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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 86-60521

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Singer, Dorothy G. "Piglet, Pooh and Piaget" reprinted from *Psychology Today*, June 1972, page 71. Copyright © 1972 by American Psychological Association.

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SIGNET, SIGNET CLASSIC, MENTOR, PLUME, MERIDIAN AND NAL BOOKS are published in the United States by New American Library, 1633 Broadway, New York, New York 10019, in Canada by The New American Library of Canada Limited, 81 Mack Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario M1L 1M9

First Printing, July, 1986

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Introduction

The philosopher's injunction, "Know thyself," has been responded to in the modern age not by philosophy, but by psychology. Psychology, the study of the psyche, is that science which seeks to reveal man to himself. For modern man, *psyche* has come to mean not *soul*, as the ancients interpreted it, but *mind*. It is through studying the mind that psychology seeks its answers.

There have been two major streams by which modern psychology has sought to fulfill its mission: the clinical and the experimental. Freud, the grand innovator of the therapist's art, showed the way for an exploration of the psyche that is practiced today by thousands of psychotherapists. Their method is the clinical approach: careful explorations with a client of his inner life and of his past and how it effects the present.

The experimentalists, on the other hand, seek to plumb the psyche through methods like those of the other sciences: experimental observations that can be repeated, verified, and refined through other experiments. The therapist seeks a truth that illuminates a single life: the patient's. The experimentalist seeks a truth that applies to all of us in equal measure.

Both these approaches to truth have much to reveal about our inner lives, and each can help us to know

ourselves more fully. That process of self-discovery is one of the principal pleasures of psychology.

There are others, to be sure. One variety of pleasure to be found in plumbing the psyche is in the delight of insight, in gaining a new sense of why it is we do what we do. And another source of pleasure in psychology is in gaining those insights through the reading of engaging writing.

In seeking to bring together a collection that could be called *The Pleasures of Psychology*, there are two rules of thumb we have followed. We have sought readings that offer the pleasure of a new understanding of the human animal, and which do so with a liveliness that reflects the excitement of the field.

Because the human animal is so complex, psychology accommodates many, many approaches, from the therapist's insight to the neuroscientist's mapping of the brain. We offer here a cross section of these approaches, a sampling of pleasures from each.

We start with the growing child, looking at the stages of life through which we all are fated to pass, from infancy to old age. To begin, there is a foray into the work of Jean Piaget, who mapped the stages of children's cognitive growth; we see how Piaget's stages are exemplified by everyone's childhood favorite, Winnie-the-Pooh.

There are many dimensions to growth and development, and we touch on several of the major ones. The child is father to the man: Children's ideas about God, for example, shift as they grow, and the seeds of adult religious outlook are to be found in these early notions. And a look at the influence of childhood trauma and difficulty on how children adjust has a hopeful message: Children from extremely troubled homes can emerge not just unscathed but strengthened.

Psychological growth continues through adulthood, and at later stages of life new issues emerge. One set of issues has to do with gender: The identity and outlook of each sex take uniquely different turns and twists, as a study of the bases of moral judgments in men and women shows.

In thinking about thinking, psychologists include mem-

ory and perception as well under the topic, since these mental processes are intricately interwoven with the web of thought. It is enlightening to consider the biases that we build into our mental life: a look at John Dean's testimony during the Watergate hearings shows just how slanted our memories can be. And something as mundane as how we go about answering questions, or the dumb mistakes we sometimes make in, say, a slip of the tongue, offer the psychologist rich clues about thought and memory. When it comes to the thinking that bears fruit in creativity, more complex matters of the mind are concerned, among them the paradoxical usefulness of holding in mind two apparently contradictory ideas.

The flow of thought is a more placid subject than is feelings, the next topic of this collection. Our feelings are at the heart of our inner self; they put us at our most vulnerable—or our most self-confident. We consider here a range of the feelings that sweep over us: feeling good, feeling bored, feeling jealous or angry. And that grandest of feelings: love. All are ripe topics for examination by the psychologist, and all are an intimate part of our experience.

When it comes to understanding how thoughts and feelings come about, many psychologists turn to the brain to seek the physiological roots of mental life. It is in the exquisite links between mind and body, psychologists tell us, that we can find keys to understanding how it is, for example, that some hardy people thrive on the rigors of a pressured life while others wilt. One bit of brain lore that has become common knowledge—the difference in mental talents between the left and right brains—turns out to be wrong; a leading researcher in the area here sets us straight.

When it comes to facing the ups and downs of life, psychology has much insight to offer. The perfectionist, for example, is a prisoner of his own habits of thought and of an unthinking allegiance to impossible standards: He is doomed to set goals he will never achieve. All of us are vulnerable to some universal tendencies that make adjustment less easy: We handily miscalculate the actual risk to ourselves of all manner of threats, from household accidents to nuclear disaster; we each harbor a talent for

self-deception that can crop up to sabotage us. The antidotes to these dangers are one and the same: a dose of insight.

As for more serious problems in life, the answer is not always so simple. Depression, for example, is a more extreme form of mental trap, similar to those the perfectionist suffers, but the way out is not easy without help. The understanding of mental illness requires multiple perspectives: biological, developmental, sociological, even linguistic. All of these are brought to bear here.

And finally, when it comes to group life, to the subtle and not so subtle interactions between us, psychology looks at such oddities of the human animal as the fact that most of us think we are better than average—a statistical impossibility, but perhaps a helpful illusion.

Psychology also deals with the darker side of group life: the propensity to obey, even when obedience and conscience do not agree, and the tendency to agree in order to fit in with a group, even when we know the group is off-base. And, in the widest of arenas, the world stage, psychologists point out how the foibles of the person and the group operate, too, among world leaders, putting us all at peril in this nuclear age.

We offer you the readings here assembled as a rich and varied set of vantage points on the human beast—on each and every one of us. We hope you will find much that is enlightening, and that all of it will be of interest—and a pleasure.

—D. G., D. H.

I.

GROWING

Piglet, Pooh & Piaget

by Dorothy G. Singer

Psychology and literature share a natural relationship because each is concerned with the inner world, with personality, and with human development. This is particularly true for child development and children's literature, where the motifs of childhood are expressed through theory and story respectively. In this sense, the developmental psychologist is a storyteller of nonfiction; the children's writer is a wise psychologist. Each plays an important role in helping us understand children and the child in all of us.

With "Piglet, Pooh & Piaget," developmental psychologist Dorothy Singer brings together influential figures from each of these realms. She uses "Winnie-the-Pooh," a story read and revered by thousands of children for the last sixty years, to illustrate the theories of the Swiss developmental psychologist Jean Piaget. Besides Freud, Piaget has probably had more influence on the psychology of childhood than anyone. In her enjoyable integration, Singer shows that fairy tale and psychological observation are two sides of a single coin.

A. A. MILNE published *Winnie-the-Pooh* in 1926, three years after Jean Piaget wrote *The Language and Thought of the Child*. I am sure that neither had heard of the other's work, yet Milne's story exemplifies the concepts that Piaget had developed through his experimental and observational work in Geneva. In the make-believe world of Christopher