SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

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TO THE MEMORY OF

JOHN EDWARD ALLPORT

BELOVED FATHER, WISE COUNSELOR,

GREAT AND TRUE FRIEND

PREFACE

ONLY within recent years have the psychologists of this country turned their attention seriously toward the social field. With one or two exceptions, the earlier works upon this subject, as well as a number of recent ones, have been written by sociologists. To these writers psychologists owe a debt of gratitude for revealing new and promising opportunities for applying psychological science. Sociological writers, however, have given their attention mainly to the larger aspects, the laws of behavior and consciousness as operative in social groups. In so doing they have naturally adopted as materials the concepts of human nature provided by the older psychologists of good standing. With the recent expansion of psychology and growth of psychological insight, it has become necessary to modify many of these earlier conceptions and to add not a few new ones. Social science has not yet profited by taking account of this advancement, but has lagged behind in its fundamental assumptions regarding human nature. A need has therefore arisen of bringing to the service of those interested in social relationships the most recent psychological investigation and theory. I have written this book as an attempt in the direction of supplying this need.

More specifically, there are two main lines of scientific achievement which I have tried to bring within the scope of this volume. These are the *behavior viewpoint* and the *experimental method.* A considerable number of psychologists are now regarding their science as one fundamentally, though not exclusively, of behavior. This approach has revealed a wealth of principles for the understanding of human beings — understanding, that is, in the truest sense, namely, the *explanation* of their acts. Like every fundamental viewpoint in a science, behaviorism is simply a convenient way of conceiving the facts. Many of its hypotheses are still unproved. Yet, on the whole, it fits the facts so well, and is so replete with possibilities for gaining further knowledge, that it should be of basic value to students of social science.

While the behavior viewpoint has been developing a richer interpretation of the facts, the method of experimentation has been yielding the facts themselves. Psychologists have recently conducted many investigations either social in their setting or suggestive of important social applications. The bearing of these experiments upon social psychology has in some cases been noted; but, so far as I am aware, no attempt has been made to collect them in a systematic way. My second purpose, therefore, has been to fit these experimental findings into their broader setting in social psychology, and to draw from them certain conclusions of value to that science.

In addition to these two main fields of progress, there is a third which deserves especial recognition. I refer to the Freudian contributions to psychology. Notwithstanding its investment in a dogmatism which is repellent to many, psychoanalysis has unearthed facts which are valuable for the understanding of human nature. The bearing of these facts upon social conflict I have discussed in various places throughout the book, and particularly in Chapter XIV.

There are certain innovations in the treatment of the subject for which it may be well to prepare the reader. To one interested primarily in social relations it may seem that I give an unusual amount of space to purely individual behavior. This is in accordance with my purpose, explained in Chapter I, to adhere to the psychological (that is, the individual) viewpoint. For I believe that only *within the individual* can we find the behavior mechanisms and the consciousness which are fundamental in the interactions between individuals. I have, therefore, postponed until the last chapter almost all the material treated in books which have been written from the sociological viewpoint. If the reader finds that not until the final chapter has he arrived upon familiar ground, I shall venture to hope that his understanding may have been increased through treading the less familiar pathways.

Another deviation will be found in the treatment of instincts. The instinct theory has fulfilled an important mission in discrediting the earlier, mechanical theories of motivation. The notion, however, of complex inherited patterns of behavior is in turn suc-

cumbing to the process of analysis and closer observation. Some psychologists have, indeed, gone too far in their rejection of instincts, in that they have denied the existence of any definite inborn modes of response. The instinct theory was right in asserting that there is an hereditary basis for behavior; its error lay in its failure to analyze behavior into its elementary components of inheritance and acquisition. The theory of prepotent reactions, developed in Chapter III, aims to combine the virtues and omit the defects of both sides of the controversy.

The book is intended to be used as a text in courses in social psychology and in courses in the various social sciences which give a part of their time to the psychological foundations. I hope also that it may prove of service, not only to college students, but to all who are interested in the social adjustments of individuals and the broader problems of society. For the benefit of those to whom psychology is a new subject, a chapter upon the physiological basis of behavior has been included. Teachers will find it advisable to assign the chapters in the order in which they occur. The closing chapter is to be regarded merely as an outline. It was written primarily to guide the student in his application of the principles of social psychology to sociological questions. It is suggested that, where the book is used for a full year's course, a large portion of the second semester be given to expanding this last chapter with the aid of the references appended. Throughout the course the student should be directed in collecting illustrations and incidents from contemporary social life for the purpose of testing or applying the principles discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FOR the origin of my interest in social psychology I am indebted to the memory of Hugo Münsterberg. It was he who suggested the setting for my first experiments and who foresaw many of the possibilities which have been developed in this book. To my former teacher and colleague, Professor H. S. Langfeld, my sincere thanks are due for a careful reading of the manuscript and for many valuable criticisms and constructive suggestions. I wish to express equal gratitude to my present colleague, Professor J. F. Dashiell,

for reading the manuscript and offering effective suggestions concerning the theories advanced. I owe much to my association with Professor W. F. Dearborn and Dr. E. B. Holt, and have used several illustrations derived directly or indirectly from their teaching. In particular, I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to my brother, Dr. G. W. Allport, both for assistance with the manuscript and for stimulating discussions of some of the problems raised. He also kindly furnished me with a number of facts from his own research, of which mention has been made in the text. My thanks are due also to Professor J. F. Steiner for advice regarding the sociological aspects of the last chapter. Valuable comments upon several chapters were given by Miss Ada L. Gould whose kindness I desire gratefully to acknowledge. To our departmental secretary, Mrs. G. Wallace Smith, I am indebted for effective work in preparation of the manuscript, as well as for helpful suggestions in regard to style. The theory of emotion developed in Chapter IV appeared in substantially the same form in the *Psychological Review* for March, 1922. My thanks are due to the editor of that journal for permission to republish it here. Finally, I wish to thank the various publishers who have given their permission to reproduce certain of the illustrations.

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CHAPTER I

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AS A SCIENCE OF INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR AND CONSCIOUSNESS

The Present Standpoint in Psychology. Psychology is the science which studies behavior and consciousness. Of these two terms behavior is placed first because it is an explanatory principle, and therefore more fundamental. The essential formula for behavior is as follows: (1) Some need is present in the organism, such as the necessity of withdrawing from weapons injuring the body, or the need to obtain food or to secure a mate. The need may also be of a derived and complex order; for example, the necessity of solving some problem upon which the satisfaction of the more elementary wants depends. (2) The organism acts: it behaves in such a manner as to satisfy the need.

Need, in the sense here employed, signifies a biological maladjustment. The relation existing between the organism and its surroundings is injurious rather than beneficial to life, and must be changed if the individual is to survive. More specifically, a need arises when certain objects excite the external sense organs, as in an injury to the skin; or when muscular changes in the internal organs, as in hunger, excite sense organs *inside* the body. These excitations, or *stimulations*, set up a current of nervous energy which is propagated inward to the central nervous system and outward again to the muscles controlling bodily movement, causing them to act in such a way as to fulfill the need through which the chain of events originated; that is, in the examples used, to withdraw from harm and to obtain food. The making of these adaptive movements is called the *reaction*.

But the word 'need' may be used in another sense beside that of

biological requirement. It may denote a felt, or *conscious*, lack, as when we say we feel hunger or feel the need of companionship. Need in this sense is a part of the immediate and private experience of each individual. We can never be directly aware of the felt needs of others; they can only be inferred by observing their behavior when they are biologically maladjusted to their surroundings (need in the former sense). This personal awareness which accompanies behavior extends to other facts beside need or desire. We are aware of the stimulating object, aware of fear or anger when these emotions are a part of our adjustment to it, aware of our purpose in making the reaction, and of our thinking and acting toward that end. These conscious states likewise are known in others only by inference from appropriate reactions.

It is clear that consciousness stands in some intimate relation to the biological need and the behavior which satisfies it. Just what this relation is still constitutes an unsolved and perplexing problem. One negative conclusion, however, seems both justified and necessary as a working principle: namely, that consciousness is in no way a *cause* of the bodily reactions through which the needs are fulfilled. Explanation is not derived from desire, feeling, will, or purpose, however compelling these may seem to our immediate awareness, but from the sequence of stimulation — neural transmission — and reaction. Consciousness often accompanies this chain of events; but it never forms a link in the chain itself.[1]

To present detailed evidence for the stand we have just taken would lead us too far afield. If the reader is inclined to challenge this hypothesis, this book should be weighed as an argument for its validity. Any hypothesis must rest its case upon its capacity for explaining the phenomena with which it deals, in this case the phenomena of human action. If it fails in this, it must be rejected.

[1] To illustrate, let us consider the act of satisfying hunger. When a man goes to dinner the combined stimulation from the sound of the bell and his restless stomach enters his nervous system and goes out to the muscles of walking to the dining-room, sitting, and eating. The man himself experiences hunger pangs, and considers these sufficient reason for his eating. Actually, however, "hunger sensations" are only a *description* of the consciousness *accompanying* the behavior. The cause of going to the table lies in the sequence stomach-stimulation — nerve transmission — reaction. The act could be equally well *explained* if the subject had no consciousness whatsoever.

While there remain many problems yet to be solved, a material advance has been made in psychology since the adoption of the mechanistic and behavior viewpoint. Much of the confusion resulting from including conscious or 'mental' entities in the sequence of cause and effect has been dispelled; and there is promise of wide future development under the guidance of the behavior hypothesis.

There are a few psychologists who maintain that, since consciousness does not explain events, it has no place in the science which studies behavior. This is a serious mistake. No scientist can afford to ignore the circumstances attendant upon the events he is observing. Introspection on conscious states is both interesting in itself and necessary for a complete account. The consciousness accompanying reactions which are not readily observable also furnishes us with valuable evidence and information of these reactions, and thus aids us in our selection of explanatory principles within the mechanistic field. The phenomena we shall study in this book comprise both behavior and consciousness, with emphasis upon the former because it holds the key to explanation. The introspective account will aid in our interpretations and will supplement them upon the descriptive side. Having outlined the position of present-day psychology as a whole, we may now approach the special branch which is our present interest.

The Province of Social Psychology. Behavior in general may be regarded as the interplay of stimulation and reaction between the individual and his environment. Social behavior comprises the stimulations and reactions arising between an individual and the *social* portion of his environment; that is, between the individual and his fellows. Examples of such behavior would be the reactions to language, gestures, and other movements of our fellow men, in contrast with our reactions toward non-social objects, such as plants, minerals, tools, and inclement weather. The significance of social behavior is exactly the same as that of non-social, namely, the correction of the individual's biological maladjustment to his environment. In and through others many of our most urgent wants are fulfilled; and our behavior toward them is based on the same fundamental needs as our reactions toward all objects, social

or non-social.[1] It is the satisfaction of these needs and the adaptation of the individual to his whole environment which constitute the guiding principles of his interactions with his fellow men.

Social Psychology as a Science of the Individual. The Group Fallacy. Impressed by the closely knit and reciprocal nature of social behavior, some writers have been led to postulate a kind of 'collective mind' or 'group consciousness' as separate from the minds of the individuals of whom the group is composed. No fallacy is more subtle and misleading than this. It has appeared in the literature under numerous guises; but has everywhere left the reader in a state of mystical confusion. Several forms of this theory will be examined presently. The standpoint of this book may be concisely stated as follows. There is no psychology of groups which is not essentially and entirely a psychology of individuals. Social psychology must not be placed in contradistinction to the psychology of the individual; *it is a part of the psychology of the individual*, whose behavior it studies in relation to that sector of his environment comprised by his fellows. His biological needs are the ends toward which his social behavior is a developed means. Within his organism are provided all the mechanisms by which social behavior is explained. There is likewise no consciousness except that belonging to individuals. Psychology in all its branches is a science of the individual. To extend its principles to larger units is to destroy their meaning.

Psychological Forms of the Group Fallacy. 1. The 'Crowd Mind.' The most flagrant form of the group fallacy is the notion of 'crowd consciousness.' It has long been observed that persons in an excited mob seem to lose control of themselves, and to be swept along by tempestuous emotions and impelling ideas. It is therefore alleged that there is a lapse of personal consciousness and a rise of a common or 'crowd' consciousness. The objections to this view are fairly obvious. Psychologists agree in regarding

[1] An interesting point of difference, however, exists in the social as distinguished from other environmental relations. In the social sphere the environment not only stimulates the individual, but is stimulated *by* him. Other persons not only cause us to react; they also react in turn to stimulations produced by us. A circular character is thus present in social behavior which is wanting in the simpler non-social adjustments.