

TALS FOR Ex-SERVICE  
 Public Health Service;  
 rapy, United States  
 ..... 481  
 lass are detailed and  
 occupational therapy un-  
 . On account of the  
 er stages to give those  
 e.  
 UPATIONAL THERAPY  
 ..... 487  
 session, held on the  
 iation..... 499  
 of the association,  
 fers suggestions for  
 ..... 503

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF OCCUPATION THERAPY<sup>1</sup>

ADOLF MEYER

*Professor of Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland*

There was a time when physicians and the public thought the art of medicine consisted mainly in diagnosing more or less mysterious diseases and "prescribing" for them. Each disease was supposed to have its program of treatment, and to this day the patient and the family expect a set of medicines and a diet, and a change of climate if necessary, or at least a rest-cure so as to fight and conquer "the disease." No branch of medicine has learned as clearly as psychiatry that after all many of these formidable diseases are largely problems of adaptation and not some mysterious devil in disguise to be exorcised by asfetida and other usually bitter and, if possible, alcoholic stuffs; and psychiatry has been among the first to recognize the need of adaptation and the value of *work* as a sovereign help in the problems of adaptation.

It so happened that in the first medical paper I ever presented, about December, 1892, or January, 1893—curiously enough before the Chicago Pathological Society, where one would least expect discussions of occupation—I asked my new neighbors and colleagues for suggestions as to the tastes and best lines of occupation of American patients. The proper use of time in some helpful and gratifying activity appeared to me a fundamental issue in the treatment of any neuro-psychiatric patient. Soon after that, May 1, 1893, I went to Kankakee and found in that institution some ward work and shop work, and later, under the inspiration of Isabel Davenport, some gardening for the women in her convalescent cottages. But I also found there a

<sup>1</sup> Read at Fifth Annual Meeting of the National Society for the Promotion of Occupational Therapy (now the American Occupational Therapy Association), held in Baltimore, Md., October 20-22, 1921.

little of a feeling which pervaded quite conspicuously much of the contemporary attitude toward this question.

Among a most interesting collection of abstracts from the history of American institutions put at my disposal by Dr. Wm. R. Dunton, I find a report on the employment of the insane by a committee from the Michigan institutions, dated 1882 and signed by Dr. Henry M. Hurd. The committee had visited European institutions and had been especially impressed by the use of occupation as a substitute for restraint. But they have a fear that the presence of *private* patients would interfere with the introduction of occupation. The conclusions contain the following statements:

Employment of some sort should be made obligatory for all able-bodied patients. . . . (But) it would be feared that such measures would meet with much opposition from all quarters. . . . It might, consequently, be best to arrange at first for the employment of state patients and to procure legislative sanction of the step. If this works advantageously it will be comparatively easy to extend the system to other patients.

This represents the attitude of many hospital men of the time. Industrial shops and work in laundry and kitchen and on the wards were the achievements of that program—very largely planned to relieve the employees.

A new step was to arise from a freer conception of work, from a concept of free and pleasant and profitable *occupation—including recreation and any form of helpful enjoyment as the leading principle.*

When in 1895 I was transplanted to Worcester, Mass., there was little in the atmosphere to foster interest in occupation: ward-work and a few shops managed merely from the point of view of utility. Only the McLean Hospital had the beginnings of some organized recreative occupations. From 1902 it was my good fortune to have to work on Ward's Island in a division which then was under the immediate direction of an unusually active and enterprising man, Dr. Emmett C. Dent, always eager for therapeutic results and untiring in his development of hospital

principles in  
new atmosph  
understandi  
conditions m  
introduce a n  
state institut

She had be  
in my ward  
ably the first  
to patient, fa  
ler urged the  
care in Nov  
Miss Horton  
to the occup  
the ward, no  
employment

Shortly at  
School of C  
ing in play  
chosen to at  
out the insti  
work and m

It had lon  
patients can  
settees and  
tresses, or  
desire for  
yet not too  
raffia and h  
weaving an  
place of th  
pleasure in  
of one's ha  
began to be  
instead of  
cording to  
the new s

principles in the face of very cramped opportunities. In this new atmosphere I was greatly assisted by the wholesome human understanding of my helpmate, Mrs. Meyer, who under these conditions may have been one of the first, if not the first, to introduce a new systematized type of activity into the wards of a state institution.

She had become a great help to my patients in visiting them in my ward and had started the visiting of the homes, as probably the first social worker with a systematic program of help to patient, family and physician, just before Miss Louise Schuyler urged the introduction of a very eleemosynary type of after-care in November, 1906. When in 1907 a real social worker, Miss Horton, was appointed, Mrs. Meyer turned her attention to the occupation and organized recreations of the patients on the ward, not only in the shops and amusement hall, but in the employment of the available time on the ward.

Shortly after that, in 1909, Miss Lathrop and the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy undertook a course of training in play and occupation for nurses, and Miss Wright was chosen to attend it and she returned to organize the work throughout the institution—with a wise balance between organized shop-work and more individual work on the wards.

It had long been interesting to see how groups of a few excited patients can be seated in a corner in a small circle of two or three settees and kept wonderfully contented picking the hair of mattresses, or doing simple tasks not too readily arousing the desire for big movements and uncontrollable excitement and yet not too taxing to their patience. Groups of patients with raffia and basket work, or with various kinds of handwork and weaving and bookbinding and metal and leather work, took the place of the bored wall flowers and of mischief-makers. A pleasure in achievement, a real pleasure in the use and activity of one's hands and muscles and a happy *appreciation of time* began to be used as incentives in the management of our patients, instead of abstract exhortations to cheer up and to behave according to abstract or repressive rules. The main advance of the new scheme was the blending of work and pleasure—all

made possible by a wise supplementing of centralization by individualization and a kind of re-decentralization.

When the Phipps Clinic was opened, we were able to secure the services of Mrs. Slagle, who, with her successors—Mrs. Price and Miss DeHoff, and Mr. Marion, Mr. Russell, and Mr. Cass—brought us to the level you find now represented at the Phipps Clinic.

This contact with the evolution of occupation therapy gave a good opportunity to see this movement grow to a position which we now want to consider more closely.

Somehow it represents to me a very important manifestation of a very general gain in human philosophy. There is in all this a development of the *valuation of time and work* which is not accidental. It is part of the great espousal of the *values of reality and actuality* rather than of mere thinking and reasoning and fancy as characteristic of the nineteenth century and the present day.

As I said in my brief abstract, we feel today that the culminating feature of evolution is man's capacity of imagination and *the use of time with foresight* based on a corresponding appreciation of the past and of the *present*. We know more definitely than ever that the twenty-four hours of the day are the problem of nursing and immediate therapy, and not the medicines taken *t. i. d.* Somehow something apparently *self-evident* has taken its *proper position* in our attention. Just as in the medical aspects we have come to value an appreciation of the exceedingly *simple* facts of basal metabolism (that is, the simple measure of the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> we produce), so the *simple* fact of employment of *time* has become an important measure and problem for physician and nurse. The most important factor in the progress lay *undoubtedly* in the newer conceptions of *mental problems* as *problems of living*, and not merely diseases of a structural and toxic nature on the one hand or of a final lasting constitutional disorder on the other. The formulation in terms of habit-deterioration of even those grave mental disorders presenting the serious problem of *terminal dementia* made *systematic engagement of interest, and concern about the actual use of TIME and work an obligation and necessity.*

It is very sciences has The ninetieth century home to all this country the interest physics and "applicatio the study of of *behavior* mental form throne of first invade Direct *exp* edged as t were more mental life fullest sens type of rea know how ciplined a is its own able and in pounds of mind or s pulsating (as we mi gible and one of th stitute the is that of world of n use, i.e., v its own n make of organ.

It is very interesting that the progress of all the fundamental sciences has shown the same trend during the last thirty years. The nineties of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century marked the rise of *energetics* (so effectively brought home to all scientists by Professor Ostwald in his lectures in this country some fifteen years ago)—a determination to replace the interest in *inert matter* by a broad conception of the world of physics and chemistry in terms of *energies*, which means literally “applications of *work*.” Similarly, during this same period the study of human and of animal life gave birth to the concept of *behaviorism* with its emphasis on performance as the fundamental formulation of what had figured up to that time on the throne of an abstract timeless psychology, curiously enough, first invaded by science in the form of studies in *reaction-time*. Direct experience and performance were everywhere acknowledged as the fullest type of life. Thought, reason and fancy were more and more recognized as merely a *step to action*, and mental life in general as the integrator of *time*, giving us the fullest sense of past, present and future, but after all the best type of reality and actuality only in real *performance*. We all know how fancy and abstract thought can go far afield—undisciplined and uncensored and uncorrected; while *performance* is its own judge and regulator and therefore the most dependable and influential part of life. Our body is not merely so many pounds of flesh and bone figuring as a machine, with an abstract mind or soul added to it. It is throughout a live organism pulsating with its rhythm of rest and activity, beating time (as we might say) in ever so many ways, most readily intelligible and in the full bloom of its nature when it feels itself as one of those great self-guiding *energy-transformers* which constitute the real world of living beings. Our conception of man is that of an organism that maintains and balances itself in the world of reality and actuality by being in active life and active use, i.e., using and living and acting its *time* in harmony with its own nature and the nature about it. It is the *use* that we make of ourselves that gives the ultimate stamp to our every organ.

This growing conviction that personality is fundamentally determined by *performance* rather than by mere good-will and good intention rapidly became the backbone of our psychology and psychopathology. It became a fair task for our ingenuity to obtain performance wherever it had failed to come spontaneously and thereby to serve the organism in the task of keeping itself in good form.

This philosophy of reality, of work and time, seen in all the sciences appeals to me because it expresses, with respect for fact, the simple and yet most valuable experiences of real life.

The whole of human organization has its shape in a kind of rhythm. It is not enough that our hearts should beat in a useful rhythm, always kept up to a standard at which it can meet rest as well as wholesome *strain* without upset. There are many other rhythms which we must be attuned to: the *larger rhythms* of night and day, of sleep and waking hours, of hunger and its gratification, and finally the big four—work and play and rest and sleep, which our organism must be able to balance even under difficulty. The only way to attain balance in all this is *actual doing, actual practice*, a program of wholesome living as the *basis* of wholesome feeling and thinking and fancy and interests.

Thus, with our *patients*, we naturally begin with a natural simple regime of *pleasurable ease*, the creation of an orderly *rhythm* in the atmosphere (a wise rule of using all our natural rhythms), the sense of a day simply and naturally spent, perhaps with some music and restful dance and play, and with some glimpses of activities which any one can hope to achieve and derive satisfaction from.

In this frame of rhythm and order of time, we naturally heed also the other factors—the personal interests and personal fitness. A large proportion of our patients present inferiority feelings, often over a sense of awkwardness and inability to use the hands to produce things worth while, i.e., respected by themselves or others. To get the pleasure and pride of achievement and use of one's hands and muscles, the feeling of worth-while-ness of a little effort and of a well fitted use of time, is the basic

remedy for  
or the hope  
thwarted p  
be put on  
few sitting  
must give  
that in the  
to work.

and essence  
"fonction  
soul of ma  
ciation of

Our rôle  
tions. Th  
to do and  
are bound  
deserved a  
specific pr  
suggestion  
a minute s  
the lines o  
physician

In a me  
cal inspir  
sources fr

It takes  
real pathf  
all a prob  
and of tea  
through t  
other day  
of the per  
success w  
an ability  
*interests*  
and tact  
fostering

remedy for the blasé tedium that characterizes the indifference or the hopeless depression (that stands in the way of rallying thwarted personalities). I am convinced that a premium should be put on the production of things that are finished in one or a few sittings and yet have an independent emotional value. They must give the satisfaction of completion and achievement, and that in the eye of the maker and of those for whom he has tried to work. Performance and completion form also the backbone and essence of what Pierre Janet has so well described as the "fonction du réel"—the realization of reality, bringing the very soul of man out of dreams of eternity to the full sense and appreciation of actuality.

Our rôle consists in giving opportunities rather than prescriptions. There must be opportunities to work, opportunities to do and to plan and create, and to learn to use material. There are bound to be valuable opportunities for timely and actually deserved approval and encouragement. It is not a question of specific prescriptions, but of opportunities, except perhaps where suggestions can be derived from the history of the patient and a minute study of the trends of fancy and even delusions reveals the lines of predilections and native longings—yet even here the physician would only exert his ingenuity to adapt opportunities.

In a meeting like this, the personal contact of many practical inspirers brings out an interchange of experiences and resources from the side of the instructors and helpers.

It takes rare gifts and talents and rare personalities to be real pathfinders in this work. There are no royal roads; it is all a problem of being true to one's nature and opportunities and of teaching others to do the same with themselves. I went through the occupation departments of a large institution the other day and was profoundly impressed by the wide differences of the personnel and the manifold ways of approach leading to success with the work. It takes, above all, resourcefulness and an ability to respect at the same time the native capacities and interests of the patient. Freedom from premature meddling, and tact in avoiding false comparisons or undue expectations fostering disappointment, orderliness without pedantry, cheer

and praise without sloppiness and without surrender of standard—these may be the rewards of a good use of personal gifts and of good training.

Somehow I see in all this a profound importance extending far beyond our special field. Our efforts seem to me destined to be the soil for helps of much wider applicability. Present day humanity seems to suffer from a deluded craze for finding substitutes for actual work. It seems more difficult than ever to guide with the traditional preachments.

Our industrialism has created the false, because onesided, idea of success in *production* to the point of overproduction, bringing with it a kind of nausea to the worker and a delirium of the trader living on advertisement and salesmanship, instead of sound economics of a fair and sane distribution of the goods of this world according to need, and an education of the public as to where and how to find the best and worthiest.

The man of today has lost the capacity and pride of workmanship and has substituted for it a measure in terms of money; and now his money proves to be of uncertain value. A great deal of activity, to be individually and socially acceptable and exciting enough and mentionable for social exhibition of one's worth, has to be of the nature of conspicuous waste, a class performance like athletics and golf and racing about the country, and a display of rapidly changing fashions. Work and play, ambition and satisfaction, are apt to lose their natural contact with the natural rhythms of appetite and gratification, vision and performance, and finishable cycles of completion—of work and play and rest and sleep.

Our special work, which tries to do justice to special human needs, I feel is destined to serve again as the center of a great gain for the normal as well. It will work like the Montessori system of education. Grown out of the needs of defective children, it has become the source of inspiration and methods for a freer education of *all* children.

What satisfactions you may develop in the guidance in difficult conditions may bring out the best principles and philosophy for the ordinary walks of life.

We  
world  
time, r  
one th  
becom  
salvati  
usually  
have  
time a  
to a f  
our li  
the g  
the pl  
Dr. E  
leadin  
fitted  
mic r  
Prof.  
(Sept  
Hum  
We  
In  
foldin  
the z  
inorg  
The  
and  
and  
and  
that  
fill t  
mor  
sens  
and  
tern  
bet  
the



We are often told, and I suppose it is largely true, that the world cannot and will not move back. A new sense of *uses of time*, new satisfactions from that inexhaustible fountain, that one thing, time, that will come and come, and only waits to become an opportunity used—that seems to me the gospel and salvation of the day. Human ideals have unfortunately and usually been steeped in dreams of timeless *eternity*, and they have never included an equally religious valuation of *actual time* and its meaning in wholesome rhythms. The awakening to a full meaning of time as the biggest wonder and asset of our lives and the valuation of opportunity and performance as the greatest *measure* of time; those are the beacon-lights of the philosophy of the occupation worker. I have often felt that Dr. Herbert James Hall represents the true *religion* of work, leading us to a new sense of the sacredness of the moment—when fitted rightly into the rhythms of individual and social and cosmic nature. Another apostle of the Gospel is announced by Prof. Cassimir J. Keyser in his Phi Beta Kappa address in Science (September 9, 1921)—Count Alfred Korzybski's "Manhood of Humanity,"—the science and art of human engineering.

We might well sum up our philosophy in this way:

In the great process of evolution there is a great law of unfolding which shows in every new and higher step what we call the *integration* of the simpler phases into new entities. Thus the inorganic world continues itself into the plant and animal world. The laws of physics and chemistry expand into laws of growth and laws of function, still physical and chemical, but physical and chemical in terms of plants and in terms of the active animal, and finally in terms of more or less highly gifted man, with all that capacity to enjoy and to suffer, to succeed and to fail, to fulfill the life-cycle of the human individual happily and effectively or more or less falteringly. The great feature of man is his new sense of time, with foresight built on a sound view of the past and present. Man learns to organize time and he does it in terms of *doing* things, and one of the many good things he does between eating, drinking and wholesome nutrition generally and the flights of fancy and aspiration, we call *work and occupation*

—we might call it the ingestion and digestion and proper use, and we may say a religious *conscience*, of *time* with its successions of *opportunities*.

With this type of background, we may well be able to shape for ourselves and our patients an outlook of sound idealism, furnishing a setting in which many otherwise apparently insurmountable difficulties will be conquered—and in which our new generations will find a world full of ever new opportunity and achievement in healthy harmony with human nature.

TRA

Ere

Among  
an autogr  
Pathology  
Society o

The first  
answer for  
the patient  
ence on th  
fact that t  
working a  
ever. Ho  
restlessnes  
themselve  
in order t  
time and  
desire for  
derstood  
way to th  
in work a  
take up t  
which mu

Thirty  
patients  
length a  
tarian fe

<sup>1</sup> Read  
Occupatio  
held in Ba