Throughout all agencies much lip service, but little or no budget or time is allowed for systematic evaluation by clients of services received.

From the preceding narrative it is fairly clear how I became increasingly involved with C.I.A. related work, beginning in 1954, ending in 1965. Then there is the question of WHY? There is at least a surface paradox in working for one of the most secret agencies in our society while stating a strong motive or goal was to have every citizen able to use, and benefit from, the concepts and methods of social science. Thus I'll attempt to be more explicit about my motives.

I felt good that the information from our drug studies might be helpful to our government, its officers and agents if it prepared

Where is it?

Sadly still true!

them to deal with possible use of drugs against them by agents of another country whose practices have been known to be less ethical and humane than ours. I felt good that the P.A.S. concepts might have been useful in gaining information about persons, events and decisions in relationship to potential threats to the security and protection of United States citizens.

Relative to the above, I had a combined patriotic-provincial motive. John Kennedy, from Massachusetts and Cape Cod, was then President and I definitely enjoyed being close to the scene of action, the exciting challenges of a more open, changing, world-responsive government. For what it is worth, there was some reassurance for me that between John Gittinger, whom I trusted, and John Kennedy, whom I trusted, there were only 3 eschelons of bureaucracy or decision-makers. (Today as a Clinic Director in the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, between my boss and the Governor there are 4 such levels, with for me many serious ethical problems connected with closing the state hospitals.)

If my activities were to be considered unethical according to professional standards, then I say that I am a citizen first and a professional second and that statement feels good to me because it leads to my basic motives. I have an insatiable curiosity focused on gaining information about people and events. I have an incurable need to share and validate that information with the purpose of reducing certain sources of stress. It is my life experience, starting with a large, extended family clan, that the source of much stress resides in individual differences in personality make-up. Inherently different temperaments clash and widely different perception of the same event are commonplace. Stereotyping, inter-personal conflicts, scapegoating and self-fulfilling projections are relative to that and extend stresses also.

The P.A.S. clearly defines inferences, stemming from identified personal abilities, which contribute to specifying attitudes, aspirations and differential stresses. The P.A.S. system also permits description of situational norms in the same terms that individual differences are described. This is a necessary bridge for describing, predicting and influencing people in situations.

My enduring professional and scientific goal is to have the P.A.S. and other social science methods and findings in the hands of professionals and citizens alike. What I mean has been most eloquently and responsibly articulated by Foote and Cottrel in their very neglected work "Identity and Interpersonal Competence" (8,9). Briefly stated, the goal is conceived that "social science represents the democratization of critical insights about behavior". The concept of participant observation is generalized to a concept of a "participant experimentation". Specific suggestions and methods are delineated how each phase of research and practice can be shared with subjects or clients with increasing, rather than decreasing, reliability and validity in the process.

Just as the Rorschach has resisted being held as a secret device, just as the Sponsoring Society is holding this meeting, just as client rights are protecting people from being railroaded and unduly restrained in mental hospitals, just as we now have better controls on use of human subjects in research, just as a large group of physicians defect from the A.M.A., just as the Freedom of Information Act is used, in these respects and many others we see that citizens in different ways insist on revising the judgment of elites with real or potential exercise of control that should be shared; insist on keeping open the access to information and decision-making that defines relationships in which each one's destiny resides.

I urge you to forget "mind control" as a generalized phenomena in any given boogy-man and to concentrate on the immediate specific situations each one finds himself in -- to challenge Institutional Imperatives (11) that abound in severe daily injustices, to look at the exclusiveness and stereotypes and projection in our own lives, groups and professional activities so that each contributes less to distorted relationships and thus injustices.

As to judgments about what is fair or unfair, ethical or unethical, my hunch is beautifully expressed by Buckminster Fuller in a statement made in 1940 (10).

"People of the United States
(I believe the vast majority of them)
who are at present especially staked out
to be foiled in a big way
which is vitally and mortally,
by all the warring or plotting factions
foreign and domestic,
are precisely those who alone remain unmoved.

It is these silent propagandees
who unerringly appraise
the pro- or anti-social values
of each world event;
of each communique;
and even of each personal happening
at other times trivial:
as these too may shade the outcome values
of man's transition
from dominant self-deciet
to preponderant self-mastery; . . . "

In my view, this statement has become increasingly applicable in the 3 subsequent decades.

In the interest of time, I have omitted details on the use of the term "Institutional Imperative" (11). This is another very neglected book which spells out the amoral nature of Institutional behavior which creates serious day-to-day insults to the dignity and well-being of all of us.

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