

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

# SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

An Analysis of Social Behavior

BY

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*"Human nature is so large, life touches life  
at so many points, and words are so elusive."*

ERWIN F. SMITH

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TO  
MY MOTHER  
ANNA MARIE ROSEBERRY YOUNG

## PREFACE

Social psychology is concerned with the personality as it operates in a world of other personalities. The writer has tried in this book to show that the behavior of the individual is determined both by the more intimate, non-standardized, person-to-person relationships and by those aspects of social interaction which rest upon the conventionalized, group-accepted forms of behavior which the anthropologists call culture patterns. Many of the chapters approach the study of the personality from the angle of the group or collective life rather than from that of the theoretically isolated individual. This fact, of course, reveals the author's bias or standpoint, but it seems to him to throw a more understanding light on the individual's social behavior.

The reader will find this volume rich in descriptive, illustrative materials, much of it drawn from contemporary life. There is no better way to reveal the mechanisms of personality than to observe it in its present social milieu. While many of us hope to see an increasing number of quantitative studies in social psychology, the importance of descriptive case analysis can not be gainsaid. In fact, it is the author's contention that for a subject like social psychology which is too young for very definite systematic formulation as yet, the observational, descriptive treatment is invaluable. There are some individuals in psychology and sociology whose over-anxiety to employ the statistical method sometimes misleads them into a faulty conception of the relation of quantitative methods to the inception of an objective science of social behavior. At best, as Yule puts it, "statistical methods should be regarded as ancillary, not essential" to scientific procedures. Until we can frame our observations under rigidly controlled conditions the genetic-historical, or case study, treatment of our social-psychological data will have a place. In the present volume statistical materials have been introduced where they throw light on certain aspects of behavior but frankly the use of case data is more frequent.

The present volume is not highly theoretical. It is concerned more with a standpoint and method of analysis than with the statement of elaborate

systematic formulas. It seems wise to present the student of social behavior with concrete analysis at the outset before loading him down with the weight of heavy phrases of more or less philosophical significance.

A word may be said about the use of terminology in the present book. The author believes that the more naturalistic approach of behavioristic psychology is sound, but that behaviorism at the moment has not offered any marked advance over functional or dynamic psychology in the analysis of covert or "mental" behavior. For this reason in dealing with internal aspects of behavior he has been forced to use such words as attention, perception, image, ideas, concepts, and attitudes. It seems that this mixture of terms from two somewhat divergent phases of psychology is inevitable in the present chaos of behavior analysis. Whenever possible, however, an attempt has been made to put these terms into a somewhat behavioristic setting.

This book is arranged for use in conjunction with the author's *Source Book for Social Psychology*. The chapters, however, do not correspond exactly, and there is much source material in the present book on which there is no corresponding reading in the other. Further reading assignments to source materials are made at the end of each chapter. Moreover, the assignments in the present volume and those in the *Source Book* should be used together. The bibliographies are suggestive rather than complete. There is no duplication of the bibliography found in the *Source Book*. Those papers and books which are valuable for classroom purposes and which have appeared since the publication of the *Source Book*, are mentioned in the special assignments for class reports or longer studies.

The author wishes to acknowledge his debt to the many persons who have helped him in the preparation of this book. He is especially indebted to Professor Robert E. Park for suggesting some aspects of the analysis of the newspaper as it appears in Chapter XXV although Professor Park may not recognize the discussion as an outgrowth of the stimulating conversations which he and the writer have had on the subject of public opinion and the newspaper. The author desires to thank the many writers and publishers who have so graciously permitted the use of their publications. Special gratitude is due Magdalene Anderson Young for her patient assistance in preparing the manuscript and in the final stages of editing the same. Thanks is also due Mr. Sidney Gair and Miss Sara Boyajian, for

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## PART ONE

### The Social Setting of Human Behavior

"The roots of the present lie deep in the past."—STUBBS

Perhaps the commonest fallacy of the textbook psychology lies in the assumption that the beginnings of social behavior exist only in the individual. It is because of this misconception that we introduce the material in this book with two chapters bearing on the social-cultural background of human personality. This brief discussion of group life should not mislead the reader into any unscientific notions about "group mind" or "collective consciousness." Rather it simply acquaints him with the fundamental types of social-cultural stimuli to which the individual is exposed from birth to death, and without which he could not carry on. Following this introductory division we turn to a psychological analysis of individual behavior.

The first chapter presents the social antecedents of human behavior; the second reviews the nature of group life and surveys the place of human culture as a background upon which human personality itself is developed.



# CHAPTER I

## THE SOCIAL ANTECEDENTS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR

Social Psychology deals with the study of personality as it develops in relation to social environment. Social environment consists of groups of other personalities and the methods of living which they have evolved. The latter we call culture. From the angle of psychology, group life, including culture, furnishes the environment to which the human being must adjust himself if he is to survive. What the sociologists and anthropologists call culture patterns constitute for the individual the basis of his ideas, attitudes, and habits. The individual does not grow up in a vacuum. He is at all times reacting to a world around him, consisting of physical and organic objects, especially, of other human beings. It must have been thus from the beginning of social life.

Actually, of course, social origins are lost in mystery. However it was in the dim days of early paleolithic man or before, certainly both common sense and science teach us that the individual today is, willy nilly, born into various social groups. The hypothetical man growing up alone on a hypothetical island acquires, in the minds of most writers about him, purely hypothetical attributes. Such myth-making lends very little to the understanding of a person in either ancient or modern times. We may lay it down as a systematic postulate that, for purposes of social-psychological analysis, the group is antecedent to the individual. By group here is meant, not any mythical entity independent of individuals, but the congregations of persons into such associate forms as families, neighborhoods, communities, schools, churches, lodges, capital and labor groups. These groups begin at once to impinge upon the new-born individual, and before many years the growing boy or girl has taken on the characteristics of his family, his class, his race or nationality, and, in a minor degree, of the other groups to which he belongs.

There is no doubt that the individual brings with him, from his bio-



logical background, potentialities for growth and modification. We do not deny the place of heredity or the significance of biological mechanisms; yet these alone, we hold, do not account for the human personality which we shall study. Truly there are marked differences in the capacity of the individual to learn of the social and physical world around him. There are variabilities in his reaction time, in his physical make-up, etc. As we shall see, these matters must be taken into account in any analysis. Still, what the individual becomes as an adult personality, what he does and thinks, is throughout determined very largely by the impress of other persons upon him.

The fallacy of an individualistic psychology is its failure to recognize the important place which social interaction plays in determining the life organization and development of the human being. What the child becomes is the product not alone of his organic make-up, but of his participation in the social milieu around him.

The description and analysis of the social behavior of the person really require a recognition of both the environment and the organism, if the matter is to be stated with any degree of completeness. Without attempting for the moment to evaluate in any way the relative weight of these factors,<sup>1</sup> we may say that there is, first, in point of time perspective, the biological organism which comes into the world from the previous generation, with its potentials for development, with the general predisposition for physical growth, with a set of characteristics which it has inherited from its ancestors. This physical organism, with its roots in the animal world, possesses the essential structures and functions from which eventuate the human personality. From this ancestry come the mechanisms which are the basis of living and the foundation of being. In describing and analyzing the organic basis of the personality we must rest our case upon the findings of bio-chemistry and psychology. These sciences point out to us the essential mechanics of behavior and indicate how behavior is modified by environmental stimulation.

The other factor to be taken into account in the social process is the environment with which the organism must come to terms if it is to survive at all. In our analysis we shall be concerned chiefly with the environment as it is made up of other human beings and the material world as men have

<sup>1</sup> The writer doubts that this could be done, since they are not comparable and exist in different dimensions.