In Memoriam

Mary Cover Jones 1896-1987

Mary Cover Jones was one of the most remarkable people in the history of Psychology. She was born on September 1, 1896 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania and died 91 years later on July 22, 1987 in Santa Barbara, California. Between these dates the field/profession/science of Psychology grew from infancy to, at least the appearance of, maturity. Mary was a major contributor to that growth, and she knew and interacted with virtually all of the important figures of the field.

Mary went to elementary school in Johnstown and was quite proud of her success in such events as spelling bees. As for college she was interested in Bryn Mawr, Barnard, or Vassar, and finally selected Vassar where she became a pre-med major and took several elective courses in Psychology. One of her psychology instructors was Margaret Floyd Washburn, the second woman to be President of the American Psychological Association. At Vassar (1915-1919) Mary was President of the Socialist Club, wrote a paper on the History of Socialism, and considered herself to be a "pacifist."

Rosalie Rayner was a classmate and friend of Mary at Vassar. Rosalie then went to Johns Hopkins University for her graduate work and majored in Psychology, becoming John Watson's assistant. After graduation from Vassar Mary visited New York City and heard a lecture by Watson (to whom she had been introduced by Rosalie) about his research at Johns Hopkins, and she was quite impressed. Mary had considered going to Johns Hopkins but decided on Columbia because her brother was attending there at that time, and she was impressed with Robert Woodworth and became one of his assistants.

At this point Mary was clearly being influenced by Watson's behavioral view, his classic text, *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*, having just been published in 1919. In fact Mary once enthusiastically noted that Watson even influenced the content of the love letters between herself and her husband to be, Harold Jones. She and Harold first met, in 1919, in a History course (by Harvey Robinson) at the New School for Social Research. Both were then beginning their graduate work at Columbia. Woodworth had also attracted Harold to Columbia by an offer of an assistantship. Mary and Harold were married in 1920 (by Norman Thomas, the perennial Presidential candidate of the Socialist party) six years before she completed her Ph.D. and three years before he completed his. They had two children while they were graduate students. Through the many years of their marriage, until Harold's death, they were the prototype of a professional couple working together harmoniously in the same field with mutual interests and being loving and caring parents and grandparents.

Watson in effect was Mary's doctoral research advisor. He lived in New York City working for the Thompson advertising agency, having been dismissed from his professorship at Johns Hopkins University because of the divorce scandal in which he was involved. Although Watson was supervising Mary's dissertation with the approval of Robert Thorndike, the Department head, his name never appeared in the Columbia University catalog.

Throughout her career Mary was quite involved in the child development/education field as parent/teacher/researcher/author. She took courses at Teachers College with Dewey and Kilpatrick, innovators in education. She viewed children as individuals who can profit by educational opportunities planned to meet their needs. In 1924 there appeared the first two reports of Mary's research which were to become classics, and basic to the subsequent behavior modification/therapy field. In the first (Jones, 1924a) Mary tested the reactions of institutionalized children, between the ages of 3 months and 7 years to being left alone, being in a dark room, being with other children who showed fear, being exposed to various animals (snakes, rabbits, frogs, white rats), hearing a loud noise, etc. After selecting children who displayed fear reactions, seven methods, based on the earlier studies of Watson and Rayner, were used alone or in combination to eliminate these reactions. These methods were: disuse; verbal appeal; negative adaptation (repeatedly presenting the feared object for the subject to adapt to); repression (ridicule, teasing); distraction (substituting another activity for the fear response); direct conditioning (associating the feared object with a different stimulus capable of arousing a pleasant reaction); social imitation (placing the individual who feared a particular object with other individuals who did not). Only the two methods of direct conditioning and social imitation produced "unqualified success." The effectiveness of these two methods were demonstrated in a second study (Jones, 1924b) the classic case involving 3-year-old Peter's fear of "furry objects."

Mary's elimination of fear with these diverse methods challenged the existing beliefs about the need to treat underlying psychodynamic states rather than overt behavior. Thus in these two articles Mary presented some of the basic techniques of what was to become the behavior modification/therapy (Skinnerian operant conditioning, Wolpean reciprocal inhibition/desensitization, Bandurian modeling) of the 1950s through the 1980s. In 1974 Joe Wolpe invited Mary to a meeting celebrating the 50th Anniversary of "Behavior Modification" and introduced Mary as the *Mother of Behavior Modification*.

The study of Peter was not considered to be ac-

ceptable for a Ph.D. thesis because it was only a single case study. Mary's doctoral thesis was based on a Watson suggestion to look at babies and determine at what ages various functions developed. She went to well baby clinics in New York City, where mothers brought their babies for check-ups and tested to see at what age they can sit up, hold their heads up, etc. She tested over 200 babies, and her study served as the preliminary basis for the later development of motor and intelligence tests for babies. In 1923 an Institute of Child Welfare Research was initiated at Teachers College of Columbia University and, much to her surprise, Mary received an appointment at the Institute to do research with children, and thus her career of research with children was under way.

It has been in the area of the systematic study of the longitudinal development of human beings that Mary has published and contributed to a major degree as seen in the 1971 edited volume she did with Bayley, Macfarlane, and Honzik. She was involved with three major longitudinal studies supported by Rockefeller Foundation grants: the Guidance Study beginning in January 1928 under Jean Macfarlane's direction; the Berkeley Growth Study initiated by Nancy Bayley and Lotta Wolff in August 1928; and primarily in the Oakland Growth Study (originally the Adolescent Growth Study) begun in 1932 under the direction of Mary's husband, Harold Jones and Herbert Stolz (a physician). The three studies eventually expanded beyond the infant/child/adolescent stage to cover the full life span and are still in process 60 years later. Many of Mary's publications and presentations involved systematic study of the life development. For example, in a 1968 study reported in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, she found a relationship between the drinking behavior of adult problem drinkers and their behavioral characteristics in junior high school. She published a number of articles with Paul Mussen (Director of the Institute of Human Development at UC, Berkeley after Harold's death) on the self-conceptions, motivations, and interpersonal attitudes of late and early maturing boys and girls.

To convey the time length of the longitudinal study several of the participants are now great grandmothers, as Mary herself was. Through the years Mary would call members of the Growth Study on their birthdays. Over 150 of the subjects in the

longitudinal study came to the Memorial services for Mary held at UC, Berkeley on September 16, 1987. Through the years Mary had become quite close to her "subjects," and they felt that they had indeed lost a warm and devoted friend.

Mary was affiliated with a wide range of academic, research, and public service institutions and settings throughout the country during her long and distinguished career. She always felt grateful to the individuals who helped her gain access to new opportunities to enhance Psychology and Society. She was particularly appreciative to Nevitt Sanford who in the early 1960s helped her through a period of simultaneous widowhood (Harold died in 1960) and "retirement" (from the Department of Education at UC, Berkeley) by offering her a position at his new Institute for the Study of Human Problems at Stanford where she worked for five years studying Stanford students and alcohol problems.

Through the years she was invited to present papers at professional meetings both nationally and internationally. She published over 100 book chapters, monographs and articles in a wide range of professional publications. She was the recipient of a number of awards in recognition of her contributions to Psychology. In 1968, with Lois Stolz, she received the G. Stanley Hall award of the Division of Developmental Psychology of the American Psychological Association for her distinguished contribution to developmental psychology.

"Retirement" was a concept unknown to Mary and she continued her professional activities, based in her office at the Institute of Human Development, virtually until the last days of her long and productive life. Mary was an extraordinary human being.

REFERENCES

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