

# AN OBJECTIVE EXPERIMENT

Arthur Kraft  
Seal Beach, CA

The following is a report of an objective, psychological experiment conducted over the past 32 years. The reader should know that the author was not only awarded a Ph.D. in experimental psychology from a large, eastern university but dedicated his entire being to logical reasoning, data collection, and objectivity. He shunned all contact with feelings and took no time for recreation or eating pork. In short he became living evidence that man can approach the efficiency and wonder of a machine.

Experimental psychology is, of course, the only scientific psychology. The lower forms of psychology—clinical, social, and the like—are an embarrassment to the profession. Psychologists from those fields write reports strewn with unscientific terms such as “inexplicably,” “idea,” and even “brainstorm.” Worse still, they concern themselves with human beings! A lofty notion but utterly impractical. Too many variables. No, if one wishes to learn about man, it is best to study the rat.

When a little, white rat runs a maze in 12.7 seconds, he runs it in 12.7 seconds and that's that. One need not be sidetracked by “emotions” (which, if they really did exist, would long ago have been isolated, photographed, and measured in the laboratory indeed an antidote might already have been discovered). For those who would argue that rat maze-running time is not all of life, for those who cling stubbornly to an interest in man, the scientific response is: Study the rat and extrapolate<sup>1</sup> to man.

That was this writer's position until one day some 32 years ago when, inexplicably, he was seized by a brilliant idea, indeed a brainstorm. What if the problem with experimenting on human beings was not really the variables of man but the experimenters themselves? Who knows what innate weaknesses had drawn them to their frivolous fields, let alone how much their so-called training had exacerbated those weaknesses? In contrast, what if this experimenter, who had no weaknesses, were to conduct a people experiment? At

last it might be possible to develop some reliable data about humankind! There remained but one question: What should the experiment be?

Something big, of course. Something that would confirm or refute at least a dozen of the notions of Freud and his bunch. Accordingly, this experimenter planned a study using couples from Freud's three basic personality types: oral, anal, and the other one. To determine if the subjects did in fact perform according to Freud's tenets, he would observe them at close range during, say, mating-behavior.

Unaccountably, when this experimenter attempted to advertise for subjects in a psychological journal, the editor threatened to bring him before the Ethics Committee of the American Psychological Association. The experimenter dropped the project forthwith.

But not the overall plan. Scientific curiosity is not easily quelled. (The term “curiosity” is used with some misgiving inasmuch as it has not yet been fully isolated and measured in the laboratory.) This experimenter resolved to take up an entirely new and different investigation, perhaps an even more important one. If disinterested volunteers were not to be had, then captive subjects must be found. Science does not wince at personal sacrifice. Accordingly, the experimenter decided to sacrifice his family.

It may surprise the reader to learn that this experimenter *had* a family. But he did. He had taken time from his labors one afternoon to marry, and at this point in time, still some 32 years ago, his wife was carrying what was expected to be their first child.

This experiment was profound in its simplicity. The experimenter decided to have two boys: he would reject one and love the other. So simple—and yet no one had thought to do this before. How they would writhe with jealousy in experimental circles!

Think of all the theories about parental rejection and love that could at last be put to the test! There have never been any bona-fide experiments in child-rearing because all such investigations have invariably been

"after the fact." A child goes wrong—torches an old-folks home or something—and the social worker (now there's a term for you!) finds what s/he is predisposed to find, that the boy's father rejected him. Humbug! That is fiction writing! To employ the scientific method one must state the method and objective *in advance*. Now at last there would be such an experiment!

The method was that one son would be rejected and one would be loved. The objective was to see if differences developed in character and personality. If so, were these differences in keeping with Freud's theories? If no differences emerged, the experiment might prove that parents have no effect on children whatever!

The reader will be astonished to learn that when the experimenter proudly informed his wife of the project, she voiced opposition to it! Yes, really! The experimenter recorded, then kindly overlooked her objection as she had not been afforded the opportunity of scientific training and was, as the reader may have gleaned, a woman.

Accordingly, two months and fourteen days later, she gave birth to a son and the experimenter immediately rejected it. Indeed, the experimenter played his part quite naturally and without effort. Whenever the boy asked the experimenter for anything, he was refused. If he asked again, he was beaten. He soon tired of asking for anything from the experimenter. For this he was beaten severely. It was apparent that the training had an impact when quite early the boy developed a morose, recalcitrant, and downright nasty attitude.

The boy's mother registered more objections from time to time. One notation has it that she spoke the following words: "Experimenter, if you don't show that boy at least one ounce of human kindness (a term she doubtless could not define), I'll take him and leave." This statement is on file in the Library of Congress with the other data. (Microfilm, \$8.65; residents of Washington, D.C. must pay sales tax.) Her threat, however, was unrealistic as she was already pregnant with what was supposed to be the second son.

Supposed to be but wasn't. Women! The second offspring was a daughter. Were the experimenter anything but extraordinarily self-disciplined, he would have been furious.<sup>2</sup> There was no provision in the experimental design for a daughter. And, by way of aggravating what might have been but a temporary setback, the girl's mother flatly refused to put the child out for adoption or exchange her for our next-door neighbor's boy born only three days later.



MOTHERHOOD, by James Chapin

There was nothing to do but ignore the girl. In that way, she would in a sense not exist. When the little urchin was old enough to ask the experimenter questions, she was ignored. If she was troublesome, she was ignored. At an early age, she in turned learned to ignore the experimenter and so experimental training was presumed to be effective once again.

Reluctantly, the experimenter's wife gave birth to the second son almost ten months after the girl's arrival. At last! This would be the loved son, the one to whom the experimenter could give all those "feelings" which the laboratory could not see and record but which many individuals claim to have experienced.

But alas, once again a change in the experimental design had to be effected. It turned out, much to the astonishment of the experimenter, that he was unable to spend hours upon hours loving the child. Where he had responded to rejecting the first son with a certain vigor, he was not nearly as convincing when it came to loving the second son. (Loving took so much time!) Conceivably, this could throw a kink into the experiment.

Then another brainstorm occurred to the experimenter. He would love the child regularly, 15 minutes a day every day. Certainly he was not so exhausted that he could not muster up 15 minutes of love after supper.

This would be an even better experiment than the original—to see if 15 minutes a day would bring about any noticeable changes in the two boys. What a break for Freud if it would! Thereafter, 7:00 to 7:15 each evening was designated as the love quarter-hour. The experimenter demonstrated observable, measurable love-behavior, to wit: he would stroke the boy, laugh with him four times, play a game with him, and deny him no requests during the specified time. However, when the boy asked for anything at other times, he was refused, just as his elder brother was. He soon learned to ask for things only between 7:00 and 7:15. This ploy was brought to a grinding halt when the experimenter reneged at a later time on promises made during the sacrosanct quarter hour.

And so the little family grew and matured, no other children being scheduled. The experimenter never tired of noting details of behavior in objective terms. He never tired of sticking to his set policies in dealing with the two children (and the girl). He even noted minor data about his wife such as the year she lapsed steadily into a depression and hardly moved.

It is unfair to skip over the entire process of the experiment and then suddenly confront the reader with conclusions without giving him something of the flavor (flavor can be measured!) of the experiment as it progressed. Accordingly, a few of the highlights are presented here.

In school the elder son developed certain academic deficits. His teachers claimed that in sixth grade he could neither read nor add numbers and that he frequently stole lunch money from other youngsters. Whereas this lad was also reported as being a flagrant bully on the playground, his younger brother was described as infantile, given to temper tantrums, and so on. The teachers, and eventually the principal, opined that the children of a psychologist should exhibit more "positive behavior" and "mental health." Obviously, they had failed to understand these were children of an experimental psychologist! In any case, they made no complaints about the girl. She was remarkably well behaved, in fact, did not speak during her entire eleven years in elementary school.

Now it is 32 years since the experiment (as well as the eldest child) was conceived. It is time to report the final results.

Briefly, the first-born son has had a taint of a criminal record and although he has never killed anyone personally, is serving a life sentence as an accomplice in an armed robbery that resulted in the death of a bank teller. Please do not blame the judge for handing down such a severe sentence as it is mandatory with the fourth felony conviction in our state.

The younger boy is quite different. He has never participated in a felonious enterprise, but it should probably be noted in passing that he took up residence in a mental hospital some eight years ago. He was sent home on a trial basis last month but immediately wrecked the house and, incredible as it seems, actually struck this experimenter (knocked him flat on his ass, as a matter of fact), and so had to be returned for further observation. (Injuries to the person of the experimenter were not serious enough to impair either his objectivity or note-taking ability, the reader will be relieved to know.) And this was the boy who had been given love and affection 15 minutes every day of his life! You hear this, advocates of permissiveness? What good did it do? What good does it do any parents to slave away and work their fingers to the bone and deny themselves for children who are simply born rotten? But I digress.

Some readers may be interested in the girl. She was turned out the best of the lot. She is married and has two children, whatever that proves. However, she is introverted and uninteresting, a dull person really. It might also be noted that the experimenter's wife appears to be in good physical health and still has occasional periods of lucidity.

Well, there you have it. The conclusions, though obvious, will be stated nevertheless. Freud has been vindicated; parental behavior does indeed have an effect on child development, to wit: (1) Reject a child and he becomes a psychopath. (2) Love a child and he becomes psychotic. While there is no need to do so, some young, experimental psychologist may be inspired by the present study and wish to replicate it. 

<sup>1</sup>Extrapolation has been outlawed in West Virginia.

<sup>2</sup>An emotion.

