

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### **A STUDY IN PSYCHOPATHOLOGY (The Secret of the Game)**

**By: Y.T. RAKHAWY, Dar El-Ghad, Cairo, 1979  
(In Arabic with and English Summary, 947 pages)**

This extensive study is an ingenious attempt towards a new, integrated look in understanding many of the ever-puzzling problems concerning man in health and disease. It is largely based on a rich clinical experience, especially with psychotics, and a deep understanding of the phenomenological approach.

The book can be divided into three parts. The first, and largest, part consists of nine chapters. In chapter one, the author introduces his concept of psychopathology, underscoring the biological 'how' of symptom formation and their 'meaning' as essential aspects of it. He also stresses the phenomenological approach as the appropriate method of study in this field. The next eight chapters deal with the evolution of various psychiatric disorders in terms of ego states and their corresponding hierarchical neuronal and molecular organizations.

Although these eight chapters the writer emphasizes in many ways his basic idea that psychiatric disorders are complications of the growth process of the human being in the form of abortion, mutilation, disruption, concealing or undue prolongation of certain phase or phases of his biologic rhythm. He innovated the term 'psychopathogeny' to refer to that abnormal unfolding replacing a macrogenic (and occasionally a microgenic) unfolding. This is directly related to the basic phylo-onto-macro-microgeny normal recapitulation rhythm.

The second part, two chapters, deals with growth, integration and life cycle. In the author's opinion, or what he later on called the Evolutionary Rhythmic Theory, man is a biologically rhythmic structure pro-

cessing information at phasic oscillatory rhythm in the way to achieve an ultimate dialectic growth.

The practical implications of the study in dealing with the problems of psychiatric diagnosis, therapy and research are discussed in the last part of the book (one chapter). Psychiatric disorders are classified into two main categories, biologically active and established, with further division into many subcategories. Therapy is viewed as the process of regulating, liberating and channelling the growth rhythm by providing adequate and appropriate information and enhancing assimilation and ultimate growth. Finally, Rakhawy believes that the researcher in the field of clinical psychiatry must be considered as a proper tool of research in himself.

The writer's critical attitude concerning the fragmentation and dichotomies in the existing psychiatric hypotheses is manifest throughout the book. On the contrary, the study emphasizes the interrelationships among the hierarchical levels of integration starting from the cell and ending with the whole cosmos. In an attempt to bridge the gap between psyche and brain, the author relates information processing to rhythmic brain function using physiological analogy derived from cardiovascular and digestive-assimilative systems.

The interesting point is that the basic ideas of the study have originally been written in a poetic form and published independently under the name 'The Secret of the Game'. It has been added as an appendix to this book. This, with the fascinating Arabic language of Rakhawy, declares him as a literary man as well. Documentation of the study and verification of the working hypotheses generated by the theory and cited in the book are the tasks, the author hopes, of his pupils.

The book presents a new model in psychiatry and is recommended for those who are 'in the fire', continually remodelling themselves and others, and searching for a real reorientation.

**Refaat Mahfouz**