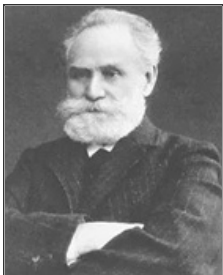


IVAN PAVLOV'S "CONDITIONED REFLEXES"

As the world stands on the brink of modern psychological discovery, Ivan Pavlov's "Conditioned Reflexes: An Investigation of the Physiological Activity of the Cerebral Cortex" published this year in the Oxford University Press, London, represents a major breakthrough in the study of behavior and mental processes. Pavlov, a Russian physiologist, reveals the findings of his innovative experiments using animal subjects to illustrate the development of what he terms 'conditioned reflexes' - a concept that describes how an organism can learn to associate a previously neutral stimulus with a significant event, thereby eliciting a specific response to the neutral stimulus alone. Pavlov, initially focused in studying the digestive processes of dogs, unexpectedly discovered that they began to salivate at the sight of food and in response to stimuli that had become associated with feeding, such as the footsteps of an approaching lab assistant or the sound of a metronome.



Pavlov demonstrated that an initially neutral stimulus, like a metronome's sound, can trigger a response such as salivation in dogs when consistently paired with food, showcasing the process of conditioning. His empirical research provided a scientific approach to studying observable behavior, moving away from introspective methods. Pavlov identified various conditioned reflexes, including those based on time, stimulus intensity, and the ability to differentiate or generalize between stimuli. He explained that conditioned responses could fade without reinforcement (extinction) but might return after a rest (spontaneous recovery). His work also explored how animals can generalize conditioned responses to stimuli similar to the original conditioned stimulus, and discriminate between similar stimuli when only being rewarded for responding to the specific conditioned stimulus. He also emphasized the importance of conditioned reflexes in understanding the brain and psychological processes, advocating for a scientific, quantifiable study of behavior.

Pavlov's insights suggest a structured, predictable basis for much of learning and behavior. This publication, therefore, shows promise to influence future studies on underlying physiological processes. We could perhaps see disciplines such as education, advertising, and even political propaganda, reflecting the potential for behavior modification.

Global Events

This year, the world has seen huge disasters that changed not just the places they happened but also deeply affected the well-being of people who lived through them.

1927 NATURAL DISASTERS

The Gansu Earthquake

The Gansu earthquake, a magnitude 7.6 disaster, struck Gulang County on the Silk Road in Northwest China at 4 am on May 23rd, impacting Liangzhou, Ningxia, and Lanzhou. It caused over 40,000 deaths and led to aftershocks for three weeks, devastatingly affecting the region's economy, society, and environment. Known locally as "when the mountains walked," its effects were compounded by China's political turmoil, leading to 70% and 90% population losses in Liangzhou and Gulang, respectively, especially among women and children. The earthquake resulted in massive agricultural losses and widespread starvation, with ongoing minor tremors increasing suicides. This disaster emphasized the need for understanding natural disasters' psychological impacts, such as nervous shock and depression, while also showcasing survivors' resilience.

The Great Mississippi Flood

The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927, the most catastrophic river flood in U.S. history, submerged 27,000 square miles in up to 30 feet of water for months, affecting over 630,000 people and causing about 500 deaths, mainly in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana's Mississippi Delta region. It revealed the critical role of community psychology in disasters, demonstrating the need for a better understanding of disaster psychology for effective community support and policy development. The event led to major changes in flood control, land use, and disaster preparedness, emphasizing the importance of psychological support and community resilience for managing nervous shock and recovery.

Internal Workings of the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union is moving from a period of intense change to a more organized socialist country under Joseph Stalin. Kicking out Leon Trotsky and his followers significantly boosts Stalin's control, signaling a new era in politics. This period features quick industrial growth and major reforms to better the economy and living conditions. As cities grow with new jobs attracting people from all over, the country sees major social and economic shifts. Yet, the increase in political crackdowns shows Stalin's tough approach to keep power and implement his plans. Despite improvements in education and healthcare, the people face a mix of progress and harsh treatment. The use of propaganda by the government also hints at future studies on its effect on society and individual thinking, suggesting a focus on how propaganda helps leaders control and influence public opinion.

Psychology Stories

CHARLES SPEARMAN'S "THE ABILITIES OF MAN: THEIR NATURE AND MEASUREMENT"



The "g" Factor

In a significant advancement for psychological science, Professor Charles Spearman, a well-known British Psychologist has recently published a groundbreaking book that delves deeply into human intelligence. He has been recognized for his work on intelligence and the statistical technique of factor analysis, which he utilized to identify underlying relationships among various mental abilities. His book builds on his earlier discovery of the 'g' factor, or general intelligence, where he argues that a single cognitive ability underlies our diverse mental skills. Spearman posits that while individuals may exhibit varying levels of skill in specific areas (such as mathematics, verbal ability, or spatial reasoning), these variations are all influenced by the underlying general intelligence. The "g" factor theory originated from his statistical analyses using a method he developed called factor analysis. By examining the correlations between different cognitive tasks across various populations, he observed that scores tended to cluster, suggesting that a common factor supported these diverse abilities. This observation led him to propose that general intelligence is a fundamental cognitive attribute that affects all types of mental tasks. Additionally, Spearman suggested that alongside the "g" factor, there are specific factors (denoted as "s" factors) that account for skills unique to certain tasks or areas of knowledge. However, the "g" factor is deemed more critical in his theory because it represents the global cognitive capacity that influences overall intellectual functioning. Spearman's comprehensive research not only deepens our understanding of the mind but also revolutionizes how we measure psychological traits. This book positions us at the vanguard of an era where measuring intelligence could enhance educational techniques and deepen our grasp of human cognition. Spearman's significant contributions mark a new direction for psychometrics, impacting future discussions and research in psychology.

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ANNA FREUD'S "INTRODUCTION TO THE TECHNIQUE OF CHILD ANALYSIS"



Anna Freud, Sigmund Freud's daughter and chair of the Vienna Psycho-Analytic Society from 1925, published this book that applies psychoanalytic principles to childhood disorders, introducing techniques specifically designed for children. It marks a significant shift from adult psychoanalysis, focusing on building trust and using play as a communication tool to express children's thoughts and emotions. Her work, relevant to understanding emotional disturbances at any age, details the treatment process from start to follow-up, emphasizing the therapist-child interaction. It covers session structure, managing interruptions, and the development of the child's relationship with the therapist, including factors such as alliance formation, transference, and resistance. The book also examines children's verbal and nonverbal expressions and the therapist's responses, enriched by Anna Freud's observations and interpretations of children's behaviors for insightful commentary and practical approach, making it a pivotal resource in child psychoanalysis.

In Vienna's intellectually rich environment, Anna Freud emerged as a pioneering figure in psychology, particularly through her establishment of the Matchbox schools this year. These schools applied psychoanalytic theory to progressive education, aiming to provide a nurturing and psychologically informed environment for children facing mental health challenges. Her book has both sparked curiosity and gained admiration in the psychology field, with experts recognizing it as a landmark contribution that could significantly influence pediatric mental health care. Despite some skepticism regarding the applicability of psychoanalytic techniques and questions about the validity of her observations, Anna's work can be used to support children in crisis.

Discoveries

THE JAZZ SINGER: DIRECTED BY ALAN CROSLAND
FIRST ALL-ELECTRONIC TELEVISION SYSTEM BY PHILO FARNSWORTH



In October 1927, "The Jazz Singer," a part-talkie musical drama film directed by Alan Crosland and produced by Warner Bros. Pictures, premiered in New York City, marking a significant shift from silent to sound films. The story centers on Jakie Rabinowitz, a young man whose deep passion for jazz music conflicts with his Jewish family's expectations. Celebrated for its pioneering use of sound and exploration of themes such as cultural assimilation, familial duty, and the pursuit of personal dreams, "The Jazz Singer" was the first feature-length movie with synchronized recorded music, lip-synchronous singing, and speech. It revolutionized the entertainment industry, transforming how society engages with movies and highlighting the critical role of sound in storytelling. The integration of auditory cues with visuals demonstrated the psychological principle of multisensory integration, enhancing the emotional and cognitive engagement of viewers.

The success of "The Jazz Singer" reflected society's growing appreciation for sensory perception, marking a pivotal moment in cultural history and psychology, especially in sensation, perception, and emotion. This technological leap parallels Ivan Pavlov's studies on conditioned reflexes, deepening our understanding of how sensory stimuli influence behavior and perception. Freud's ideas are also gaining traction, not just in medicine but in arts and culture, including movies. "The Jazz Singer" has sparked public discussions about emotions and psychology, suggesting it might help us understand a character's deeper, hidden depths, just as Freud advocated.

In 1927, Philo Farnsworth, an American inventor, made a groundbreaking contribution to the field of telecommunications by creating the first fully electronic television system. On September 7th, Farnsworth's invention transmitted its first image—a simple line—marking a monumental moment in the development of television technology. Unlike previous mechanical television systems that used rotating disks to generate images, Farnsworth's system utilized electronic scanning of images, a method that laid the foundation for modern television. This innovation was not just a technical achievement but also a visionary step towards transforming how people would consume information and entertainment in the future. Farnsworth's work demonstrated the feasibility of electronic television, opening the door to the widespread adoption of television broadcasting and fundamentally changing the landscape of media and communication. This innovation could be a groundwork for visual media's role in shaping public opinion, social norms, and individual behavior, which has potential to create a new strategy for learning, entertainment, and information dissemination. Television could even become a major part in studies that focus on media influence, attention spans, and the shaping of cultural narratives.



The Columbia Phonographic Broadcasting System: Founded by William S. Paley

Founded by William S. Paley, the establishment of the Columbia Phonographic Broadcasting System in New York, United States, as a radio network in September, marks a significant milestone in the realm of radio broadcasting. Launched with 47 radio stations, it initially started as United Independent Broadcasters, Inc. on January 27th. The Columbia Phonograph Company, showing interest from the beginning, offers support by acting as a sales agent but eventually withdraws due to challenges in selling airtime, leading to financial difficulties. At this moment, United purchases all the shares, and William S. Paley, together with his family, acquires the majority of CBS, propelling the network into a period of significant growth. CBS's inaugural broadcast on September 18 helps the network to expand and gain substantial influence in broadcasting. This event demonstrates the potential of broadcast media on shaping societal attitudes and behaviors at a large scale, such as influencing cognitive processes through auditory narratives.

Journal of Abstracts by Stanley Hall

Stanley Hall founded America's first psychology laboratory in the United States to initiate formal psychological research. The initial Index, listing only study titles, soon proved inadequate for the expanding research landscape. To address this, 1927 witnessed the debut of the first psychology journal of abstracts, offering essential summaries of recent studies, including their key findings, methodologies, and conclusions. This is a major advancement in academic communication, significantly enhancing researchers' and scholars' ability to keep up with new developments efficiently.

Popular Publications

Publication of "On Finished and Unfinished Tasks" by Bluma Wulforma Zeigarnik: Introduces the Zeigarnik effect, which observes that people remember uncompleted or interrupted tasks better than completed tasks. Shows insights into memory and cognitive processes, highlighting how motivation affects perception and recall.

L.L. Thurstone

Publication of "Psychophysical Analysis" in American Journal of Psychology: Contributes to psychometrics and the measurement of psychological phenomena using quantitative methods. An innovative approach to understanding the relationship between physical stimuli and their psychological effects.

Publication of "A Law of Comparative Judgement" in Psychological Review: Introduces Thurstone's law of comparative judgment, a foundational concept in the field of psychometrics. It revolutionizes how attitudes, perceptions, and subjective judgments can be quantified, making a significant impact on psychological assessment and research.

Publication of "A Mental Unit of Measurement" in Psychological Review: Discusses the conceptualization and application of a unit of measurement for mental activities, aiming to bring precision to psychological studies. This work is important for its attempt to standardize psychological measurement, influencing the development of psychometric testing and theory.

The Ongoing Works Of:

Jean Piaget

Academic forums are actively discussing Jean Piaget's innovative work on child development. At the Rousseau Institute in Geneva, Piaget has unveiled the idea of developmental stages in children's cognitive growth, using observations and interviews to show how children think differently from adults. There is a sense of excitement about how his research will transform views on learning, intelligence, and education.

Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler, and Kurt Koffka

Gestalt psychology, created by these psychologists, revolutionizes psychology by suggesting we perceive and think in whole, organized forms rather than just parts. This theory, highlighting our instinct to group experiences and problem-solve by patterns and contexts, changes how we understand thinking and learning, marking a significant shift in psychological research and education.

Psychological Assessment

Psychological assessment had evolved from the work of Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon to Lewis Terman's Stanford-Binet Scales, demonstrating the broad impact of intelligence tests as seen in the Army Alpha and Beta tests during the Great War. This expansion into personality and aptitudes, which involves measuring individual differences in specific skills, introduced standardization and ethical challenges amid debates on the nature of intelligence and the genetics versus environment issue.

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