

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY INTERPRETED

By

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PREFACE

This volume is intended for students who are beginning the study of social psychology. As the title indicates it is an introduction to social psychology. This work has grown out of the author's experience in teaching this particular phase of psychology to undergraduates. The volume attempts to supply what the author feels is a genuine need, namely, a survey of leading problems that in one form or another have engaged the attention of students in this field. Social psychology, in some respects the most important of all psychologies, is characterized by an indefiniteness of both subject-matter and method unknown in any other branch of science. These two leading problems comprehend all others. As long as the student is ignorant of their origin, he can be only a reader of books. As long as they remain indefinite, he may be expected to become a learner of this or that aspect of social psychology without becoming in any real sense a student.

The nature of social psychology is such that it cannot in its present stage of development be known without recourse to its history. For this reason considerable space has been given to historical considerations. The close relation of social psychology to sociology, history and anthropology is sufficient reason for pursuing it from a historical point of view.

Social psychology on the other hand is a living subject. For this reason the student should be taught to discover it in the daily lives of communities and individuals. The major illustrations in the text are generally presented at length for the purpose of illustrating methods of study. It is the author's conviction that in the study of social psychology, class room discussions may be conveniently supplemented by the study of concrete cases. Students should be required to make detailed reports of specific social situations. In this respect the teacher of social psychology is especially favored—his laboratory is all about him. He cannot escape it even if he would; his very

class room with its members is a living workable laboratory. In fact the work for a whole semester of laboratory instruction need not extend beyond the college campus.

Numerous cross references have been made throughout. While these may appear unnecessary repetitions (and they certainly are for those familiar with the subject) they are made deliberately in order to emphasize certain fundamental aspects, or to illustrate their application in different connections, or still again to show their limitations. These aspects could not conveniently be shown at once, so it seemed best to treat them with as much sympathy as possible in one connection, and to show their relative worth in comparison with other aspects in another connection. In some places this method of treatment has amounted almost to contradictions of principles themselves. Reference is made especially to the separate treatments of the two fundamental questions of subject-matter and method, which are frequently discussed. The author feels that they are still unsettled questions and that they should finally be grasped as such by the student who has been kept in mind throughout. To use a structural analogy, the problems of subject-matter and method are the foundation materials or corner stones of the edifice of social psychology; these materials are quarried from many separate deposits: biology, anthropology, sociology, economics, history, theology, etc.

The reader will in all probability feel that whereas several questions are raised, none are answered. The object of this study is to state problems, not to answer them; to point out the way to solutions, not to make them. In the field of social psychology, particularly, dogmatism implied or asserted has dominated too completely. The author's attitude in regard to the problems, while disconcerting to students, especially beginners in social psychology to whom the work is primarily addressed, cannot be avoided. The reason is obvious: at the present time there is no answer for most of the questions. There has been as yet very little reliable experimental work done in social psychology. This work must await definitely stated problems; social situations must first be defined; human reactions must be observed under controlled conditions. Until this is done on a larger scale, social psychologies must remain as they are today,—bundles of theories discussed pro and con, descriptions of social events, arrays of vital, economic or political statistics, discussions about social institu-

tions, metaphysical disputes about mind and matter, etc., etc. The big problem is to draw some line, if possible, around phenomena that may be called social and to separate these, for purposes of study, from phenomena that are only partly social.

It may be that the subject-matter represented in these chapters will one day be known as two divisions of science: (1) group psychology which studies aggregates in reference to culture, and (2) social psychology which studies individuals and aggregates in reference to definite periods during which social interaction is going on. The former will in turn be studied under many heads: (1) the psychology of religion, (2) the psychology of war, (3) the psychology of art, (4) the psychology of industry, etc.

The pedagogy of social psychology is yet to be discovered. There is no text that adequately portrays the methods that should be used in conducting courses in this subject. If this volume assists in clearing the field, it will have accomplished the author's aim: to provide a general view of the problems which social scientists have regarded as important. The student should have on hand for frequent reference: Allport's *Social Psychology*, McDougall's *Group Mind*, Tozzer's *Social Origins and Social Continuities*, Lindeman's *Social Discovery*, Dunlap's *Social Psychology*, Ellwood's *Human Society*, Bernard's *Introduction to Social Psychology*, Thomas' *Environmental Basis of Society*, Williams' *Principles of Social Psychology*, and Ginsberg's *Psychology of Society*. Znaniecki's *Laws of Social Psychology*, a difficult work indeed to read, contains a wealth of suggestions. In order to provide the students with the materials for an orientation to this vast and increasing body of literature, it has seemed best to select such references as may be collected for a reserve shelf. The present volume therefore is a mere guide to the study.

In the preparation of this work, the author has been stimulated principally by his students whose bewilderment during class room discussions has indicated the difficulties that confront the beginning student of social science. From the professional point of view, he is indebted to Dr. Mollie Ray Carroll and Dr. Ivan E. McDougale of the department of social science in Goucher College, and Dr. E. T. Devine formerly of the Columbia University faculty of Political Science, now Dean of the graduate school of American University. Acknowledg-

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J. W. S.

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

GENERAL STATEMENT

A survey of the development of the sciences of psychology and sociology and their separate contributions is basic for an understanding of social psychology. A very brief account is here attempted. While it may be said that social psychology is something of a compound, the statement should not be taken too literally. The term mixture rather than compound is a more descriptive expression; social psychology may be likened to a mixture to which have been added from time to time ingredients from every field of science. The mixing has been going on for centuries. It is only in recent years that a history of social psychology has been developed to assist in the classification and appraisal of social theories.¹ In fact the history of the development of social psychology as such, shows that it has been passing through the same phases as have its parent stems, though admittedly less telescopically, and as a consequence more rapidly and less connectedly. Social psychology, therefore, like all other sciences has had its theoretical and scientific developmental stages. The latter stage is just beginning to make headway.² There was a lengthy pre-history of gropings toward a science of social psychology before its claim to a separate department of classified knowledge was recognized as such. Even at the present time one should not hastily conclude that there is a distinct science of social psychology. Social psychology in general keeps in close contact with knowledge of human institutional and cultural development on the one hand, and with that pertaining to individual psychology on the other.

¹ For an excellent review of this subject see Barnes, H. E., *The New History and the Social Studies*.

² See especially Dewey, John, *Psychological Review*, Vol. 24, pp. 266-277; Kroeber, A. L., *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 23, pp. 633-650; Hall, G. Stanley, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 18, pp. 613-621.

Each basic accretion or discovery in these fields of knowledge promotes a change in the conception of human destinies, human nature, or human needs, and these in turn modify existing institutions or gradually replace them with new ones. Modification rather than replacement is more accurately descriptive. In the light of metaphysics, jurisprudence, biology, economics, or psychology, social psychology came in turn to center around the potency of ideas, contracts, organisms, distribution of wealth, or some basic instinct.

THE FOUNDERS OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Attempting a more specific orientation to social psychology in the making, we may conveniently turn to the philosophies of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) and Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Working along somewhat different lines of study, they concurred in the assumption of a spiritual principle directing human destinies; for the former it was a "folk-soul" conceived as an emanation from or embodiment of a World-Spirit. This background is reflected in the work of Moritz Lazarus (1824-1903) and Heymann Steinthal (1823-1899), who are usually spoken of as the founders of the science of social psychology.³ But it is just as difficult to designate the founders of social psychology as it is to trace the history of the various sciences that contribute to it. Much depends upon the particular bias of a given interpreter of the history of this new science. Finding his basic theory anticipated in the writings of Adam Smith (1723-1790), F. H. Giddings⁴ assigns the beginnings of social psychology to him. H. E. Barnes⁵ with a strong political bias, tells us that Walter Bagehot (1826-1877) was the founder of social psychology, for his *Physics and Politics* (1873) was the first great modern psychological interpretation of social processes and institutions. Knight Dunlap⁶ says William McDougall was the first psychologist to write a text on social psychology.⁷ This would place the formal beginning of the new science as late as 1908, when McDougall's *Social Psychology* appeared. Finally, E. S. Bogardus⁷ mentions David Hume

³ Ginsberg, M., *The Psychology of Society*, p. ix.

⁴ *Principles of Sociology*.

⁵ *The New History and The Social Studies*, p. 154.

⁶ *Old and New Viewpoints in Psychology*, p. 83.

⁷ *Essentials of Social Psychology*, pp. 20 and 22.

(1711-1776) as the reputed founder of social psychology because of his theory of imitation. At the same time he mentions E. A. Ross as the first American writer. In a way Ross goes back to Gabriel Tarde (1843-1904) who like Hume emphasized the psychology of imitation.⁸

Lazarus and Steinthal established in 1860 a periodical⁹ devoted to the study of folk psychology and philology. Their purpose was "to discover the laws which come into operation wherever the many live and act as one." Their avowed method was "direct observation." Their purpose and method as stated are justification for the assumption that they are the originators of this new science. "In the course of the nineteenth century great interest was developed in man, in his condition and activities. Naturally it was observed that laws, customs, myths, religions, and language, in short, all of what we have since learned to call institutional phenomena, though connected with individual psychological activities are still independent of them. Language, custom, myth, etc., while indubitably human phenomena are nevertheless independent of and prior to human individuals, and develop from age to age. From the pressure arising from such problems arose the conception of the folk-soul or mind (Volkseele) and the science of social psychology (Völkerpsychologie)."¹⁰ Regardless of where and when social psychology as such began, the Lazarus and Steinthal program of direct observation is in keeping with the spirit of modern philosophical thought and scientific procedure as well. Moreover, their folk soul theory,¹¹ notwithstanding certain objections that may be offered to it, has been a rather persistent one in the history of social science. The latest books on social psychology¹² show traces of the program that they instituted.

Mention should be made of the work of Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), another German representative of the early stages of the new science. For Wundt, sociology deals with language, custom and myth. In this he shows his sympathetic connections with Lazarus and Steinthal, although he departed widely from them in theory

⁸ See page 17.

⁹ *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*.

¹⁰ Kantor, J. R., *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, pp. 285-286.

¹¹ See Chapter V.

¹² See especially McDougall, Wm., *The Group Mind*.

and method. It was with Wundt that the question of method first began to take critical form as a part of the now growing subject of social psychology.

Recent significant advances in the domain of anthropology and the reconstruction of theories therefrom, bridge the work of Wundt with modern social sciences, forecasting a newer synthesis for which the term "andrology"¹³ is proposed. If this appraisalment is correct, we are by no means ready to say that social psychology is firmly established as a separate science. It means that the development of the science from the standpoint of its subject matter is not as yet complete.

EMERGENCE OF GROUP MIND THEORIES¹⁴

The earlier writers of social psychology generally found use for the conception of a group mind. This assumption was no doubt reinforced by natural inferences from observation, when once the study of society was seriously undertaken; observations were centered upon the institutional and differential aspects of peoples in different regions. Psychology, moreover, had not as yet entirely abandoned the idea of "faculties" and these suggested a counterpart for collective psychology. Still again, the phenomena of mere temporary aggregates, such as crowds, mobs and revolutions, became the earlier objects of study; they were readily accessible.

It may be worth while to call attention to one of the historical peculiarities of some aspects of psychology; it is the tendency to extend the inquiries from observation of the abnormal. Within the last quarter of a century this has been particularly true. Mental measurement, which is now regarded as a perfectly legitimate branch of normal psychology, began with attempts to study the retarded; psychoanalysis began with the study of hysteria; social psychology began with the unusual social situations, or again with racial peculiarities. But what has just been called the unusual in reference to the origin of studies in these and other fields of knowledge should be interpreted as the seeking after knowledge for the purpose of human adjustments rather than as an interest in what is merely spectacular.

¹³ Evans, R. T., *The Aspects of the Study of Society*, p. 11.

¹⁴ These theories will be discussed as a unit in Chapter V.

J. L. Tayler¹⁵ thinks that the originator of crowd psychology was a relatively unknown Scottish observer, John Dunlop, who published two studies between 1830 and 1840. Dunlop laid down what he called the laws of association which would explain what seemed to him "the universal tendency in mankind." Sir Francis Galton in his epoch-making *Inquiries into the Human Faculty* which appeared in 1883, found use for the term "herd" as applied to human associations. Whatever value may be attached to these earlier conceptions of a group mind, it may be said that Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Gustave Le Bon (1841-) between 25 and 30 years ago firmly established the theory. Other writers who at various times have contributed to the establishment of the theory should be mentioned: Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Alfred Espinas (1844-1922) and perhaps to a less extent Tarde, McDougall and Giddings.

The various theories of the group mind would make a volume. It will suffice here to say that this question in some form or other has constituted one of the chief concerns of many writers. Of late, there has been, as in the case of F. H. Allport¹⁶ a complete denial of anything approaching a group mind, for "if we take care of the individuals, psychologically speaking, the groups will be found to take care of themselves." Morris Ginsberg¹⁷ likewise rejects such theories but at the same time finds among the people who constitute a group, certain common mental elements due to hereditary structure, racial traits and the like. Common traditions both intellectual and moral give rise to sentiments so that the people of a given group may come to have a sense of loyalty for one another. An individual can be loyal to a group as well as to an individual. Social groups may therefore be as real as individuals. He concludes that there is some plausibility for such theories, although they have frequently been conceived in an altogether too metaphysical sense.

DIFFERENTIAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Much of the literature bearing upon the science of social psychology directly and indirectly belongs to differential social psychology—a comparative study of the psychology of races and peoples. Differ-

¹⁵ *Social Life and the Crowd*, p. 130.

¹⁶ *Social Psychology*, p. 9.

¹⁷ *The Psychology of Society*, p. 68.

ential psychology is not, as might at first appear, a question of subject matter merely. It came into being partly by virtue of classification of human social phenomena; in this sense methods of study have played an important part in segregating certain phenomena; that these phenomena should in turn be regarded as discrete elements of human nature, belonging to certain races or developmental stages alone, is to a certain degree to be laid at the door of hasty generalization. Psychology of every kind may be studied segmentally. By this we mean the breaking up of an entire series of connected phenomena for the purpose of throwing light upon its elements one at a time. Thus it comes that while we may have a psychology of perception, of attention, and of imagery, they should finally be studied synthetically with sensation from which these specific processes are ultimately derived. Just so in race psychology; the facts, let us say, of Mediterranean, Alpine, and Nordic race traits should be studied also as whole-human traits. At this point it will be well to keep in mind a fundamental principle: subject-matter and methods of studying it cannot be divorced.

One of the advocates of race psychology, Le Bon, holds that races may be classified psychologically as well as anatomically; that differentiation in psychical traits bespeaks racial superiority or inferiority in terms of intellectual and moral traits that are in turn responsible for all that goes to make up what he calls the "racial soul." The soul of a people is referred to a racial past which he believes is far more important than the social conditions at any given time in appraising national stability.¹⁸ The search for causes of racial differences early led to speculation about climate, giving rise to the so-called environmentalist or anthropogeographical school.

Thomas Buckle (1821-1862) in England and Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) in Germany were among the first to grapple with the problems of race and climate. Passing over the minor differences among the supporters of the environmentalist philosophy, their position may be stated as follows: national and race traits are due to the influence of climate and general geographical conditions. The operation of these forces over long periods of time results in the

¹⁸ Alfred Korzybski in *The Manhood of Humanity* has given a very extreme exposition of cultural inheritance from his interest in the philosophy of man, as a "time-binding" animal.

establishment of differential traits which when crystallized tend to remain constant through inheritance. From such studies a number of correlations between geographical location of races and race traits were produced. The first distinction was between "central" (i.e., continental) and "marginal" races.¹⁹ The latter are regarded as the older races of the earth; at the same time they are primitive. Physical anthropology recognizes certain physical traits as race criteria: cephalic index, nasal index, nathism, structure of hair, color of eyes, color of skin, etc. In recent years these various physical criteria are receiving less consideration as factors in race differentiation, although the cephalic index is still supposed to be valid.²⁰ Lately cultural factors are coming to be the chief consideration for race differences. Griffith Taylor has attempted some general correlations between head shapes and cultural products, which Ellsworth Huntington approves as a step in the formulation of laws.²¹

Differential psychology assumes that our national, international and world problems must be solved in the light of this comparative knowledge of the psychological abilities of nations and their certain destinies, racially considered.²² Such theories seem at times the product of pure speculation on the part of alarmists; in the first place it can be shown that such studies characteristically make their appearance just when great wars are at their height, or when national feeling has arisen by virtue of economic rivalry. The famous *Les Allemands* of Pater Didon (1884) following the German successes of 1870, is an example. Numerous books have appeared in different countries at just such times; a nation's real or fancied difficulties with other nations provoke the recurring question of honor or special ability.²³

It is hard to say just what the effect of this class of literature is or may become. When one reflects upon the tendency of the masses to read indiscriminately, to believe anything and everything that happens to be in print, and moreover when one takes into consideration

¹⁹ Marginal races are isolated races; they live in out of the way places as mountainous regions, inaccessible islands.

²⁰ Taylor, Griffith, *The Geographical Review*, Vol. 8, pp. 289-328.

²¹ *The Character of Races*, p. 79.

²² See Grant, Madison, *The Passing of the Great Race*.

²³ For a good American study, see Perla, Leo, *What is National Honor?*

the powerful emotional appeal such nonsense has, and the use that designing politicians, big and little, make of it in securing and maintaining office, the future looks rather dark. It may require a generation or longer to eradicate the mistaken notions about race which many otherwise sober people now hold.

The idea of inherent racial dispositions has received some confirmation from biological quarters. It is hard for any scientist, no matter how objective his working data may be, to refrain from philosophical indulgences which lead to highly speculative and even fantastic conclusions. Perhaps the most radical of these biologists is A. E. Wiggam²⁴ from whom we quote without comment.

Nations can not progress to any high standards of social life, gentility and polish, nor to any ordered working of political institutions, without a homogeneous national mind, a common racial outlook, similar cultural traditions, common language and literature. In short, there must be a national like-mindedness, which is the outcome of biological like-mindedness, inner similarity or physiopsychological organization. The fact, as witnessed by the writer, that during the great Dayton, Ohio, flood, many of the foreigners of lower cultures, and doubtless of inferior racial make-up, had to be forced to clean the mud from their beds and houses at the point of the bayonet, is a poignant national reminder. This has a world political significance. Those who recklessly think the mining of a few more tons of coal, or the manufacture of a few more pounds of steel, is worth this price have reckoned in dollars instead of national character. This lowering of the bars of our American development which was rapidly trending toward unique, picturesque national individuality in art, politics, social life, education, folkways, speech and literature has probably robbed us forever of our manifest destiny. We had clearly before us to become a greater Greece, a grander Rome, a more puissant England with a still nobler influence. We are the children of these cultures and should enrich them. With wise statesmanship, we may do it yet, but you have thus infinitely delayed such a consummation.

A second somewhat less speculative theory, opposite to Wiggam's, is brought forth by G. F. Nicolai²⁵ who maintains that nations are in certain fundamental biological particulars like plants and animals. There is a limit to the amount of structural differentiation that a given species may attain. After this limit is reached, decadence sets in and the species may become extinct; it has utilized its inherent growth impulse; its basic physical mechanism will refuse to function.

²⁴ *The New Decalogue of Science*, pp. 227-228.

²⁵ *The Biology of War*.

There is according to this view a certain human cycle of development which nationally considered, bespeaks a period of ultimate decadence and even extinction. The final interpretation that must be drawn from Nicolai's argument amounts to a warning to those who place stress upon the inherent qualities of race.

The supposed superiority of the Nordic race has resulted in propaganda tending to influence the regulation of immigration. Leading anthropologists are inclined to treat the question as a myth. They do not discover a racial variation of any fundamental psychological importance.²⁶

While it is true that immediately following periods of inter-group struggle, there is always a fresh crop of literature having to do with the supposed superiority of different races, it is also true that such literature succeeds in directing the attention of scientists to its claims. At no previous time have the scientists been so well equipped to study these supposed differential traits as at the present time, and while these methods are by no means accurate even now, they are sufficient to show how such problems may be solved. The methods referred to are the so-called "intelligence tests" which became popular in selecting men for various duties in the army. It was during the late war that the group tests were first perfected; since then they have been widely used in comparative studies of the intelligence of various groups. In this wise a new science sometimes called "mental anthropology" is being rapidly perfected; it is beginning to throw light upon the opposed suppositions that racial traits are "static," and that racial traits are "mobile." So far the results of the several kinds of tests indicate that mobility in race traits is beyond doubt; from this general conclusion it is easy to assume that the science of eugenics may in the near future play an important rôle in promoting conscious evolution.²⁷

At the same time the environmentalist philosophy has gradually become the basis for further elaboration, especially along the line of economics. This narrower aspect of environment was singled out by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who applied the environmentalist philosophy literally and specifically. In so doing they committed the

²⁶ Dixon, R. B., *The Racial History of Man*.

²⁷ Garth, T. R., *Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 23, pp. 240-245.