Enough has perhaps been said to show the general tenor of the ideas set out in the papers collected in this book. The comments which follow them are brief, very variable in quality and character, and chiefly interesting as emphasizing the dual nature of Sumner's teaching: its 'timeliness' in the broader sense, its 'out-of-dateness' in many cases in the narrower. But when all is said and done the essays are still provocative and challenging and raise anew certain questions much in the minds of thinking men at the present time: how can we in fact embark upon a study of society that shall be truly scientific, for example, and to what extent can social planning be finally divorced from a consideration of the values involved? "The fashion of forming ideals", says Sumner severely, "corrupts the mind and injures character. What we need to practise, on the contrary, is to know with the greatest exactitude what is and then plan to deal with the case as it is by the most approved means." He demanded, in short, of the young men to whom he addressed the paper from which the above quotation is taken, an exercise in strict intellectual discipline which might well be emulated at a time when the practice of austerity in other fields has become for once both necessary and fashionable.

E. I. BLACK.

BLUEPRINTS FOR A NEW SCIENCE

Foundations for a Science of Personality

By Dr. Andras Angyal. Pp. xii+398. (New York: The Commonwealth Fund; London: Oxford University Press, 1941.) 13s. 6d. net.

THE title of this work might lead one to think that it deals with a branch of psychology. In point of fact, however, it is an attempt to define a science of which psychology as we now know it would be a branch. The other branches would include physiology, sociology, and indeed all the studies with the human organism and its activities. Dr. Angyal suggests that the time has come for a radical reconstruction of this group of sciences, not one of which can deal adequately with its subject-matter so long as it remains in comparative isolation from the others.

In attempting to assess the value of an ambitious work of this description there are two points that must be considered. First of all, are there good grounds for believing that such a reconstruction is necessary, or even desirable? In the second place, does the writer succeed in showing that the reconstruction which he advocates is possible?

Dr. Angyal establishes the first point without much difficulty. There can be no doubt that the various branches of psychology present to-day an appearance of almost complete disorder. Indeed, it might be said that there is no psychology but only psychologies. So that it is most refreshing to meet with a resolute attempt to tackle the theoretical problems, even though the result may be yet another psychology. But the second point is the critical one. Dr. Angyal is not the first to attempt to unify this group of sciences, though his approach is a new one. Does he succeed in overcoming the difficulties which his predecessors failed to solve?

In our attempts to understand the world round about us we have hitherto had at our disposal two great instruments, language and mathematics. Language abstracts qualities and relations from the

concrete mass of events, and by so doing enables us to discover structure and regularity. Mathematics specifies this structure in quantitative detail. Now Dr. Angyal would have us approach the concrete datum which we wish to understand, and, without abstracting or dividing, apprehend it in its original "wholeness". We should study the total human organism responding to a total environment. It will obviously be necessary for us to deal with partial aspects of this total situation at any given time; but when we do so we should consider, not parts merely, but parts of such and such a whole. In fact, Dr. Angyal is postulating not so much a new method as a new category, and therein lies the real objection to what is otherwise a very attractive programme. For we cannot simply by taking thought alter our existing categories. There is no need to adopt a Kantian point of view and claim that only certain categories are possible. It is enough to suggest that existing categories are embedded in our thought and language much more deeply than Dr. Angyal seems to realize. A quotation may serve to bring this out more clearly. "Biological tensions viewed from the subject as a point of reference are considered as drives. Viewing the same tensions from the object side one obtains something similar to what Kurt Lewin calls the 'field forces' or 'demand qualities' of environmental situations" (pp. 128-29). The rather clumsy periphrasis, "something similar to . . . 'field forces' or 'demand qualities' of environmental situations", shows the sort of difficulty likely to be met with. Dr. Angyal has been forced to express himself in terms of analogies with physical science or with the sort of descriptive analysis which he has already rejected. He is, moreover, unable to express the "wholeness" of the situation directly, but has instead to move rapidly backwards and forwards between the subjective and the objective sides.

Dr. Angyal is by no means unconscious of these difficulties, though he may not realize how fundamental they are. "Relational thinking", he admits, "is so firmly rooted a habit that the transition to system thinking is at least as difficult as the transition from a three-dimensional to a four-dimensional geometry" (p. 261). The point is, however, that given an instrument, the transition presents no difficulty. What is difficult, if not impossible, is to express four-dimensional geometry in terms of our immediate apprehension of three-dimensional space. This seems to be equivalent to the task which Dr. Angyal has set himself.

But it would be unjust to suggest that Dr. Angyal is merely attempting an impossible task. What he has done is to raise issues of a very fundamental kind, and to make a number of very stimulating suggestions. His basic principles are probably correct. We should treat the problem of human behaviour as he suggests. Unfortunately, it seems doubtful whether we can at present do so. But this does not mean that we can never overcome our present limitations, and Dr. Angyal's re-orientation may in time develop a vocabulary and set of operations suitable to its requirements.

In any event, Dr. Angyal's work is a very timely survey of the psychological wood, when so many psychologists refuse to look beyond the nearest tree. Some of them may produce useful logs, others may do no more than carve their initials on the bark; but unless they can fit their activities into a wider whole their work is likely to have only accidental value.

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