READINGS IN PSYCHOLOGY

by

RAYMOND HOLDER WHEELER

University of Kansas

WITH SPECIAL READINGS BY

HARRY HELSON

Bryn Mawr College

MILTON METFESSEL

University of Southern California

AND

THOMAS D. CUTSFORTH

University of Kansas

THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY

PUBLISHERS - - - NEW YORK

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PREFACE

This volume of Readings has been written for the purpose of giving the beginning student in psychology access to a selected number of experimental investigations. Where classes are large it is impossible for students to make extended use of the periodical and monographic literature, especially when only one copy of an important contribution is available, and it is a burden for the instructor to provide enough references to accommodate every one when suitable contributions are limited in number.

The selection of these Readings has been determined first, by what seems to be the dominant interest in psychology at the present time, second, by their accessibility to the Editor and third, by their relevance to the material presented in *The Science of Psychology*. The organization of the Readings corresponds to the organization of the chapters in the text just mentioned. In order to help the student in understanding the Readings, editorial notes have been written in each instance. These notes are designed to interpret the Readings and to provide continuity throughout the book.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author takes this opportunity of expressing his appreciation to Professors Harry Helson and Milton Metfessel, and to Dr. Thomas D. Cutsforth, for their contributions written specially for the Readings. Professor Helson has presented an original and critical summary of the outstanding theories of Perception in the light of *Gestalt* Psychology, and has included valuable material not hitherto available in English. Professor Metfessel has brought together the results of his technique in phonophotography. His experiments open a rich field for investigation and promise to accomplish for Audition what configurational experiments have been accomplishing in other fields. Dr. Cutsforth has made intensive studies in the Psychology of the Blind, many of them yet unpublished. The case which he describes was studied while he was a Fellow under the Social Science Research Council, 1928-1929.

Acknowledgment and thanks are due the authors of the several Readings reprinted in this Volume either in whole or in part, not only for permission to use their material, but for their hearty co-operation and interest in the project as a whole. Their names appear in the Table of Contents and in the Text.

Acknowledgment and thanks are due The American Psychological Association, and the Psychological Review Company for permission to use the following material: Readings Two, Sixteen, Seventeen and Eighteen from the *Journal of Experimental Psychology;* Readings Fifteen and Twenty-six from the *Psychological Review;* and Reading Twelve from the *Psychological Monographs.* Thanks are due also the *American Journal of Psychology* for Readings Twenty-two and Twenty-five; the American Psychological Association and the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* for Readings Three, Four and Nine; the National Committee on Mental Hygiene, and *Mental Hygiene,* for Reading Five; the *British Journal of Psychology* for Reading Twenty-one; the University of Chicago Press and the *American Journal of Sociology* for Reading Twenty-eight; the Williams and Wilkins Company and the *Quarterly Review*

of Biology for Reading Thirteen; the *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* for Reading Twenty-seven; Warwick and York, Inc., and the *Journal of Educational Psychology* for Readings Six and Fourteen; Teachers College Publications, Columbia University, for Reading Eight; University of Oregon Publications for Reading Nineteen; and the Oxford University Press for Reading Twenty-four. The author also expresses his gratitude to the Editors of the various periodicals just mentioned for their consent and co-operation. In each case where reprinted material is used all rights are reserved to the original holders of the copyrights.

The author is deeply indebted to Mrs. Paul E. Malone for typing the manuscript and reading proof; to Drs. Harry DeSilva and Beulah Morrison for many helpful suggestions, and to Messrs. S. Howard Bartley, Edwin B. Newman and F. Theodore Perkins for their generous aid in helping prepare the manuscript and in reading proof

RAYMOND HOLDER WHEELER.

Lawrence, Kansas,
March, 1930.

CONTENTS

GROUP I. SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

GROUP II. INTELLIGENT BEHAVIOR

GROUP III. EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR

GROUP I

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

READING ONE[1]

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP: AN APPLICATION OF EIGHT ORGANISMIC LAWS[2]

Editor's Note

The readings of this book deal with a psychological study of man's behavior, and with the conditions under which that behavior takes place. The most obvious of these conditions, together with their resulting behavior, are chosen first, conditions that pertain to man's social life taken in a scientific sense. This means that the human being will be studied at the outset, just as he is found in a natural, unrestricted environment. Further investigation necessitates restricting the conditions of his behavior, but the instant this restriction is imposed, the resulting behavior becomes limited. It seems expedient to restrict the conditions gradually, thus gradually presenting more and more limited modes of behavior. The less limited the behavior under consideration, the more general it is; the more limited, the more its specialized aspects emerge. The principle adopted, therefore, in arranging the following readings, is a transition from the more general to the more particular and specialized types of material.

This plan satisfies three *desiderata:* (1) It harmonizes with the point of view which has dictated the selection of the readings, namely, the *organismic* view. Here the necessity is emphasized of accounting for the simpler modes of behavior, in man, in terms of the complex—the parts in terms of the whole. If this principle is sound the logical procedure is to consider wholes, first, and the parts, second. (2) A study of the more general concepts of psychology presupposes less technical knowledge and depends to a greater extent upon the common sense information of the reader. As the more specialized material is gradually introduced, the reader is able to make use of the technical vocabulary which he has been acquiring. (3) The same procedure introduces, first, the cruder methods of investigation in psychology, and then leads to a consideration of the more and more refined methods. Thus the reader is first introduced to the easier problems of technique and then, gradually, to the more and more difficult.

Anything imaginable is a part of some whole, and it is related to that whole. The question is, How? As an object of psychological investigation, man is a part of some whole and that whole is the social group in which he lives. How is he related to that whole? To what extent is he dependent upon it, from the standpoint of psychology? This is the problem discussed in the first reading.

[1] Reading One parallels Chapters II and III, Wheeler, *The Science of Psychology.* Crowell, 1929.

[2] Written for *Readings in Psychology* by Raymond Holder Wheeler, University of Kansas.

Ask a schoolboy, "What constitutes an army?" and he would unquestionably reply, "Soldiers." This is a sensible answer, for if he had ever seen an army, or even a picture of one, the only visible and tangible things about it were men. Ask a military expert, however, to define an army and the answer will be an entirely different one. The emphasis will not be placed upon soldiers, in spite of their importance, but upon *training* and *organization.* The schoolboy did not mention these latter factors, for they are intangible; he probably did not know about them; they cannot be seen; their existence is detectable only as an army is observed in action. But because training and organization are intangible they are none the less real to the military man who understands them. The schoolboy did not see the army as a unit, a whole. He noticed only the parts, and if he saw *all the parts,* the complete whole would not be obvious to him. The military man, however, sees the whole and recognizes that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. An army is more than an aggregate of soldiers; it is an organized group. The "more" that must be considered over and above the parts is precisely the *organization* of the parts within the whole.

It is not easy to apprehend, fully, the significance of the word "organization." When the phrase "organized whole" is used, parts are implied that are in constant relationship to each other and to the whole. Each soldier in the army has certain duties to perform that supplement the duties of all the others, so that in the end a feat can be accomplished, a purpose fulfilled, that without co-operation would be impossible. The army executes a performance which the same number of unorganized men would be incapable of carrying out. The different tasks of different members of the group put each man into a particular relationship to the others and to the army as a unit.

The concept of organization has thus introduced the idea of relationship, a concept not any simpler to understand than organization itself. Relationship signifies a situation that is dynamic in character; it signifies action, or the possibilities of action. The various tasks which each soldier has learned to perform in co-operation with his comrades places him in constant dynamic relationship to them. The relationship to them is that of doing a particular thing at the right time, and it is a dynamic relationship, for it reveals itself in a particular kind of action that depends, for its significance and effect, upon what the other men are doing. His relationship to the whole is also

dynamic in that his is an activity that fits properly into the total scheme. His duties mean nothing except as they are defined by the objective of the entire army. The whole is not only more than the sum of its parts, but the activities of the parts are determined by the nature of the whole.

Ask a beginning student in psychology to define a social group and his answer would probably be much like the schoolboy's. The social group would be regarded as nothing more than an aggregation of individuals whether the group be a family, a tribe, a fraternity, a nation, or a race. Individuals would be considered elements or atoms of the group, and the group would be defined in terms of these atoms.

Then, if the student were asked to state how a person came to be an individual he would probably wonder what the question was all about. Naturally, he would think, a person is born an individual; he is a man possessing an innate personality; throughout he is a product of inheritance. It would not occur to the student that possibly a person could no more acquire a personality in the absence of the social group than a man could become a soldier without being in an army. It would be sensible enough for him to assume that an infant, developing in absolute isolation, would acquire all the attributes and properties of human nature: intelligence, skill, morality, self-consciousness and a host of attitudes such as aggressiveness, modesty, acquisitiveness, and shyness. But, like the schoolboy, the beginning student has had no occasion to study the less tangible but none the less real facts of the case. On the other hand the trained psychologist, like the trained military man, sees organization and relationships in the social group that give to the individual the attributes of a human being, just as the army gives to a man the attributes of a soldier.

Consider first any of the qualities of human nature known as traits of character, aggressiveness for example. An aggressive person is one who pushes himself forward in his dealings with others; he assumes leadership in a form of activity in which groups participate; he outwits his business rival; opens and maintains conversations with his companions; leads in a game; suggests things for others to do; and opens the attack in a competitive enterprise. In short, aggressiveness is an attitude *toward others.* It is a dynamic relationship exhibited in the form of behavior, and sustained toward the group in which the individual lives. In the absence of other human beings, to be

aggressive would mean nothing. It is a quality quite properly referred to a single human being, but it depends upon a *society*, a whole of which the individual is a part.

Take the trait of modesty. In all of its different meanings—bashfulness, reserve, humility, decency of thought and action—it describes the behavior of one person toward another or toward a group. One is neither modest nor immodest in his behavior toward a tree. The word has no significance except as it applies to a dynamic give-and-take-process between human beings. Again *a society* is the condition that defines the trait; indeed, it is the outstanding source of the trait, for unless a social situation prevailed there would be no quality of human nature known as modesty. Modesty is not something existing inside of human beings; it is a dynamic relationship existing between them; a mode of behavior of one person toward another. Society, composed of human-beings-in-relation, imparts this aspect of human nature to the individual.

In like fashion it would be possible to run the entire gamut of character-traits and to show in each case that the trait is a product of society. But there is more concrete proof that human nature is a social phenomenon, primarily, and that the individual is an individual by virtue of his membership in a group. Infants raised in isolation lack personality in proportion to the extent of their isolation. The story is told of two girls found living in a cave in India, with only wolves as companions. One of the girls was evidently about twelve years of age, and the other, eight. How they came to be living there was a mystery and no one in the vicinity seemed to know how long they had been isolated. According to reports,[3] these abandoned children had no language; the only sounds they could utter were guttural-like growls and weird cries. In their habits they were more like animals than human beings. They ate from the ground, as wolves do, and seldom used their hands. They did not walk erect. They were terrified when their discoverers captured them, and bit and scratched in self-defense. They were taken to an orphanage where attempts were made to civilize them. At first they refused to wear clothes. They took no interest in the other children, in fact, in no human beings other than the matron, save for infants in the creeping stage. The latter were a source of interest, for they were creatures which the "wolf-girls"

[3] Squires, Paul C., "'Wolf Children' of India," *Amer. Jour. of Psychol.*, Vol. 38, 1927, 313-314.

could understand. They would romp around with them on hands and knees, but if the infants did something which evidently seemed strange the "wolf-girls" would pounce upon them and bite them.

If this account is true, and there is no reason to believe that it is not reliable in its essential points, the fact under discussion is illustrated in two ways. First, the orphans possessed no exclusively human characteristics other than the few which could be derived from their own society, because they lacked a human environment. Second, in their behavior they were more like animals than human beings, because they had lived in an animal society. In each case the character of the whole conditioned the character of its parts.

The thesis has been presented that human nature is not an endowment from heredity. To be sure, the infant enters the world with a capacity to grow, to absorb nourishment, and to maintain the organization of his energies, but the direction of that growth and the form of organization of these energies are strictly products of group life, so far as their psychological aspects are concerned. There are no innate properties of the nervous system, yet known, that guarantee a personality, other than a complexity and specialization of structure that make possible highly intricate modes of behavior. The hypothetical man, developing in isolation, would exhibit no traits of character, no intelligence, skill, morality or self-consciousness, and no attributes like aggressiveness, modesty, acquisitiveness, and shyness. He would not exhibit these traits because there would be no social conditions present to create them.

It is possible to summarize the relationships of the individual to the group in the form of definite laws. These are known as *organismic* laws because they rest upon the fact that a society is an organism, or in other words, an organized whole. A discussion of these laws will bring out many details intended to illustrate how the individual acquires a personality and why he behaves like a human being.

First organismic law: The whole is more than the sum of its parts; it possesses properties and exhibits behavior which its parts, taken alone, do not exhibit. In the illustration of the army it was evident that the whole is more than the sum of its parts and that organization describes the "something more." But this is not all. With organization come new properties not possessed by the parts. In the army these properties may be

described as a fitness to achieve particular goals, oneness of purpose, and a strength that comes with unity. Organization, then, takes on properties in its own right; the whole possesses attributes that are unique.

Before applying this law to the problem of the social group, as such, consider another example of the same principle. "Consciousness" is a property of living organisms of a certain level of complexity. By "consciousness" is meant a mode of behavior of the organism-as-a-whole toward the forces of a physical and social environment. This property, or mode of behavior, is not exhibited by isolated parts of the organism. A man's brain, taken out and laid on the table, would not think; an eye, dissected out, would not see; a hand, severed from the body, would not be capable of feeling anything. And if the organism were completely out of contact with its environment the property of "consciousness" would not, it is believed, be exhibited.

This same principle, in fact, holds in the physical realm. Reduce water to its ingredients, hydrogen and oxygen, and note the difference between the whole and its isolated parts. Water, an organized molecule, assumes the form of a liquid at normal temperatures; it enters into a variety of particular relationships with other chemical compounds; it sustains life; turns water wheels; holds substances in suspension; and dissolves solids. Compare these modes of behavior with those of the two gases, hydrogen and oxygen. How different they are!

Similarly, social groups, as organized wholes, possess properties and exhibit behavior not characteristic of human beings in isolation. *First,* human nature is one of these properties. Strange as it may seem it is primarily a group, not an individual attribute, for if it were the latter, isolated human beings would possess it. Accordingly, individuals take on their human nature by virtue of their membership in the group. Human nature is a pattern, a group phenomenon, and pertains to the individual only as a part of the whole. *Second,* there are specific modes of behavior that characterize this pattern of human nature. Among them are folkways. Folkways are correct ways of doing things; they are group habits carried out, to be sure, by means of individuals within the group, for that is the way in which all wholes operate, namely, through their parts. The important point to be remembered, here, is the fact that the behavior of the individual in conforming to the group habit represents a dynamic relationship of that individual to the whole of which

he is a part. Take the matter of dress. It would make no difference to a man living off by himself whether he wore trousers or a skirt, so long as he was comfortable. A man dresses in accordance with the group to which he belongs. Dressing in certain ways is social behavior; it is a unique property of groups, and it is possessed by individuals only as members of the group. Folkways are uniquely group phenomena.

So too, with elaborate forms of group behavior, like the *mores*. Mores are folkways that have long been practiced and have been raised to the plane of doctrines. Religious observances and political faiths are illustrations. A hypothetical man, reared in isolation, would certainly not exhibit any political behavior, and it is almost as certain that he would have no religion. It is a commonplace fact that a person born and raised in a Catholic family generally remains a Catholic; raised in a Methodist home and community, he generally remains a Methodist. Exceptions in each case can always be traced to outside social influences.

Folkways and mores are relatively permanent characteristics of group life, but even temporary groups, formed by the circumstances of the moment and organized only for the time being, take on properties of organized wholes. The crowd is a good example of a temporary group. The fact that individuals in a crowd will execute performances that when alone they would repudiate, proves the point. The excitement, suggestibility, hostility, egotism, primitiveness and desire of flattery exhibited by the crowd are characteristics that pertain to the group as such; they are properties of the whole, over and above the individuals.

Public opinion, morality and race feeling are also unique properties of groups. Again, a hypothetical man in isolation would be neither moral nor immoral in his reactions because there would be no pattern of human nature to condition the morality of his conduct. It would make no difference to any one if he cut down a tree, or even if he committed suicide. It is evident that a thousand hypothetical individuals, scattered over the land far enough apart to prevent any kind of contact and any knowledge of each other's existence, would have no folkways, no mores, no public opinion, no politics, no right and wrong ways of doing things, no doctrines. But let these same individuals live together in an organized group and all of these phenomena forthwith appear. In the first case there is no pat-