
In this volume Mr. Tansley endeavours to give the general reader an account of the structure and working of the human mind from the point of view of the more recent psychological developments. The book is very readable, and contains many observations of interest and value; though possibly it assumes more knowledge on the part of the general reader than he can reasonably be supposed to have, and it is thus perhaps more suitable for the informed student of psychology. In the introductory chapters Mr. Tansley explains and defends the dualist conception which he adopts in dealing with his subject, and throughout his book he treats mind as an independent entity with its own laws, energy, and phenomena. While there is much to be said for the point of view which detaches mind from its setting in the physical organization, it also has serious disadvantages which cannot be ignored, and in some respects Mr. Tansley’s treatment of his subject brings these into strong relief. Especially is this apparent in the chapter on psychic energy and the libido, where the author makes assertions with which it is difficult to agree. Thus, in maintaining the necessity for assuming the existence of psychic energy as distinct from physical, Mr. Tansley writes (p. 61): “A navvy driving a pile expends very little psychic energy, but a great deal of physical energy, with each stroke;
whereas a philosopher searching for the right phrase to express a difficult and subtle idea may spend a good deal of psychic energy in the search, but uses very little physical energy in speaking or writing the words. Indeed, if the philosopher is alone, and is content with merely thinking the words, he may spend no physical energy at all—the whole effort is completed with the completion of the mental conation and does not pass over into motor action.” The last sentence in this quotation would seem to be quite untenable, and indicates how impossible it is to maintain consistently an essential difference between thought and action, each having its own particular form of energy. Surely, while the philosopher is thinking, his thought finds expression in a constant discharge of energy through motor channels, as evidenced in the frowns of concentrated thought, subvocal or silent speech, tension of the musculature, and nascent movements which may at any moment issue in explicit activities. Any work, physical or mental, must involve activity on the part of the whole organism and a corresponding expenditure of physical energy. There is at present a strenuous endeavour to regard the organism as a unity in approaching the problems of psychology, and to erect a psychology upon a physiological basis in terms of physical rather than psychical energy, and it may well be that some formula may be suggested which will serve to replace the unsatisfactory dualism with which Mr. Tansley finds himself unable to dispense. Professor Holt has managed to do this with some success in his work *The Freudian Wish*, to which reference is made in this volume, and we rather regret that Mr. Tansley has not found it possible to take a somewhat similar standpoint. We are tempted to make this general criticism of the author's book because, though he modestly conceals the fact, he happens to be a distinguished biologist, and it would, perhaps, have been of greater service to the psychologist if he had approached his subject from the strictly objective and biological attitude that he adopts in his own particular branch of science. As it is, he erects an extremely complex and rather vague hypothesis of the unconscious which differs in structure from that formulated by Freud upon grounds which do not appear to be well justified.

The author provides a comprehensive survey of his subject, and approaches it under the successive headings of *The Structure of the Mind; The Energy of the Mind; By-ways of the Libido; Reason and Rationalization; and The Contents of the Mind*. He does not adhere strictly to any particular school of thought, but bases his views on the teachings of McDougall, Trotter, Freud, Jung, and Hart. Altogether he has written a book which contains much of interest to the psychologist.

H. Devine.


When Dr. Hollander set out on his ‘search’ he undertook a colossal task—one which would have seemed great even to a number of collaborators.