

SWEDENBORG'S CONTRIBUTION TO PSYCHOLOGY*

Anders Hallengren†

“A colossal soul” who “is not to be measured by whole colleges of ordinary scholars,” Emerson said of Swedenborg. That is still a challenge to face up to, and today we once again take up the gauntlet at this academy, where Swedenborg was himself an active member, certainly the most extraordinary fellow they ever had, a universally learned man with an enormous scope of study and amazing aims and pretensions.

Since Emerson's time it has been shown by whole colleges of eminent scholars how much Swedenborg owed to others, and the importance of forerunners and intellectual environment. However, “the greatest genius is the most indebted man” Emerson observed in his essay on originality, and a follower of none, an original borrower from all, Swedenborg was such a genius, avoiding—like Linnaeus and Newton—speculation that is not based on inspection.

Like Plato in his *Timaeus*, and Einstein in his unified field theory, Swedenborg was aiming at a theory of everything, and in the vein of his contemporary colleague and relative Carl Linnaeus in his *Systema Naturae*, which grew to include the whole of creation, the universe of stones, plants and animals, and the *homo sapiens* that he named, Swedenborg similarly sought to explore nature (leaving the vegetable and animal kingdoms in the hands of Linnaeus, however) starting with the mineral kingdom, quarrying deeper and penetrating matter to the non-dimensional mathematical point and the end of the universe, was offered professorships of

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† Anders Hallengren (b. in Stockholm in 1950) is a Senior Research Fellow in the Dept. of Literature and History of Ideas at Stockholm University, a life member of the Swedenborg Society and a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London and New South Wales. He is the author of a number of historical and philosophical works, including *The Code of Concord: Emerson's Search for Universal Laws* (1994), and *Gallery of Mirrors: Reflections of Swedenborgian Thought* (1998). In 2009 he lectured in Sydney about Carolus Linnaeus's contribution to psychiatry, as unknown as significant, and as a sequel to that work focused on Swedenborg's unexplored position in the history of psychology. Address: anders@hallengren.eu

mathematics and astronomy, presented a nebular theory, and proceeded until he reached THE KINGDOM OF THE SOUL, the *Regnum animale*, the field of his key research project, where every aspect of the human being (the *homo sapiens*) was to be surveyed, the human body being the abode of the soul, the spirit feeling hominess in that microcosm. In search of the essence of being and the human condition in the universe, he then turns from the telescope to the microscope and becomes an anatomist. It is due to the studies of anatomy and the life sciences he is able to do a systematic investigation of different states of consciousness and make a contribution to our knowledge of the mental faculties. He becomes a psychologist and presents a theory of the human mind.

Psychology, the science of the human soul or mind, deals with the *psyche*, which means “soul,” “spirit,” and “mind.” If we define the term according to its linguistic derivation, as *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* does, psychology became Swedenborg’s main field of study. In this broad sense, scholars and other writers have analyzed Swedenborg’s psychology for centuries, some of them even using the term in this way, e.g., Leon James, to mention a professor of psychology, and Wilson Van Dusen, a clinical psychologist.¹ Turning the mirror to the man, others—as the existentialist Karl Jaspers—have approached Swedenborg from the point of view of (abnormal) psychology, scrutinizing both his views and visions along with his mental status. Switching perspective again, and more to the point, it is obvious from his writings that Swedenborg took a particular interest in human behaviour and human reactions, from early until late. In a way, his visionary *memorabilia* can be viewed as the work of an empirical *casuist*, a student of cases of conscience, affection, and aberration, even perversion—as when he horribly lengthens his stay in the spiritual world of *amor scortatorius* to study the *psychopathia sexualis* (to use Krafft-Ebing’s term). In the following, the word *psychology* will be used in a much more terrestrial, narrow, and technical sense, however.

¹ Cf., e.g., Wilson Van Dusen, *The Country of Spirit: Selected Writings* (San Francisco and Boston: J. Appleseed & Co., 1992) and the Honolulu academic Leon James’s multi-volume *Theistic Psychology* published on the Internet. There are, in fact, numerous parallels, ranging from O. L. Barler’s systematic theoretical and practical guide, *Degrees of Life in Man* (Chicago: The Regan Printing House, 1907) to Stephen Russel-Lacy’s *Heart, head & hands: an interpretation of Swedenborg’s writings in relation to psychological and spiritual well-being* (London: Seminar, 2008).

Then we are immediately faced by a serious problem, though, and the odds are against me when I talk about this and address these questions, as if a proverbial academic sword were whizzing above my head. If you go to a well-stocked library or a major academic bookseller and ask for a History of Psychology, and turn over the leaves of all books you can get hold of, you will most certainly observe two things: 1) Emanuel Swedenborg is not mentioned; 2) there *was no* psychology in the eighteenth century—at all! Well, that is my starting point.

Renowned comprehensive standard works entitled *History of Psychology* agree to this point, as those written by Morton Hunt, John G. Benjafield, David Hothersall, Wayne Viney, Per Saugstad, Henryk Misiak and Virginia Staudt Sexton. The authoritative 4-volume reference work *Encyclopedia of Psychology* provides us with a date for the birth of psychological science: 1874, the year that Wilhelm Wundt's *The Principles of Physiological Psychology* was published, but acknowledges a tradition of philosophical speculation about the nature of the mind from Plato to Immanuel Kant, observing that Kant insisted "that there could be no science of psychology," the tradition coming to a halt there, as it were.² This is also stressed by many others, including Saugstad, who observes that Kant's successor to the chair of philosophy at Königsberg—Johann Friedrich Herbart—in fact finally dared to take a more positive view of psychology and published a popular *Lehrbuch der Psychologie* (1816) and, indeed, a book entitled *Psychologie als Wissenschaft* in 1824, "Psychology as science."³

This general view of the history of psychology is corroborated by the Swedish 4-volume reference work *Pedagogisk-Psykologisk Uppslagsbok*, but in a section on the history of psychology in Sweden it is incidentally remarked—just listen to this!—that psychology was introduced as a partial academic discipline in Sweden in the eighteenth century, represented by Andreas Rydelius's *Nödiga Förnuftsöfningar* (Useful Intellectual Exercises) in 1718, and by Emanuel Swedenborg "who in his work on a rational psychology got on to strikingly modern, brain-physiological problems."⁴

² *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 2nd ed. Vol. 3 (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984), pp. 155–157.

³ Per Saugstad, *Psykologins historia* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur 2001), p. 24.

⁴ *Psykologisk-pedagogisk uppslagsbok* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1956), Vol. 2, pp. 1080–1083.

The importance of Christian Wolff and Wolffianism in the middle of the century is also stressed.⁵

Now we are getting somewhere! Rydelius is mentioned in Swedenborg's *Spiritual Diary* as a man who "had given much study to such things as belonged to psychology." Rydelius was one of Swedenborg's first teachers in psychological matters, and as can be seen from the first pages of *A Philosopher's Notebook*, Rydelius's outline of the sciences formed a kind of basis for the scope of Swedenborg's studies and his life project.⁶ In his 1758 work on *Heaven and its Wonders*, Swedenborg clearly states that psychology is an empirical science; there is really no reserve or hem and haw about it: "By sciences the various kinds of experimental knowledge are meant, such as physics, astronomy, chemistry, mechanics, geometry, anatomy, psychology" (§ 353:1).

Now, if we turn to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, Christian Wolff is credited as being (in the 1730s) the first to use the term "psychology" (Latin *psychologia*) in a modern sense, referring to a study of the mind! The modern classic *Brett's History of Psychology* confirms that "Wolff named and defined empirical psychology, though he made no significant contri-

⁵ Cf. Tore Frängsmyr, *Wolffianismens genombrott i Uppsala: frihetstida universitetsfilosofi till 1700-talets mitt*. Uppsala: Skrifter utgivna till Uppsala universitets 500-årsjubileum, 1972.

⁶ "... is multum studuerat talibus quae psychologiae erant". . . *Diarium spirituale* §4698. This passage refers to the prolific philosopher and theologian Andreas Rydelius (1671-1738), the author of a major Swedish work on philosophy, including the five-volume work *Nödiga förnufts-öfningar* ("Necessary exercises of reason/Useful Intellectual Exercises /," 1718–1722, new ed. 1737), of great importance to Swedenborg's development as a thinker, as to many other students of his generation. Rydelius was a zealous scholar and teacher who impressed all his contemporaries. In 1712-13 when Lund University was closed because of a pest epidemic, Rydelius moved his students from village to village to continue the lessons. King Charles XII was much impressed by his lectures and encouraged Rydelius to publish his major philosophical opus on logic on behalf of sound reasoning and common sense among students, the full title being *Nödiga förnufts öfningar för all slags studerande ungdom, som wil hafwa sunda tankar*. It is evident from the excerpt collections in the Royal Academy of Sciences (Codex 36–110) how important this work was to inspire Swedenborg's great project to found a science of sciences, a universal language and a doctrine of series of degrees (Inge Jonson, *A Drama of Creation: sources and influences in Swedenborg's Worship and Love of God*, West Chester, Pa., Swedenborg Foundation, 2004, p. 35; cf. Alfred Acton, ed., *A Philosopher's Note Book*, Philadelphia: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1931, pp. 2–3 including footnote on Rydelius), and to his study of psychology as a number of different faculties, such as different degrees and qualities of perception (Jonson, *A Drama of Creation*, pp. 162, 196–197, 271), including the faculties of perceiving truth or goodness, and the understanding of symbols and emblems.

bution to it,"⁷ psychology still being a subdivision of metaphysics (a rationalist or idealist aspect that Swedenborg the Scientist did his utmost to avoid in his works, whose aim was sensibly and empirically to demonstrate every statement, *ut ipsis sensibus*, for the senses themselves).

Erwin Esper, formerly professor of psychology at the University of Washington, in *A History of Psychology* actually calls Christian Wolff "the first German professor of psychology" (although he was a professor of mathematics, natural philosophy and physics). Esper is one of the few historians in this field who does mention Swedenborg (in connection with Kant), although his psychological contributions are not mentioned: "The intellectual environment in which Kant grew up included Prussian Pietism—the formalized dogmatic theology of the Lutheran church, Swedenborgian mysticism, and Wolffian metaphysical dogmatism. *Emanuel Swedenborg* (1688-1772) illustrated in his life the conflicting tendencies in the Northern Europe of his time; until middle age he was a scientist and man of affairs who made many contributions to pure and applied science, some of which were remarkable anticipations of much later research. But then he began to have visions of heaven and hell and to receive revelations from God; it then became his mission to teach the doctrines thus received: that the essence of God is infinite love; that the two worlds of nature and spirit are distinct but intimately related by analogues substances, laws, and forces, etc."⁸

Immanuel Kant's confutation of Wolff in *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* and other writings made Wolff disappear from the scene, and according to their fellow-countryman Kuno Fischer, the perceptive historian of philosophy, Kant's frontal attack on Swedenborg in *Träume eines Geistersehers* was as much a refutation of Wolff and metaphysics in general, and thus an

⁷ George Sidney Brett, *Brett's History of Psychology*, edited and abridged by R. S. Peters, (London: George Allen & Unwin, and New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), pp. 397–410.

⁸ Erwin A. Esper, *A History of Psychology* (Philadelphia & London: W.B. Saunders Company, 1964), pp. 229-230.

opportunity to kill two flies with one blow, an opportunity Kant laughingly seized, to use Fischer's words in *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*.⁹

And the blow didn't miss its target. After that, Wolff and Swedenborg (The Scientist) were gone with the wind. We are moving in the great shadow of Kant that put Wolff and Swedenborg into obscurity, thrown into the shade by him and his followers. Perhaps that is a reason they were forgotten in the history of psychology.

Nevertheless, raised in a Swedenborgian ambiance William James became a pioneer of American psychology, his groundbreaking textbook on Psychology of the 1890s for a hundred years serving as course book; I read it myself at college. As the (Swedenborgian) psychologist Stephen Larsen has observed, scholars with a psychological orientation have found much of interest in Swedenborg, including both his early work on neurophysiology and the psychological implications of his late theological works, but notes that there are few works that directly address the psychological contributions of Swedenborg,¹⁰ the explanation being that modern psychology is accepted as being only a century old, and Swedenborg is one century older! Or, as Aldous Huxley put it in his book *Perennial Philosophy*, "One of the most extraordinary [. . .] pieces of twentieth century vanity is the assumption that nobody knew anything about psychology before the days of Freud."¹¹

In his concise and perceptive account, Larsen furthermore stresses Swedenborg's systematic consciousness studies, his introspection and self-analysis, the interpretation of dreams, his description of mental life as a mixture of cognitive and affective aspects and a hierarchy of motives, and autonomous parts of the self; the pioneering neurophysiologic work, in-

⁹ "The similarity in fact which he found between the Dreamers of Sensation, the spirit-seers, and the Dreamers of Reason, the metaphysicians among his contemporaries, the builders of castles in the air of the various kinds of worlds of ideas (Wolff and Crusius) gave him an opportunity to define the character of prevailing metaphysical thought and to proclaim a new conception of it as a science. To use an aphorism, Swedenborg and metaphysics were for Kant two flies, which he could kill with one blow. He laughingly did so." (Kuno Fischer, "History of the Newer Philosophy," 2nd ed., vol. 3, p. 232.)

¹⁰ My own brief account can be seen a centennial reply to the first paper on this subject, viz., that of Alfred H. Stroh, "Swedenborg's Contributions to Psychology," *Transactions of the International Swedenborg Congress* [. . .] 1910, London: Swedenborg Society 1912, pp. 151–164.

¹¹ Carolyn Blackmer, *Essays On Spiritual Psychology*, Ed. & Introduction by Stephen Larsen (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1991), Foreword and Introduction.

cluding the importance of the endocrine system in emotional life, and groundbreaking yet for long unknown brain research, the localization of the main seat of psychical activity to the cerebral cortex; the differential functioning of the cerebral hemispheres, and a hypothetical notion of neurons and brain waves.

Martin Ramström at the London Congress of 1910 and many others of the century past have testified to Swedenborg's surprising insights in such neurological and physiological matters, largely unknown to his contemporaries, since he made syntheses of the work of various anatomists and draw his own conclusions. That was his working method, to process rationally and logically the results of empirical investigations and laboratory work made by others. Armchair reflection, yes, to a great extent (logical and systematic like that of Mr. Sherlock Holmes), although based on observable and testable facts and phenomena, and other verifiable data. This thorough and lasting methodology aiming at grand syntheses is clearly distinguishable and is explicit in Swedenborg's own scientific program, stated already in 1720: "It seems to me, that an endless number of experiments is a good foundation to build upon, in order to make use of the labour and expenditure of other men, that is, to work with the head, over that on which others have worked with their hands."¹² Or, to sound his perspicacious introduction to *Rational Psychology* in 1742: "I must proceed by the analytic way, or through experience to causes, and then from causes to principles; that is to say, from posterior things to prior."¹³

That is an empirical-deductive principle he was to follow, combined with rational analysis. Consequently he draws from the work of all great anatomists of his time and those of the seventeenth century, including neuroanatomist Raymond Vieussens and Thomas Willis and many others.¹⁴ His ideal is to find empirical truth, and so he still does in his late

¹² Inge Jonsson, *Visionary Scientist: The Effects of Science and Philosophy on Swedenborg's Cosmology* (West Chester: Swedenborg Foundation, 1999), pp. 40, 214n.; (Chs. 3–4 contain a well-informed account of Swedenborg's psychological work). Swedenborg's 1720 wording is found in Alfred Acton (ed.), *Letters and Memorials of Emanuel Swedenborg* (Bryn Athyn: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1948) Vol. 1, p. 237.

¹³ *Rational Psychology, A posthumous work written in 1742 by Emanuel Swedenborg*. Translated from the Latin by Norbert H. Rogers and Alfred Acton, and edited by Alfred Acton. Revised edition. Bryn Athyn: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 2001, p. xvi.

¹⁴ Swedenborg enumerates his sources in *CEconomia regni animalis*, Vol. 1, Introduction, § 17f. (*The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, I, New York: New Church Press, 1955, pp. 7–8.)

theosophical accounts of things he has heard and seen himself. He is not bent for speculation and in fact not much interested in philosophy *per se*. He was a man who wanted to know. The aim of his intense study of anatomy was to create a new psychophysical theory, and in his research program outlined in the early 1730s he hoped to allow psychology to make the same progress achieved by geography in recent times.¹⁵ For this reason he critically examined Christian Wolff's work *Psychologia Empirica* (1732) already in 1733, and the *Psychologia Rationalis* (1734) as his extensive manuscript notes and comments show, and consequently became, after Wolff, one of the first to adopt and develop the term *psychology* and use it in a more modern sense.¹⁶

From that time on, *psychology* is a term he uses in his mapping of the human body, which he terms the soul's domain, and among his first sketches is an outline of psychosomatics where he tries to find a synthesis between conflicting theories concerning the interaction of body and soul, seeing them in context and as a whole. The term *psychology* is elaborated upon in *Oeconomia Regni Animalis* (The Dynamics of the soul's domain) of 1740-41 (§§ 42, 579, 651), where the concluding chapter of the first part in fact is "An Introduction to Rational Psychology," opening with words that emphasize the psychosomatic action: "Psychology is the science which treats of the essence and nature of the soul, and the mode in which she flows into the actions of her body" (I: VIII), outlining the workings of a vital force ruling it, present everywhere in its functions. But the most interesting aspect of this outline is Swedenborg's attempt to find a unifying theory where the prevalent philosophical views of the soul-body interactions can be combined, and, in a sense, are all right, because causality-theories are blunt instruments, body and soul in reality acting as a system, as a whole of interconnectedness, and he consequently sets out to describe that kind of harmony in his psychophysical account. Discussing

¹⁵ Jonsson (1999), p. 42 & *seq.*

¹⁶ *Psychologica: Being notes and observations on Christian Wolff's Psychologia Empirica*, by Emanuel Swedenborg. Translated and (admirably) introduced by Alfred Acton, Philadelphia: Swedenborg Scientific Association 2009 (1923). Swedenborg draw on Wolff's *Psychologia Rationalis* for "The Soul and the Harmony between Soul and Body" (posthumous), one of his *Psychological Transactions* of about 1742 (Bryn Athyn: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1984); and in *Oeconomia Regni Animalis* the importance of Wolff is still obvious.

the dynamics of the soul's domain, he minutely describes the blood, arteries and veins, the heart and coronary vessels, the brain, the movements of cerebrum in harmony with the respiration of the lungs, the cortical substance, and finally, the human soul enthroned at its seat, ruling the body.¹⁷

His main theme is psychology, using the term time and again, also in the unfinished *Regnum Animale* series (1744-45), which aimed at a complete survey of all parts of the human body, organ for organ, seen as a system—glands, intestines, lymph, liver, pancreas, spleen, kidneys, lungs, pericardium, thymus, the skin and the sense of touch, taste, the Sensorium as a whole; in a following comprehensive volume he minutely examines the generative organs. In a posthumously published manuscript of particular moment, entitled *The Five Senses*, he treats all kinds of perception and the senses of sensation in general: hearing, smell, sight, light and colours—parts of great interest *per se* which have enthused artists, scientists and humanists, from Ernst Bendz to Clifford Curry.¹⁸ (The nature of colours he had been analyzing since 1717 when he wrote his first paper about it, a manuscript preserved at Linköping.)¹⁹

Somewhere at the end of this long series of books, the soul would have emerged in full stature from the manifold of bodily details and functions, but the author never finished this magnificent project. The most thorough treatment of psychology is found in an unpublished manuscript of 1742. It is not complete and lacks title, but has been posthumously published as *De Anima*, on the soul, and as *Rational Psychology*. This work summarized his most important findings, and the complex system remains as a structure or pattern behind all his later revelatory works. This is not only a view taken by sceptic or agnostic Swedish scholars in the past (like Martin Lamm) but also that of the late Hugo Ljungberg Odhner, formerly Profes-

¹⁷ *Oeconomia regni animalis* II:3, §§ 208–366. For an English translation, see: *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, Vol. 2 (New York: The New Church Press, 1955), pp. 5–60 (Intro.), and pp. 201–356.

¹⁸ Ernst Benz, *Die Vision: Erfahrungsformen und Bilderwelt*, Stuttgart: Klett, 1969; Clifford Curry, *Beyond the Rainbow: Reflections on the Spiritual Significance of Colours*, London: Seminar, 1988.

¹⁹ Norman Ryder (ed.), *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Works of Emanuel Swedenborg*, Vol. 1 (London: Swedenborg Society, 2010), pp. 304f., item 22/11.

sor of Theology at the Academy of the New Church, who regarded this work as “a most exhaustive analysis of all that the human mind contains,” a view implicitly and explicitly taken by the Swedenborgian Harold F. Pitcairn, who compiled a concordance to this work.²⁰ Indeed, the eloquent New Church author Alan Grange saw this scientific psychology as a solid foundation of the revelation to come, and termed psychology “a servant of religion.”²¹

Our conclusion is obvious: Swedenborg did not embark on his inward spiritual journey until the foundation was laid, and his psychological system pervades his theology. There is continuity and not a break in Swedenborg’s life, and it is not surprising that he at an advanced age once again returns to the difficult and never fully explained psychosomatic interaction, in a booklet published in London in 1769, actually one of his last works, *De Commercio Animae et Corporis*, where the problem is finally solved in a spiritual lottery by pieces of paper at random drawn from a hat, which “may well constitute,” in William Ross Woofenden’s phrasing, “the most singularly unique methodology yet found to cope with this time-honored philosophic problem.”²² *Spiritual influx* was the most important aspect, but Swedenborg was more than anyone aware of the interaction and interplay between outward and inward stimuli, and the limits of ordinary language and of our understanding.

De Anima is a work on psychodynamics, psychosomatics, physiology, affections, emotions, perception, imagination, sensations and passions, intellect, intelligence, thought, reasoning, judgment, and it especially treats topics such as gladness, sadness, love and hatred, compassion, fear and dread, courage, indignation, fury and zeal, shame and envy, conscience,

²⁰ Hugo Odhner, *The Human Mind, Its Faculties and Degrees: A Study of Swedenborg’s Psychology* (Bryn Athyn: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1969), p. 58; *A Concordance of Selected Subjects treated in the Rational Psychology of Emanuel Swedenborg* (Bryn Athyn: Swedenborg Scientific Association, 1960), cf. the Preface, p. iii—“a remarkably complete analysis of the functions and states of the mind, and for many other philosophical concepts which are not found elsewhere.”

²¹ Alan Grange, *Psychology as Servant of Religion: a Short Introduction to the Psychology of Swedenborg* (London: The Missionary Society of the New Church, 1970).

²² *Swedenborg Explorer’s Guidebook* (West Chester: Swedenborg Foundation Publishers, 2008), p. 196. For a modern English edition of Swedenborg’s concluding treatise on psychosomatics, see: *The Interaction of the Soul & Body*, London: Swedenborg Society, 2005.

will, inclinations, inherited characteristics, temperaments.²³ Sometimes the treatment of different emotions in this beautiful work reminds me of Swedenborg's sensitive and finely tuned dissertation of 1709, showing his early interest in human sentiments and reactions, as does a draft, now lost, on a Method to Analyze Feelings, written in 1714.²⁴

The psychologist Carolyn Blackmer, in one of her well-informed essays on Swedenborg's psychology, states that this *Rational Psychology* is a good example of his characteristic pragmatic approach to questions of growth and learning, as well as "his revolutionary concepts about the unconscious levels of the mind's operation," adding the important observation that all the conceptual framework of his theological writings was already established in the period of the writing of *The Animal Kingdom*, of which *Rational Psychology* was a part.²⁵ Of particular interest here is the note on the unconscious processes of the human mind, a topic she developed further in another paper, and to which there is ample reason to return.²⁶

The term "The Unconscious" was introduced in England in the mid 1700s, that is, in the Londoner Swedenborg's time. In his gigantic book on *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*, Henri F. Ellenberger tells the story, and he incidentally mentions Swedenborg five times, due to the latter's superposition of two distinct but connected realities (between which the great mystic could come and go), and because Swedenborg was one of those mysticist predecessors which Carl Gustav Jung hailed as the pioneers of the psychology of

²³A typical example is the description of shame and its series of manifest psychophysical reactions, which also includes a deeper-level analysis of "inner shame" (§ 262).

²⁴Woofenden, *op. cit.*, 38. — In his *disputatio academica* at Upsala, L. Annæi Senecæ & Pub. Syri Mimi forsan et aliorum selectæ sententiæ, Swedenborg analyzed a choice of Roman maxims, like the following: "To love and be wise, is hardly granted to God," "The avaricious man is himself the cause of his misery," "To the mind that grieves, it avails nothing to believe," "Whatever man's mind commands to itself, it obtains"—because "the mind is the leader of the body"; "Courage grows by daring, fear by delay"; "He sleeps well who does not feel how ill he sleeps." The saying "Good may indeed be suppressed, but never extinguished" inspires a notable conclusion: "Because of envy, virtue rarely brings thanks among the living, but after death their riper fame shines out and sparkles." (See further *The New Philosophy* Vol. LXX, No. 1, January–March 1967, pp. 303–370).

²⁵Carolyn Blackmer, *On Reading Swedenborg* (New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1974).

²⁶"Swedenborg, Psychologist Extraordinaire," in: Blackmer, *Essays* (1991), pp. 21–54.

the unconscious.²⁷ Jung devoured Swedenborg in his youth and would draw on his observations in his writings on the Collective Unconscious and Archetypes, explicit in his Introduction to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

Unfortunately, Ellenberger did not really explain how Swedenborg contributed to the discovery of the Unconscious, which remains obscure. In a quite recent book on the Unconscious, Inga Sanner, the Swedish historian of ideas, has tried to make up for this, starting her account of this historical process with a chapter on Swedenborg.²⁸ The most important points in this context seem to be the following: Swedenborg accounts for a theory of inner development towards a spiritual awareness beyond reason, where the soul (*anima*) harbours an intuitive faculty on a higher level than understanding and common language, and which can only be indicated and approached by analogies and symbols. Between our reason and our will is a conflict, as between our outward and inward self. True Self-knowledge is uncommon, and very few people know about their inward motives. We have inward barriers that make us often think one thing and do another, fooling ourselves, often overestimating our rationality. To be more true to our nature and soul, there must be a harmony between reason, will, and motives, and the inward and outward personality be integrated. We are dealing here with different stages and aspects of consciousness, of which we are largely unaware, and there are parts of ourselves we do not know. Development or regeneration means getting closer to the unconscious parts of our identity as humans and making them more known and comprehensible, getting nearer to the ineffable essence of the soul that is spiritual in itself and is a state of consciousness, as are all spiritual dimensions, including the supersensual worlds. Our major difficulty is our overrated intelligence, since our wilful self-absorbed thoughts gear us hither and thither, and consequently some children are wiser than old philosophers, Swedenborg says.

Or, to quote *Rational Psychology* on cognition and our natural limits: “Cognition is the mediate cause whereby knowledge is acquired; hence

²⁷ Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1970), pp. 168, 628, 665, 702, 730.

²⁸ Ch. “Swedenborg och den andliga världen,” in: Inga Sanner, *Det omedvetena: Historien om ett utopiskt rum* (Nora: Bokförlaget Nya Doxa, 2009), pp. 55–72.

[different] doctrines and schools" (*Rational Psychology*, § 324, end). Knowledge is a slow fruit.

In conclusion, perhaps we have realized something after all. Swedenborg produced an impressive work on psychophysiology, neuroscience, brain functioning, perception, cognition, memory, attention, emotion, personality, behaviour, and interpersonal relations. Swedenborg was one of the first to outline a complete psychological system comprising all these aspects. □