

The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique

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CHAPTER 8

THE FACTORS GOVERNING PROGRESS

This tendency in the large groups to go on increasing in size and diverging in character...

The Personality Factors

We may end this account of the principles of humane technique with at least a sketch of the factors which govern its progress. The sociological factors especially deserve a much fuller treatment, which may be attempted later elsewhere. But we have enough evidence in this book to form some provisional conclusions, pending the careful examination of the details of history.

The individual personality factors need not detain us long. Two pathological personality variables are known to be important in determining attitudes to, and therefore treatment of, animals (Russell, 1956a; Russell and Russell, 1958). The first of these is the well-known *authoritarian* factor (Adorno *et al*, 1950). This is now known to correlate significantly with hostile attitudes to animals, as well as stereotyped preferential treatment of particular species. The second is a much less well understood factor which is at least partly independent of the first. It has been tentatively called the *revolutionary* factor (Russell and Russell, in press), and finds its main expression *vis-à-vis* animals in a rigidly and fanatically antivivisectionist attitude.

Even *a priori*, experimental biologists are less likely than most people to respond irrationally to animals. They cannot, obviously, lean far towards fanatically antivivisectionist attitudes. On the other hand, their work compels them to think (at least in relation to it) in terms of many variables. This is precisely the sort of thinking which is blocked by a high level of the authoritarian factor. Those with a high authoritarian score are, therefore, not likely to remain, or even to become experimental biologists. If they do, they will be restrained from acting inhumanely by the climate of opinion among the majority of their colleagues--such conformity is a

predictable consequence of the authoritarian factor itself. We have no quantitative data, but in a not inconsiderable acquaintance with British experimental biologists we have encountered only a minute proportion of individuals with markedly authoritarian traits. In some other countries, the picture may be altered by large-scale recruitment of subordinate routine experimentalists without advanced biological education. But even here the authoritarian factor will play into the hands of the humanitarian if those in the higher ranks of the hierarchy are humanely disposed.

The problem at the individual level, therefore, is largely one of knowledge; application may be taken for granted. Two rather subtle instances of this have been given elsewhere (Russell, 1955). As such, the problem merges into the sociological one, which we can now confront.