

THE PSYCHOLOGY TIME

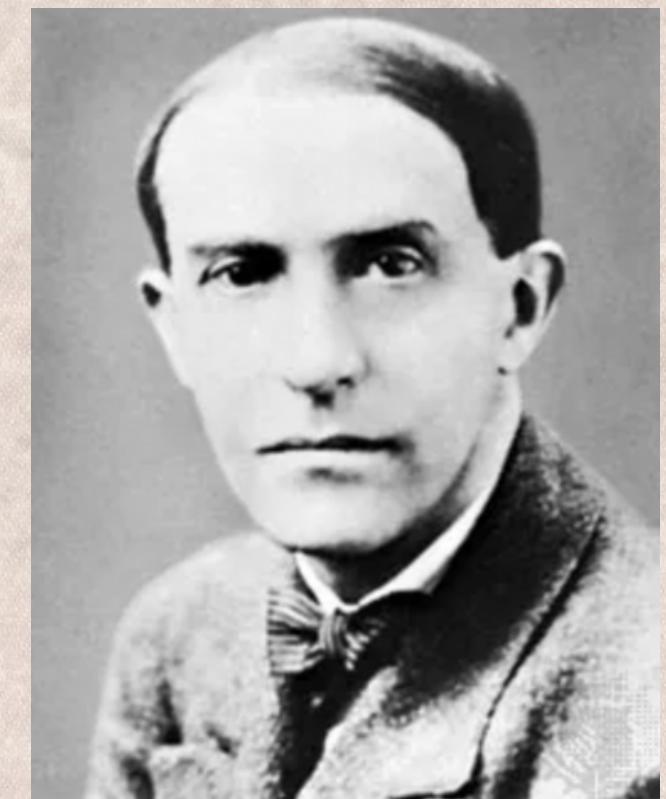
THE BIRTH OF GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY

In 1935, Kurt Koffka published the book *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (Koffka, 1935), marking a pivotal moment in the field of psychology. Koffka, a respected German psychologist who had moved to America in 1924, introduced his ideas of Gestalt psychology to American audiences for the first time.

In his book, Koffka criticized the tendency to oversimplify human perception and cognition. He opposed the reductionist approach of breaking mental processes into isolated components. Instead, Koffka advocated for a holistic understanding of human experience. He emphasized the complex nature of perception and stressed the importance of investigating the subjective meanings that people assign to their experiences. This perspective led Koffka to include aspects such as visual perception, memory, learning, and personality development in his work. His quote, "*The whole is something else than the sum of its parts,*" illustrates the core of Gestalt vision.

The publication of Koffka's book was groundbreaking, offering a fresh perspective on human mental processes. Gestalt psychology diverged sharply from behaviourism, the prevailing school of thought of the time. While behaviourism focuses on reducing psychology to elemental, measurable behaviours, Gestalt psychology criticizes behaviourism's reductionist approach, stressing the importance of viewing mental experiences as a whole.

Koffka and his Gestalt psychology signalled a potential revolution in how individuals perceive and analyze their behaviour and cognition. In the future, Gestalt psychology may emerge as a strong competitor to behaviourism, challenging its dominance in the field of psychology.



SKINNER'S RADICAL BEHAVIOURISM



In January 1935, American psychologist Burrhus Frederic Skinner introduced novel ideas into the field of behaviourism (Skinner, 1935). His paper begins by describing the existing idea of conditioning, where a neutral stimulus is repeatedly paired with a biologically relevant stimulus to elicit an automatic, involuntary response. Skinner describes a new type of conditioning that has never been considered before, one where an organism associates its voluntary behaviours with the resulting consequences in its environment. Skinner also notes that presenting certain stimuli in the environment can influence the frequency at which an organism engages in voluntary behaviour.

Skinner's new ideas are a sign of the growing radical behaviourist movement. Behaviorists are showing a keen desire for establishing psychology as a recognized science, and are approaching this by focusing on overt behaviour. Psychologists are trying to apply highly empirical methods to the study of psychology, doing their utmost to mirror practices in scientific disciplines like physics. As behaviourism gains popularity with its practicality and ease of observation, and with Skinner setting the foundations for a new type of conditioning, we can expect a continuing rise of behaviourism in the years to come.

A DYNAMIC THEORY OF PERSONALITY

In 1935, psychologist Kurt Lewin published a new book called "A Dynamic Theory of Personality" (Lewin, 1935). In his book, Lewin emphasizes how people's distinct interactions with their environment contribute to their personality and behaviour. He also considers the importance of mental processes in these interactions. Throughout his book, he describes how people-environment interactions further our understanding of many areas in psychology, such as child development and mental illness.

THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST

In 1935, American Psychologist Henry Murray introduced the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), designed to probe respondents' mental processes by letting them interpret a set of pictures. The TAT employs a projective method, proposing that individuals disclose aspects of their personality, emotional states, and cognitive processes while perceiving and describing scenes. Murray observed that individuals often show drastically diverse interpretations of the same picture, highlighting their unique mental states and cognitive functions.

The creation of the TAT holds significant promise for various applications. TAT has the potential to serve as a valuable tool in Freudian psychoanalytic therapy, which explores people's unconscious experiences. Additionally, the TAT holds great promise for future personality assessments.



Jun 18

James Watson's second wife, Rosalie Rayner Watson, passes away in the year 1935. Rosalie had been a source of support for Watson, helping him with publishing books and implementing behaviourist practices.

August 7

A monument of a dog was built in Russia, commemorating Ivan Pavlov's dogs that contributed to his physiological and psychological research. The establishment of the monument underscores Pavlov's significant contribution to science.



Sep 4

The first Psychometric Society was established during a sessional meeting of the American Psychological Association. The Psychometric Society is devoted to supporting quantitative studies in psychology, social sciences, and education.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL news

THE SECOND NEW DEAL

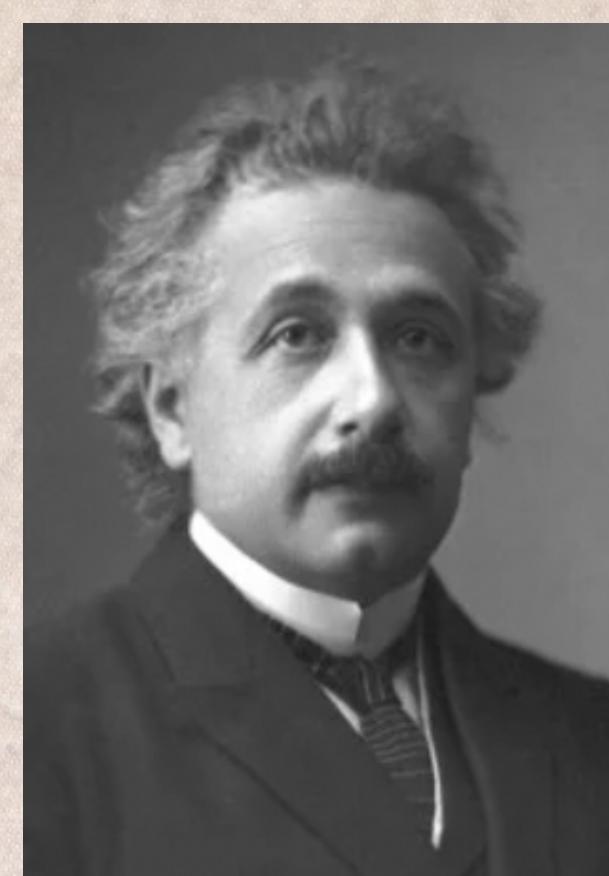
In response to the profound challenges brought by the Great Depression, on May 6th, 1935, President Roosevelt launched the Second New Deal, making a renewed commitment to improving the quality of life of Americans. The establishment of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) program was the central part of Roosevelt's deal. The WPA aimed to alleviate unemployment by providing job opportunities as well as building public infrastructure, including bridges, public transportation, hospitals and schools.

The Second New Deal offered hope during the darkest days of the Great Depression, holding the potential to reestablish the country's economy. As the nation embraced this new era of possibility, the Second New Deal catalyzed technological and cultural progress, revealing people's collective ambition to rebuild and innovate.

THE EINSTEIN-PODOLSKY-ROSEN PARADOX

A groundbreaking article published by the New York Times on May 4, 1935, introduced the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen paradox (Einstein, 1935), which sparked a significant reconsideration of quantum physics. Despite the advancements in studying atoms and electrons in the past decade, Albert Einstein remained skeptical about the field. He argued that quantum physics does not provide us with a complete picture of the physical world. Initially, Einstein predicted that by breaking down a substance into its basic components, one could precisely predict the substance's position and rotational behaviour. However, this is not what he observed.

Einstein asserted that substances behave in less predictable ways than scientists believed by simply analyzing their constituent parts. According to Einstein, to truly understand physical reality, it is important to view substances as complete entities and consider how their smaller parts are interconnected.



Einstein's article not only challenged the dominance of quantum theory but also led to a paradigm shift in the study of physics. Einstein's ideas potentially paved the way for the development of field physics, a field of study that investigates the global and holistic properties of substances.

Remarkably, this transformation in physics parallels current development in Gestalt psychology. Just as Gestalt psychology challenged the idea of reducing human cognition to its elemental parts, Einstein's critique of quantum physics emphasized the need for a holistic view in understanding physical reality. Both ideas highlight the influence of perception and mental processes on people's understanding of the world.

PREPARING TO EXPAND THE GERMAN MILITARY



On March 16, 1935, Adolf Hitler publicly announced his plan to expand the German army, in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler declared that he was increasing his army to a size of 500 000 troops, and was also creating a new airforce. Hitler also reinstated conscription laws that would force German citizens to join his army. Hitler's announcement has put European countries in a state of panic, with countries like France and Italy urging Germany to stop these military developments. So far, Hitler has ignored such calls to stop, and is continuing with his plan.

The harsh conditions imposed by Hitler are causing tension within Germany as well, particularly in the academic sphere. Intellectual freedom is being restricted in German educational institutions, as scholars are limited to exploring topics that support Hitler's views to ensure their safety. The situation has been particularly dire for Gestalt psychologists, who have made so much progress in establishing this subdiscipline of psychology in Germany, but are now fleeing the country as refugees in fear of persecution under Hitler's rule. Many of these psychologists have chosen to start a new life in the United States, which will surely come with its set of trials and tribulations. However, despite the challenges that they may face while starting anew, one can hope that the strong Gestalt movement from Germany will continue to grow and spread in the United States, given the interest that American scholars show in other domains of psychology.

THE DISCOVERY OF RADAR DETECTION

In February 1935, British physicist Robert Watson-Watt successfully demonstrated the use of radar waves for detecting aircraft. Initially, Watt was requested by British officials to develop a radar weapon, in preparation for a potential aerial attack from Germany. Although Watt disregarded the radar weapon idea as being too impractical, it inspired him to study new ways of using radar waves to help the military.

His efforts were fruitful, resulting in an elaborate radar wave system that can detect aircraft from as far as 140 km away. Later in April, Watt received a patent as well as additional funding for the development of the radar system. His discovery of radar detection will undoubtedly be a key asset in protecting Britain from aerial attacks, and marks the birth of a new era of air defence and technological advancement.

PENGUIN BOOKS BRINGS AFFORDABLE LITERATURE TO BRITAIN

In 1935, the Penguin Books company was founded in Britain by Allen Lane. Lane's vision was to make books widely accessible to the general public, by selling paperback books for an incredibly low price. At the time, paperback books were extremely expensive, and reading such books was considered a pastime for the elite. The formation of Penguin Books greatly changed things in Britain, enabling people from lower classes to access the books that people from the upper classes would read.

POPULARITY OF THE COLOR FILM

In the United States, the Kodak company released a new colour film product called Kodachrome. This product allowed people to take still motion pictures and video in color, using very simple camera devices. This was a significant invention because it was the first time that colour film became widespread in the public and so easily accessible.



March 21

Reza Shah Pahlavi made the formal change of the country's name to "Iran", marking the nation's transformational step into a more modernized future.

Apr 25

The world witnessed its first around-the-globe telephone conversation, spanning from New York to San Francisco, with stops in Indonesia, Holland and England. This historic call marks a new era in communication.



July 6

The National Labor Relations Act was established in America to enhance workers' rights and wages.

Sep 15

Germany introduced the Nuremberg Laws, initiating discrimination against Jews. On Hitler's order, the Nazi flags were adorned with Swastika symbol.

Oct 3

The Second Italo-Ethiopian War marked its start as Mussolini invaded Ethiopia on Oct 3, 1935.

Dec 10

James Chadwick receives the Nobel Prize for Physics, due to his discovery of the neutron in atoms.