



***Methods of Analysis***  
**Psyentific Analysis**

Stephen Petrina (2021)

It's often said as a truism that “psychology influences every aspect of life” (e.g., Geller, 2001, p. i; Open University, 2021). Should researchers take this to mean every datum and every dataset? If each conscious and unconscious behavior, belief, feeling, and thought is predicated on psychic agents and agency, then isn't psyentific analysis of data the default method? With the expansive increase of psychological complexes, conditions, disorders, stressors, and vulnerabilities—within all animal communities—over the past 150 years, one might reasonably conclude that every analysis of data and experience ought to be psyentific. This was certainly an ambition of psycho-analysis as it demonstrated its value in everyday interactions and research. Similarly, psychotherapeutics quickly expanded its interests from psychopathology to psychonormality and wellness. As justification, the premise was that a study of “exaggerated conditions” of behavior and the mind inform the maintenance of normal functioning. Critics identify these historical and sociological processes of expanding psychic disorders and means of study and treatment as psyentification or what is often called psychiatrization and psychologization (De Vos, 2012).

Just as “science” refers to a disparate range from anatomy to zoology, and as “social science” or “socio science” includes a narrower range, “psy science” or “psyence” specifies a range of disciplines and practices, from psychoanalysis to psychotechnology. Similarly, like health services or paramedical professions, psyence necessarily includes a range of psychotherapeutic practices. What counts as psience, psyence, or science is not merely an issue of certification or license. Symmetry and asymmetry make psyence and science more or less inclusive or exclusive. Basically, symmetry means treating “true and false” or “rational and irrational” beliefs and knowledge with the same descriptive and normative repertoire. This means “doing away with epistemological breaks, *a priori* separations between ‘sanctioned’ and ‘outdated’ sciences” or psyences (Latour, 1993, p. 94). Indeed, is “psychic science” or parapsychology a psyence or pseudo-psyence? Psychoanalysis prompts a parallel question. Readily included as a psyence, it makes no sense to then turn around and continue to exclude psychoanalysis as a science.

As it goes, psychoanalysis is coterminous with analysis itself— from its development to this moment “analysis” is shorthand for psychoanalysis. In early studies in the 1880s and through the mid 1890s, Freud used “analysis” to describe the new method and it was not until 1896 that he introduced the term “psycho-analysis” (Freud, 1896/1962, p. 151). Before hitting on this winner, in one paper alone Freud referred to “psychical analysis,” “clinico-psychological analysis,” “hypnotic analysis,” and “psychologico-clinical analysis” (Freud, 1894/1962, pp. 47, 53, 59; Strachey, 1955, p. 48). Explaining his “first full-length analysis of a hysteria” (i.e., case of Elisabeth von R.), he said the method entails “clearing away the pathogenic psychical material layer by layer, and we liked to compare it with the technique of excavating a buried city” (Freud, 1895/1955, p. 139). Briefly describing the method as “psycho-analysis,” Freud (1896/1962) added that it involves “travelling backwards into the patient’s past, step by step, and always guided by the organic train of symptoms and of memories and thoughts aroused” (p. 151).

Psyentific analysis, including psychic analysis, psychological analysis, and psychoanalysis, suggests an analysis of humans affect, behavior, and cognition. For the most part, psyentific analysis is a method of “meaning-bestowal,” or discerning “what a given kind of conduct means for the actor and how this meaning originates” (Belzen, 2002, p. 27). This is considerable, given that so many aspects of life are reduced to meaning-making (e.g., cognition, culture, learning, and literacy are each defined as “meaning-making”). As well, psyence and science both essentially reduce to meaning-making. However, following insights of social psychology earlier in the century, psychoanalysis demonstrated its utility beyond human subjects beginning with Freud’s and Jung’s analyses of culture in the 1910s. Freud (1913/1950) posed a basic problem in his first comprehensive cultural psychoanalysis: Is there a difference “in principle between a neurosis and a cultural creation such as taboo” (p. 71)? Horney (1936) then concludes, “neuroses are the price humanity has to pay for cultural development” (p. 229). Extending notions of culture as repression of desires, Jung (1918/1970) argued that the “suprapersonal” or “collective unconscious forms the dark background against which the adaptive function of consciousness stands out in sharp relief” (p. 11). This is a basic premise of analytical psychology.

Psyentific analysis includes: 1) analysis of behavior and minds of animals and humans; 2) analysis of cultural and social phenomena *via* psyentific concepts and methods; and 3) analysis of psi and psy phenomena, psychic forces, and all varieties of psy agents or content irrespective of origin (i.e., conscious, unconscious, cultural, personal, social, etc.). Given the range of agents circulating in the present and past, Bandura (2006) is mistaken in asserting that, “in addition to regulating their actions, people live in a psychic environment largely of their own making” (p. 165). This conception also overlooks the vast complexity of phenomena and stimuli added by artificial intelligence (AI), bots, social media, virtual reality (VR), and the web. One can no more “largely” make up one’s own psychic environment than one can make up one’s natural environment. Changes in psychic environments over time reflect a proliferation of psi and psy phenomena and parallel proliferation of psychic disorders (Figure 1) (Pomeroy & Parrish, 2012).

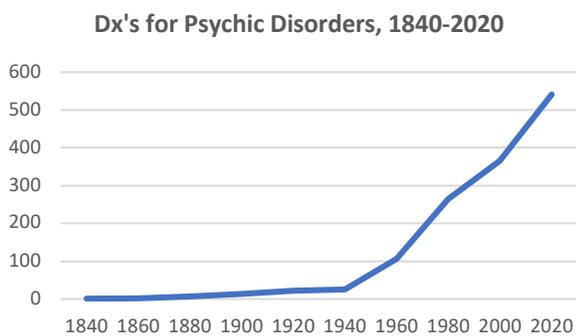


Figure 1. Diagnoses (Dx’s) for Psychic Disorders. Data from *DSM-I-IV*, 5 and Nuckols (2013).

This proliferation is indicative of psyentification but psychic phenomena are nonetheless interesting. Two phenomena, for instance, attention and distraction, are special concerns for children and youth. Attention Deficit (ADD), with or without hyperactivity, effectively became a disorder in 1980 upon inclusion in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III)*. By 2016, 1 in 10 children in the US were diagnosed as ADD (Xu et al., 2016, p. 4).

In 1980, distraction was not a pronounced concern for children but was a criterion for ADD (i.e., “easily distracted by extraneous stimuli,” *DSM-III*, 1980, 314-01, p. 52). For adults, distraction stereotypically referred to the entertainment and media industry’s knack for attracting and holding attention to insignificant content (i.e., “weapons of mass distraction”). Nowadays, nearly everyone 5 years and older can reproduce this psychic phenomenon through an app, device, and signal. Some say this user-with-a-device hybrid exerts unique psychic forces. If the phenomenal casualties were limited to concentration and patience, there would be only minor concerns.

1. What is Analysis?

- a. Poe (1841/1900, p. 1): The mental features discoursed of as the analytical are, in themselves, but little susceptible of analysis. We appreciate them only in their effects. We know of them, among other things, that they are always to their possessor, when inordinately possessed, a source of the liveliest enjoyment. As the strong man exults in his physical ability, delighting in such exercises as call his muscles into action, so glories the analyst in that moral activity which *disentangles*. He derives pleasure from even the most trivial occupations bringing his talent into play. He is fond of enigmas, of conundrums, of hieroglyphics; exhibiting in his solutions of each a degree of *acumen* which appears to the ordinary apprehension preternatural. His results, brought about by the very soul and essence of method, have, in truth, the whole air of intuition. The faculty of re-resolution is possibly much invigorated by mathematical study, and especially by that highest branch of it which, unjustly, and merely on account of its retrograde operations, has been called, as if *par excellence*, analysis. Yet to calculate is not in itself to analyze.
- b. Mill (1878, pp. vi-vii, viii): all the variety of substances which meet our senses and compose the planet on which we live, have been shewn to be constituted by the intimate union, in a certain number of fixed proportions, of some two or more of sixty or seventy bodies, called Elements or Simple Substances, by which is only meant that they have not hitherto been found capable of further decomposition. This last process is known by the name of chemical analysis: but the first mentioned, of which the Newtonian generalization is the most perfect type, is no less analytical. The difference is, that the one analyses substances into simpler substances; the other, laws into simpler laws. The one is partly a physical operation; the other is wholly intellectual.
- c. Mill (1878, p. viii): The phenomena of the Mind include multitudes of facts, of an extraordinary degree of complexity. By observing them one at a time with sufficient care, it is possible in the mental, as it is in the material world, to obtain empirical generalizations of limited compass, but of great value for practice. When, however, we find it possible to connect many of these detached generalizations together, by discovering the more general laws of which they are cases, and to the operation of which in some particular sets of circumstances they are due, we gain not only a scientific, but a practical advantage; for we then first learn how far we can rely on the more limited generalizations; within what conditions their truth is confined; by what changes of circumstances they would be defeated or modified. Not only is the order in which the more complex mental phenomena follow or accompany one another, reducible, by an analysis similar in kind to the Newtonian, to a comparatively small number of laws of succession among simpler facts, connected as cause and effect; but the phenomena themselves can mostly be shewn, by an analysis resembling those of chemistry, to be made up of simpler phenomena.
- d. Watson (1919/1924, pp. 2-3): So far the psychologist on this basis has never been able to do anything but analyse and only his own past states at that. Synthesis, the method sine qua non of modern science has been found to be impossible in psychology. All that introspective psychology has been able to contribute is the assertion that mental states are made up of several thousand irreducible units; for example, the thousands of sensation units like redness, greenness, coldness, warmth, and the like, and their ghosts called images, and the affective irreducibles, pleasantness and unpleasantness (possibly six of the latter if we include strain and relaxation, and excitement and calm). But the truth or falsity of this assertion is inconsequential, since no other human being can make an introspective observation upon anyone but himself. Whether there are ten irreducible sensations or a hundred thousand (even granting their existence), whether there are two affective tones or fifty, matters not one whit to that 'organized body of world-wide data we call science.

- e. Luepnitz (2009, p. 974): The word 'analysis' comes from the Greek verb *ἀνάλλειν* [*analyein*], meaning to loosen or untie. Lacan writes: "Psychoanalysis alone recognizes this knot of Imaginary servitude that love must always undo again or sever" (1949, p. 7). For Winnicott, analysis may untie or free the True Self from its moorings in compliance. For Alvarez Stein, psychoanalysis began to "loosen the bars" in a way that speaks both to the development of the self and to the transformation of subjectivity.
  - f. Hollands (1905, pp. 508-509): This is chiefly interesting as a more detailed and logical account of the method of psychological analysis. Analysis is of three kinds, descriptive, causal, and logical. Only the first two are of use in psychology. In some sciences, such as physiology, descriptive analysis, or the mere separation of an object or phenomenon into its distinguishable elements, forms a necessary and separate preliminary stage. In psychology, however, descriptive and causal analysis are practically coincident. Like physics, it begins with the simplest facts, the causal explanation of which is immediately evident.
2. What is Psychology?
- a. Brentano (1874/2009, pp. 2-3): The word "psychology" means science of the soul. In fact, Aristotle, who was the first to make a classification of science and to expound its separate branches in separate essays, entitled one of his works *Περὶ Ψυχῆς* [*On the Soul* or *On the Psyche*]. He meant by "soul" the nature, or, as he preferred to express it, the form, the first activity, the first actuality of a living being. And he considers something a living being if it nourishes itself, grows and reproduces and is endowed with the faculties of sensation and thought, or if it possesses at least one of these faculties. Even though he is far from ascribing consciousness to plants, he nevertheless considered the vegetative realm as living and endowed with souls. And thus, after establishing the concept of the soul, the oldest work on psychology goes on to discuss the most general characteristics of beings endowed with vegetative as well as sensory or intellectual faculties. This was the range of problems which psychology originally encompassed. Later on, however, its field was narrowed substantially. Psychologists no longer discussed vegetative activities. On the assumption that it lacked consciousness, the entire realm of vegetative life ceased to be considered within the scope of their investigations. In the same way, the animal kingdom, insofar as it, like plants and inorganic things is an object of external perception, was excluded from their field of research.
  - b. James (1890, p. 1): Psychology is the Science of Mental Life, both of its phenomena and of their conditions.
  - c. James (1892, p. 1): The definition of Psychology may be best given in the words of Professor Ladd, as the *description and explanation of states of consciousness as such*. By states of consciousness are meant such things as sensations, desires, emotions, cognitions, reasonings, decisions, volitions, and the like. Their 'explanation' must of course include the study of their causes, conditions, and immediate consequences, so far as these can be ascertained.
  - d. Watson (1913, pp. 158, 161, 165-166): Psychology as the behaviorist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior.... the study of behavior.... I was greatly surprised some time ago when I opened Pillsbury's [1911] book and saw psychology defined as the 'science of behavior.' A still more recent text states that psychology is the 'science of mental behavior.' When I saw these promising statements I thought, now surely we will have texts based upon different lines. After a few pages the science of behavior is dropped and one finds the conventional treatment of sensation, perception, imagery, etc., along with certain shifts in emphasis and additional facts which serve to give the author's personal imprint.
  - e. Watson (1919/1924, pp. xi-xii, xiii): Behavioristic psychology or behaviorism, as it is

sometimes called, contends that the most fruitful starting point for psychology is the study not of our own self but of our neighbor's behavior in other words it assumes that the student should take the view that the most interesting and helpful method is the study of what other human beings do and why they do it. Only by so doing can we ever hope to understand our own behavior.... In other words Psychology from the Standpoint of the Behaviorist is concerned with the prediction and control of human action and not with an analysis of 'consciousness'.

- f. Gray (2018, p. 51): Psychology is the science of *behavior* and the *mind*. In this definition, *behavior* refers to the observable actions of a person or an animal. *Mind* refers to an individual's sensations, perceptions, memories, thoughts, dreams, motives, emotions, and other subjective experiences. It also refers to all of the unconscious knowledge and operating rules that are built into or stored in the brain and that provide the foundation for organizing behavior and conscious experience. *Science* refers to all attempts to answer questions through the systematic collection and logical analysis of objectively observable data.
3. What is Psychiatry?
    - a. Russell (1828, p. 328): treatment of the diseases of the mind.
    - b. *Century Dictionary* (1904, p. 303): The treatment of mental diseases.
    - c. Macpherson (1928, p. 903): the medical treatment of mental disorders, which necessarily implied scientific investigation of their nature and causes.
    - d. Masserman (1946): science of human behavior.
    - e. Menninger (1958, p. 288): that branch of clinical medicine that concerns itself with diagnosis, treatment, and the prevention of personality disorders.
    - f. Szasz (1961/1974, p. 262): It is customary to define psychiatry as a medical specialty concerned with the study, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illnesses. This is a worthless and misleading definition. Mental illness is a myth. Psychiatrists are not concerned with mental illnesses and their treatments. In actual practice they deal with personal, social, and ethical problems in living.
    - g. Campbell, *Campbell's Psychiatric Dictionary* (2004, p. 532): The medical specialty concerned with the study, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of behavior disorders.
    - h. Trivedi (2006, p. 2): the branch of medicine that deals with the causation, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of mental and behavioral disorders.
  4. What is Psycho-Analysis?
    - a. Freud (1895/1909, p. 156): bringing to consciousness the hitherto unconscious.
    - b. Freud (1922/1942, pp. 97-99): Psycho-analysis is the name (1) of a procedure for the investigation of mental processes which are almost inaccessible in any other way, (2) of a method (based upon that investigation) for the treatment of neurotic disorders and (3) of a collection of psychological information obtained along those lines, which is gradually being accumulated into a new scientific discipline.... Psycho-analysis as an interpretive art.... Now, in the first resort, this psycho-analysis was an art of interpretation and it set itself the task of carrying deeper the first of Breuer's great discoveries— namely, that neurotic symptoms are significant substitutes for other mental acts which have been omitted. It was now a matter of regarding the material produced by the patients' associations as though it hinted at a hidden meaning and of discovering that meaning from it.
  5. What is the Psy Complex?
    - a. Ingleby (1985, pp. 79-80): how should we understand the growing army of professionals operating in the psychological sphere? In recent years, the debate over this question has taken some new turns. I shall try to show how the argument has developed from the stage of "critical psychiatry" as represented by the book of that name (Ingleby, 1980a). Not the least of these changes is in the content of the question itself: a preoccupation with

medically based psychiatry has given-way to a perspective in which this and many other agencies (educational, clinical and social psychology, social work and some parts of the juridical system) are seen as making up an ensemble, the so-called "psy complex", through which psychological technology is applied to social problems.... how are we to understand the activities of the "psy complex"? The first task is corrective—to see through the understanding of their own activities which professionals themselves offer. For the professionals' account is strongly biased in the direction of justifying their own actions: it rationalizes the present and rearranges the past into a triumphal perspective leading inexorably toward it.

- i. (p. 105): To define the "psy complex" as an ensemble of professional groups is to commit a solecism which some may refuse to pardon. In its original connotation, the term refers not to professions, but to the discourses which inform their activities; and these discourses are seen as both wider and deeper than the professional practices which embody them. In this article, I shall try to detach the notion of a "psy complex" from the structuralist metaphysic which gave rise to it.
  - b. Rose, *The Psychological Complex* (1985, pp. 1, 9): Psychological agents and techniques are involved in assessment and diagnosis of problems of individual conduct in institutional sites such as hospitals, schools, prisons, factories and in the army. An analogous range of psychological specialisms has arisen— clinical psychology, educational psychology, criminal psychology, industrial psychology, military psychology and so forth.... It was the existence of this psychology — as a complex of discourses, practices, agents and techniques, deployed within schools, clinics, the judicial and penal processes, the factories and the army — which provided the basis for the generalisation and development of 'applied' and 'clinical' psychology during and after the Second World War.
  - c. Hunter, *Rethinking the School* (1994, pp. 127-128): a network of 'psy'-prefixed discourses and counselling agencies... The key to the success of the psy-agencies lay in their deployment of 'adjustive technologies'. These are techniques of reflection and intervention that do not impose social norms by fiat but instead allow them to 'float'— the metaphor derives from the floating of currencies on the money market-to an optimal level. This allows for a non-coercive style of regulation in which individuals can adjust to new norms partly by adjusting the norms to their own values.
  - d. Rose, *Inventing Our Selves* (1996, p. 60): This variability in psychological ways of 'making up' persons is a key to the wide-ranging power of psychology, for it enables the discipline to tie together diverse sites, problems, and concerns. The social reality of psychology is not as a kind of disembodied yet coherent 'paradigm', but as a complex and heterogeneous network of agents, sites, practices, and techniques for the production, dissemination, legitimation, and utilization of psychological truths. The production of psychological 'truth effects' is thus intrinsically tied to the process through which a range of domains, sites, problems, practices, and activities have 'become psychological'.
  - e. Parker (1999, p. 7): the network of theories and institutions to do with the mind and behaviour.
6. What is Psyence?
- a. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (1949/2009, pp. 296, 297): 'psychology' can quite conveniently be used to denote a partly fortuitous federation of inquiries and techniques... 'psychology' is not the name of a single homogeneous theory... Probably some people will be inclined to protest that there does exist some general and formulable distinction between psychological inquiries and all the other inquiries that are concerned with the wits and characters of human beings. Even if psychologists enjoy no proprietary data on which to found their theories, still their theories themselves are different in kind from those of philologists, camouflage-experts, anthropologists or detectives.

- b. Rose (1988, pp. 179, 187): The psychological sciences— psychology, psychiatry, and the other disciplines which designate themselves with the prefix 'psy-'— are certainly not devoid of an historical consciousness. There are many weighty tomes which tell the story of the long development of the scientific study of psychological functioning— normal and pathological. Almost every psychiatric or psychological textbook appears obliged to include an historical chapter or review, however desultory, of the topics under discussion. These texts repeatedly tell us the story of the development of the psychological sciences in similar terms: they have a long past but a short history.... I would like to adopt a hypothesis put forward by Michel Foucault: the suggestion that all the disciplines bearing the prefix psy- or psycho- have their origin in what he terms a reversal of the political axis of individualization.
  - c. Kendall (2000, p. 84): By the psychological sciences (psy-sciences), I mean psychology, psychiatry and the other disciplines which designate themselves with the prefix "psy."
7. Abnormal v Normal Psyence
- a. Renan (1849/1891. p. 171): For it is easier to study diverse natures in their crises than in their normal condition. The regularity of life only shows one surface and conceals in its depth the inmost mainsprings ; in a state of ebullition, on the other hand, everything rises in its turn to the surface. Sleep, madness, delirium, somnambulism, hallucination afford the study of individual psychology a much more profitable field of observation than the regular condition. For the phenomena which in the latter state are effaced, as it were, by their insignificance show themselves in extraordinary crises in a more conspicuous manner by reason of their exaggeration. The physicist does not study galvanism in the feeble quantity presented by nature, but multiplies it by experiment in order to study it with more facility, being perfectly sure, after all, that the laws thus observed in their exaggerated condition are identical with those of the natural condition. In the same way the psychology of humanity should take its lessons above all from the study of the aberrations of mankind, of its dreams, of its hallucinations, of all those strange absurdities that may be met with at every page of the history of the human intellect.
8. Psyentification: Psychologism and Psychologization, Psychiatrism and Psychiatrization
- a. De Vos (2014, p. 1547): Minimally defined, psychologization is the spreading of the discourse of psychology beyond its alleged disciplinary borders. In this way, psychologization is the (unintentional) overflow of psychological theories and praxes to the fields of science, culture, and politics and/or to subjectivity itself. Generally the concept entails some kind of critique, targeting inappropriate psychology (theories misconceiving the human and/or the societal), inappropriate use of psychology (e.g., in inappropriate contexts), or inappropriate users of psychology (e.g., so-called laymen).
  - b. De Vos (2012, pp. 3-4, 10): Let us start with determining three possible critiques of psychologisation, each of them addressing a particular field which is supposed to be affected by the overflow of the psy-discourse. The first concerns the critique of psychology where, as a discipline, it would occupy terrains which are, viewed from another perspective, not psychological. This is the critique emanating from other sciences (medical sciences, sociology, anthropology . . .) on psychology's misappropriating of certain presumably extra-psychological realities. A second approach criticises psychologisation not only as an illegitimate claim to jurisdiction but, foremost, as the impertinent overflow of psychology to the broader fields of society. Consider the overflow of psychology via education and the media to culture and society in general. This spread of psychological discourses could be regarded as littering the human life-world, allegedly obstructing straightforward and genuine ways of living. The third critique not only regards improper uses of psychology, as in the first two critiques but, moreover, a *misuse* of psychology. This critique addresses the, structural or otherwise, entanglement of psychology with power mechanisms.