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BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

SOME PROLEGOMENA TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTIES OF THE GRADUATE
SCHOOLS OF ARTS, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE, IN CANDIDACY
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY)

BY

CHARLES ABRAM ELLWOOD

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The University of Chicago Press

1901

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FOUNDED BY JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

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УВАЖАЈУ
СВАКИ СВОЈАТЪ СВАЈУ
УТОСЪВНУ

PREFACE.

THE method of this thesis is confessedly philosophical. As the title indicates, it has been an attempt to examine by philosophical analysis and criticism the necessary presuppositions, categories, and principles of a social psychology, and thereby to determine the nature, task, method, and form of such a science. Throughout the discussion, however, the facts dealt with have been carefully borne in mind, and it is hoped that evidences of a positivistic spirit will not be found lacking. The value of this attempt must be determined by the reader, but the writer hopes that, by rendering certain concepts clearer, he has made the field of social psychology less difficult to work in.

A brief summary of the conclusions reached may be found helpful in making clear the argument of the thesis as a whole: Social psychology is simply psychology in general applied to the interpretation of the life of the social group. Inasmuch as the fundamental principles of psychology are discoverable only through the study of the life of the individual, social psychology may be regarded, in a certain sense, as an applied science: it is simply carrying over a certain portion of the technique discovered by individual psychology in the psychical processes of the individual and applying it to the interpretation of the life of society as a whole. This is possible only because society is a functional unity, and as such presents fundamentally the same technique in its psychical life as is exhibited in the life of the individual. Because society is a functional unity, too, social psychology is no mere application of individual psychology to society as an aggregation of isolated individuals, but rather to society as an organic whole. Its point of view is, not the individual, but the social group considered as a functional unity. It is not, then, a *pure* applied science, but, like animal psychology, is only partially or fundamentally an application of a generalized

technique obtained through individual psychology. It has room, accordingly, for an inductive as well as a deductive method in its study of socio-psychical processes. That society functions, *acts*, is, then, the peculiar fact which makes possible a social psychology, while the coördination of individuals in societary activity is the fundamental phenomenon with which it deals. The life of the social group, therefore, like the life of the individual, is to be interpreted on its psychical side fundamentally in terms of habit and adaptation. From this point of view and upon these principles it is believed that a science of social psychology can be built up which will be able to give a psychological interpretation of the entire social process.

The chapters of the thesis appear in the same form in which they were originally published as articles in the *American Journal of Sociology*. On this account the order of the chapters has been left the same as the order of the articles; for this reason, also, each chapter has the form of an essay fairly complete in itself, although evidence of internal unity in the thesis, it is hoped, will not be found wanting.

I am greatly indebted to others for both the content and form of my thought, and I take this occasion to acknowledge my obligation to those who have helped me most directly. To Professor Small I owe the suggestion of the subject, as well as many valuable criticisms, and without his sympathy, encouragement, and guidance, I may add, the thesis could never have been written. To Professor Dewey and his colleague, Professor Mead, I am indebted for much friendly criticism, but especially for the philosophic principles which have guided me in analysis and criticism. To Professor Henderson, Professor Thomas, and Professor Vincent I am also under obligation, both for friendly criticism and for valuable suggestions. Finally, to previous writers in the field of social psychology my indebtedness needs hardly to be acknowledged, for it will be evident to all who are familiar with the literature of the science; in particular, from Schaeffle and De Greef among the older writers, and from Baldwin among the more recent, I have drawn thoughts or suggestions of thoughts.

PREFACE

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In order to guard against any misinterpretation, I ought, perhaps, in conclusion, again to emphasize that this thesis is not an attempt to construct a system of social psychology, but simply an attempt to state clearly its view-point, nature, method, and fundamental principles as a science from my own philosophic standpoint—which is that of *life-process*.

CHARLES A. ELLWOOD.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO,
June, 1899.



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CHAPTER I.

THE NEED OF THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY.

HERBERT SPENCER begins his *Study of Sociology* with a chapter emphasizing the practical need of it; in like manner, perhaps, there is no better way of entering upon a discussion of the subject of social psychology than by pointing out the theoretical need of such a science. This paper accordingly will be a plea for the study of social psychology, with an attempt to show the necessity of it by a partial inventory of the problems dependent upon a social psychology for their scientific solution. Some sort of social psychology, it is true, has usually been assumed by social science; but the plea of this article is for a systematically worked out and carefully verified social psychology as a condition of complete social knowledge. For, if it be assumed that the phenomena of society are chiefly psychical, a knowledge of the psychical processes which characterize group-life as such is manifestly a most important condition of complete social knowledge.

A few preliminary statements of position may, however, be helpful in rendering our plea more intelligible.

Külpe speaks of social psychology as the science which "treats of the mental phenomena dependent upon a community of individuals."¹ This we may accept as a rough, working definition of the science. Now, the assumption that there are "mental phenomena dependent upon a community of individuals" presupposes psychical processes which are more than *merely* individual, which are *inter*-individual; in last analysis it implies that through the action and reaction of individuals in a group upon one another there arise psychical processes which cannot be explained by reference to any or all of the individuals

¹ See KÜLPE'S *Outlines of Psychology*, translated by Titchener, p. 7; *cf.* also the original.

as such, but only by reference to the group-life considered itself as a unity. Social psychology, then, if somewhat more strictly defined, has as its task to examine and explain the form or mechanism of these group psychical processes. It is an interpretation of the psychical processes manifested in the growth and functioning of a group as a unity. Whatever psychical phenomena may be regarded as *pertaining to group-life as such* are, therefore, the proper subject-matter of social psychology. As such phenomena we may instance, for the sake of provisional illustration, political revolutions, mob action, group action, and organization of all sorts, down even to the psychical adjustments which take place in small groups, such as a family or a committee. Whether these facts are properly classified among those of social psychology or among those of individual psychology we cannot here discuss: the logical delimitation of the facts with which the two sciences respectively deal, and a discussion of the problems therein involved, must be reserved for a later article.

It is here acknowledged, however, that if the abstraction of the individual from the group and of the group from the individual is an unjustifiable abstraction for any purpose whatsoever, as some may assert, then the creation of a separate science of social psychology is also unjustifiable. Again, it is conceded that, if individual psychology can explain all the phenomena of group-life, as some individualists maintain, social psychology as a science has little excuse for existence. But the individualistic hypothesis, it must be added, needs demonstration quite as much as its opposite, and as yet such demonstration seems decidedly wanting. Indeed, it is notorious that psychology has up to the present failed to furnish that aid in the solution of social problems which was expected from it a half century ago. It may be suspected that a reason for this is that psychology has been developed too much on its purely individualistic side, and has neglected the not less real psychical processes of group-life.

Here another possible misunderstanding must be guarded against. In emphasizing the importance of social psychology

we do not mean to imply that it can furnish a complete interpretation of society. There are many physical phenomena of land and climate, and many physiological phenomena of race and population, which are not less than psychical facts to be taken into account in a complete interpretation of society, but which social psychology as such cannot consider. Hence an objective as well as a subjective interpretation is essential for the proper understanding of the social life: neither alone will yield complete knowledge of society; both are necessary for the understanding, not only of society as a whole, but of any particular side of societal life. Nor is the subjective or psychological interpretation to be set over against the objective or biological interpretation; both are parts of a philosophic whole, and each is supplementary to the other.

The objective interpretation of society has been, perhaps, sufficiently developed and emphasized during the present century by such men as Comte, Spencer, Buckle, and their followers. They regarded the physical and objective as fundamental, and brought in the subjective and mental only as modifications of the physical. Hence they treated the science of society logically as a physical science. In this proceeding they were justified, since they all explicitly or implicitly denied that the actions of men are independent phenomena having laws of their own. It is because we question, however, on methodological grounds the rightfulness of such an assumption that we would now shift the emphasis from the objective to the subjective interpretation. We do not question the value of an objective interpretation; it is absolutely necessary to any complete understanding of the social process; but experience has shown that it is inadequate to explain the principal and characteristic features of that process; that it explains the incidental rather than the essential facts of societal life. We must, therefore, reverse the methodological order of the older sociologists and proceed from man to nature in our interpretation of society, not from nature to man.¹ That is to say, a social psychology is needed to interpret the processes

¹ Cf. PATTEN'S *Theory of Dynamic Economics*, Introduction. The methodological justification for the above position appears in Chapter V.

of social growth and functioning, which are essentially psychological and subjective, before we can proceed to examine intelligently the relations of society to nature.

Now, if sociology be conceived as the complete interpretation of society, as the bringing-to-bear of all knowledge upon the problems of societal growth, structure, and function to effect their solution, it will be a synthesis of the objective with the subjective interpretation of society. In this synthesis the subjective interpretation of the social process, afforded by individual and social psychology, becomes progressively important as we pass from the lower to the higher stages of social development. Thus an objective or biological interpretation of society may seemingly answer very well for its primitive stages, but it is felt to be entirely inadequate for the interpretation of present social life with its preponderance of the psychic factor. Again, as we pass from the lower to the higher stages of society, social psychology becomes increasingly important for the interpretation of the social life. As social groups become more highly unified and organized, that is, "individualized," they act more and more as "individuals," and group life-processes become more definite and coherent. Corresponding to these group life-processes are psychological processes, which, though manifested in individuals, may properly be regarded as the expression of group-life. They represent the coordination and organization of the activities of group-life on its inner side. They not only function to secure those inner and outer adjustments necessary to the continuance of group-life, but they embody in themselves all those emotional and volitional attitudes, all those ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, which are favorable to the persistence, solidarity, and growth of the group. They hand down in unbroken tradition the ideas, valuations, and methods which have been to the group of life-saving advantage. Thus group psychological processes become the great vehicle of progress; and group or social psychology, rather than individual psychology, must interpret the general method or mechanism of that progress. If this reasoning be substantially correct—and in a later article evidence will be adduced to show that it is correct—the

need of the sociologist's studying social psychology is simply the need of developing his own science. Sociology cannot hope to become a well-organized and perfected discipline until it has, for a part of its foundation at least, a fully developed social psychology.

One particular respect may here be pointed out in which social psychology can aid in the construction of a general sociology. When conceived as social philosophy, it is evident that sociology in its genetic aspect may be regarded as the philosophy of history. Now, social psychology in its genetic aspect has also to do with the problem of a philosophy of history on its subjective side. Group psychical processes are the historical processes on their *subjective side par excellence*. When the genetic aspect of social psychology is fully worked out, therefore, it should yield a philosophy of history. Without entering upon any discussion of the difficulties of such a discipline, we would merely remark that such a subjective interpretation of historical processes would seem possible, if any interpretation is. If the psychical factor is the unifying, life-preserving, and life-developing factor in the group, it would seem that, if any philosophy of history whatever is attainable, it must be reached through the interpretation of the psychical process of societary development, that is, through the explanation of the process of growth of what we may, for want of a better term, call the "social mind." Such a subjective philosophy of history, however, would undoubtedly need supplementing by reference to those physical facts which constantly affect the process of social growth; and such a supplementing it would be the duty of sociology to furnish in its complete interpretation of the historico-genetic process of societies.

If the study of social psychology may be regarded as necessary to the further development of sociology, it is hardly of less importance for the special social sciences. Even that social science which from its nature is most bound by the facts of the physical world, namely, economics, would be greatly helped by the development of social psychology. Within the last twenty years economic thinkers have come to look more and more to

individual psychology for new and deeper interpretations of the economic life. They have done so with some degree of success, both because individual psychology is a factor in all social interpretation, and because of its essential unity with social psychology. Where they have failed, they have failed chiefly because they have lacked a social psychology to complete their view. Take, for instance, the problem of value. The Austrian economists were successful in explaining the phenomenon of economic value in so far as they referred it to a psychological origin; they were unsuccessful in explaining it in so far as they referred it to a purely individual origin. Economic value is now widely admitted to be a social phenomenon, to be explained only through reference to the social life as a whole, or, at least, to the life of the particular group within which it appears. The last word upon value is, however, far from said, and social psychology may yet throw much light upon this fundamental economic problem. The theory of consumption furnishes another illustration. So long as there was no subjective interpretation of the economic life, consumption occupied no place in the discussions of economic writers. Now, however, the theory of consumption is admitted to be one of the most important parts of economic science, though a satisfactory theory remains yet to be developed. As Professor Patten has pointed out, such a theory can be developed only along socio-psychological lines, since consumption is a matter of social (group) habits, customs, and feelings. It must, in other words, be worked out with the aid of social psychology. In the closely related question of economic crises the necessity of understanding the social psychical processes is even more plainly evident. Hitherto economic science has had almost no serious theory of crises. What has been written concerning them has often been worthless, and often, it is not too much to say, vague, mysterious, and superstitious. To the social psychologist, however, it is evident that economic crises are phenomena that lie wholly within the psychical process of group-life, and that their explanation is to be found in the mechanism of that process. A satisfactory theory of economic crises, if such can ever be given,

must be reached through the aid of social psychology. Illustrations of the service which social psychology might render to economic science might be multiplied *ad libitum*. Among the more important questions which must receive, in whole or in part, a socio-psychological solution are those of distribution, of the rise and persistence of economic classes or groups, of the genesis and various expression of the so-called "economic instinct," and of the relation which various economic systems bear to the political, legal, and moral systems with which they are found. But perhaps enough has been said to show that economic science has much to expect from the development of a social psychology, and that its own progress in the future must be in an essentially socio-psychological direction.

In political science the need of the study of social psychology is not less evident. A host of questions concerning the origin and development of legal and political institutions await a socio-psychological settlement. Government and law are two of the most important products, or rather sides, of the social psychic process, and the attempt to understand them without understanding it is like an attempt to understand an organic species without reference to organic evolution as a whole, or to explain attention without reference to the whole process of the mental life. The natural history of government and of the various forms of government, when it comes to be properly written, must seek the help of social psychology to explain the phenomena with which it deals. Monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, with their variations and "perversions," will be truly explained as phenomena only when they are shown to be expressions of the particular psychical processes which characterize particular stages of social growth, or special social coördinations. The same method of interpretation will have to be applied to the legal systems and institutions which are bound up with government. It will be the further task of political science to show, through the facts of history and ethnography, what forms of government and of law are regularly associated with certain types of social psychic coördination. Thus it is possible that some degree of prevision may be reached as regards the relation

between a society and its form of government ; but no exact prevision, since, as individual psychology teaches, no two psychical coördinations can ever be exactly alike. On this account a socio-psychological interpretation of political and legal phenomena will, perhaps, be unacceptable to those who, like Comte, long for a rigid science of society, a "social physics," which shall make possible in social life the exact prevision of the mathematical sciences.

Concerning the inner life of the state, as well as concerning political and legal systems, social psychology will have somewhat to say. The problem of political parties, of their rise, growth, and disappearance, lies almost wholly within its territory. Here, too, belongs the explanation of those disturbances of the political life called revolutions. The objective interpretations of revolutions have notoriously failed ; none of them have been principles of universal, or almost universal, applicability. If any principle of explanation of universal validity can be found, it must be a socio-psychological principle ; for revolutions are matters of social habit, feeling, and belief, that is, of the social psychic process.

The need of social psychology in the judging of social programs for reform may here also be noted. The real objections to the propositions of socialism, for example, are mainly socio-psychological, inasmuch as socialism concerns social organization. A thorough understanding of the psychical life of society will furnish criteria for the just criticism of the propositions of socialism. Through social psychology their consistency or inconsistency with the psychical process of social development can be shown, and a judgment formed as to the probable effect of a socialistic régime upon that process. Not alone the propositions of socialism, but also other programs for social betterment, need the criticism of social psychology. The propositions of the individualist as well as those of the socialist are likely to show the lack of a proper understanding of the psychical life of society. In fact, the proper method of procedure in all attempts at general social betterment can be determined only through social psychology. As individual psychology must underlie the

doctrine of individual education, so a full knowledge of social psychology must underlie the doctrine of social transformation; that is, a "social pedagogy" or "teleology" must be developed from a knowledge of the processes of normal social growth, of psychical adjustment and readjustment in society, just as pedagogy is developed from a knowledge of similar processes in the individual. When social psychology has reached the completed stage in which it can yield a doctrine of social betterment, or "social teleology," it is possible that there will be one other person beside the socialist who knows exactly what he wants done for the betterment of society; that person will be the social psychologist. The methods of social improvement which he may propose will perhaps not pretend to be so speedy and cocksure as those of socialism, but they will at least have the merit of resting upon a knowledge of the nature of the social process. We claim, therefore, for the study of social psychology ultimately a practical as well as a theoretical value.

We have already reached in our discussion the territory of ethics. In so far as ethics is a social science, it rests upon the facts of the psychical life of society, and so has much to expect from the development of social psychology. The phenomenon of moral valuation affords an illustration. Moral value, like economic value, has now come to be regarded as a social phenomenon; that is, it is regarded as explicable only through the psychical life of society as a whole, not through the life of the individual. The reason why society regards one act as virtuous and another as wicked, one thing as having moral value and another as not, must, in the last resort, be found in the nature of the social psychic process, and can be understood only through understanding it, that is, through social psychology. The relation of beliefs to the moral life is another problem which illustrates the dependence of ethics upon the development of social psychology. The function of beliefs in the moral life of society, especially of the beliefs in God, in the immortality of the soul, and in moral freedom and responsibility, needs to be made out, and to be embodied by ethics in its discussion of the facts of the moral life. Whether the ethical activities of society can be

carried on and ethical progress be possible without these beliefs, that is, whether they are essential economies of the social psychic process or not, is a question which social psychology alone can answer, yet a question of the greatest importance to moral as well as social philosophy.

In this article, intended merely as a plea for the study of social psychology, it is not the place to discuss either the difficulties of the construction of such a science or the methods it should employ. Of these we shall speak later. What we trust we have made clear is the need of such a science in any rational attempt to solve the problems of the social sciences. It is certainly essential to the interpretation of the societary process as a whole. It is needed in economics, political science, and ethics to correct and supplement prevailing theories and to formulate new ones. Finally, it is needed for the criticism of false and for the construction of wise programs for social betterment.

CHAPTER II.

THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY.¹

IN spite of the remarkable development which this century has witnessed in the science of psychology from the time of Fechner to the present, most psychologists will admit that the science has as yet contributed little to the development of the social sciences, to the solution of the problems of societary life. A beginning, it is true, has been made in some of the social sciences in applying psychological principles to the solution of their problems. This is the case, for example, in political economy, especially in the attempt which the Austrian school has made to build up a theory of value upon principles furnished by the older individual psychology. But the contributions which psychology has thus far made to social science have been, with a few exceptions, small and insignificant compared with what has been expected from it.

The reasons for this failure of psychology to contribute materially to the solution of social problems have been many. One has already been suggested in the preceding article of this series, namely, the dominance of the individualistic method and point of view in psychological investigation. Another is to be found, perhaps, in the failure to develop a comparative or genetic psychology. The reason, however, which appears to us fundamental and inclusive of the others is that psychology has not been developed from the point of view of *function* or life-process. A mere *structural*² psychology of the adult human individual cannot, from its very nature, give an interpretation of life in its broadest phases, much less of the activities of society. Though the psychical life of the social group may be roughly analogous to the psychical life of the individual, yet the analogy,

¹ This paper appears slightly out of its logical order in the series. Many of its presuppositions will be found in the paper following.

² Cf. TITCHENER on "The Postulates of a Structural Psychology," in the *Philosophical Review*, September, 1898.

if such there be, is wholly on the side of function, not on the side of structure. The whole development of psychology, therefore, which has been represented by such men as Wundt and Külpe, however valuable it may be in other respects, has had no special significance for the development of the social sciences. A functional psychology is what is wanted for the interpretation of society or any section of its activities. The essential principles of such a psychology, we believe, have already been formulated. The credit of having formulated them belongs to Professor John Dewey,¹ a statement of whose point of view is a necessary preliminary to the argument of this paper.

Professor Dewey's psychological point of view may be put somewhat schematically as follows: The fundamental fact in the psychical life, according to him, is not the sensation, but the coördination of the living organism in some activity — the act.² We cannot get back of the coördination in psychology. Wherever we begin, we must begin with a living organism *doing something*. The unit of psychical activity, therefore, is the act or coördination. In reality there is only one large coördination — the act of living or the life-process. But within this supreme coördination there arise minor coördinations in the adapting of one part of the organism to another, or of one portion of the life-process to another portion. Or, looking at the process from the opposite standpoint, we may say particular acts are coördinated, unified, into larger coördinations which control the smaller acts; and all are finally unified into, and controlled by, the general life-process of the organism. Thus the psychical life is to be regarded and interpreted as a function of the general life-process. Function, then, rather than organism or environment, is the thing to be considered in psychology. From this point of

¹The leading ideas of this paper were first suggested to the writer in listening to a course of lectures by Professor Dewey on "Advanced Psychology" in the winter quarter of 1896-7.

²See, concerning the problem here involved, PROFESSOR DEWEY'S article on "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology," in the *Psychological Review* for July, 1896. The coördination (or act) may perhaps be defined as "the bringing to a unity of (objective) aim of minor, unorganized activities." The term "coördination" is preferred to the term "act" merely because it can be given a more definite scientific content.

view all forms of psychical activity can be reduced to two types: coördination and adaptation. All the phenomena of psychical life group themselves about these two fundamental forms—are the outgrowth of them, and are functionally explained by their reference to them. Thus a coördination which has once been successfully established tends to persist, or becomes a habit. The necessity of adjustment, however, arising from some variation in the organism or environment, causes the old coördination or habit to break up, and sensation results. Sensation, then, is the sign of the interruption of a habit, and represents the point at which an activity is reconstructed. The old coördination in breaking up, however, must yield the material for the new coördination; that is, it must be used as means for the construction of a new coördination. The processes of discrimination, attention, and association come in to build up the new coördination. They are all processes which arise only through the transition from one coördination to another. The discriminative process, for example, represents the breakdown of the old coördination, and what we call association represents the building up of the new coördination. Attention represents the conflict of two or more activities involved in the building up of the new coördination; it is the attempt, on the part of the organism, to discover, select, the adequate stimulus for the construction of the new coördination. These illustrations will suffice for our purposes. In the same manner all psychical processes may be interpreted—as referring either to the coördination or to the transition from one coördination to another. The coördination is, therefore, the fundamental and central fact of the psychical life. All other psychical facts are functional expressions of the coördination, or of the relation of one coördination to another within the life-process. Thus the psychical life presents itself as a system of means and ends, whose unity finds expression in the general end of control over the means of existence, that is, over the conditions of survival. Summarizing, then, we may say that Professor Dewey's psychological point of view is that of a life-process, or life-activity, functioning to secure control over its own life-conditions, and thereby its own development. The

resulting interpretation of the facts of the psychical life yields a psychology whose chief categories are coördination, adaptation, habit, instinct, selection, evaluation, and the like; in brief, an *evolutionary* psychology.¹

The value of such a psychology to the social sciences must be evident, even from such a schematic and fragmentary statement as we have given. Such a psychology comes into contact with life at every point and interprets functionally the processes of life; it is no formal, over-abstracted science, but shows us the actual workings of the psychic reality. The question at once suggests itself: Are not these categories, which have been so successfully applied to the interpretation of the psychical life of the individual, also applicable to the interpretation of the life of society on its psychical side? Cannot the fundamental principles of such a functional psychology be transferred at once from the interpretation of the life of the individual to that of society? If it be granted that social groups function, act, as unities, and that therefore they, as well as individual organisms, may be regarded as functional unities, then there would seem to be no logical objection to such a procedure. On the contrary, when both society and the individual are regarded as functional unities, it would seem highly probable that the fundamental principles and categories employed in the interpretation of the psychical life of the one would apply equally in the interpretation of the psychical life of the other. Thus the transference of principles of interpretation from the individual to society may be easily justified as a working hypothesis. Professor Dewey's point of view, if fully stated, would, indeed, be favorable to such an extension of his psychological principles of interpretation to society. He recognizes that the individual life-process is not an isolated fact, but only a differentiated center within a larger life-process of the group. This position implies, not only the possibility of a group psychology, but also the possibility of applying the same fundamental principles of interpretation in it as in

¹Of course, other psychologists have made use of the evolutionary point of view in their interpretation of the psychical life; but their systems have been incapable of assimilating thoroughly evolutionary concepts and principles, and it is only fair to say that their psychologies have not been distinctively evolutionary in their character.

individual psychology. But the real warrant for transferring the principles and categories of a functional psychology of the individual to the interpretation of society must be found in the facts of societary life itself. The question which must be asked, accordingly, is: Are there real processes in the group which correspond to those denoted in the individual by the categories coördination, adaptation, habit, etc.? Is there anything, for example, in group-life answering to the coördination in individual life? If so, does it occupy the same central position in the life of the group as in that of the individual?*

In group-life, as in the life of the individual organism, we cannot get back of the group *doing something*. If we go back of that point, we get merely an aggregation of individuals, of which we predicate no group-life. We may explain biologically how the aggregation was primitively formed, but we do not think of the aggregation as a unity until group-action appears. The group-act is the sign of group-life throughout the scale of living organisms, whether among human beings or among the lowest forms. Forms merely dwelling in proximity can hardly be said to have a common group-life until they become functionally related to each other as parts of a functioning whole. In a psychological interpretation of group-life, then, we must begin with the group *acting together* in some particular way; for it is this which constitutes the group a functional unity. This acting together of the individual organisms in a group evidently

* The equivocal meaning of many sociological terms is a great hindrance to clearness in sociological discussion. Many terms, for example, have both subjective and objective meanings. An attempt has been made in this series of papers, however, to use terms with approximate consistency. Thus, the word "social," ordinarily used in any one of half a dozen different subjective senses, has been used mainly in an objective sense, implying simply "necessary interdependence of forms *among themselves* in the life-process." It is true that this definition, suggested by Professor George H. Mead, widens the meaning of the term very greatly; but the widening is necessary to the proper understanding of the phenomena to which the term is applied. The word "society" has been used in a sense corresponding with that of "social," though often with human cultural or national groups in mind; while the word "group" has been used in a somewhat looser sense, though always implying some measure of "interdependence of forms among themselves." Where it has seemed desirable to use a colorless term, meaning simply "of society," in order especially to exclude the narrower meanings of the word "social," the word "societary" has often been employed.

corresponds in form exactly to the coördination in the individual. We may call it, therefore, the group or social coördination.¹ It is in group-life what the coördination is in the individual organism—the unit of psychical activity, the fundamental psychical fact about which all other facts of psychical activity group themselves. As in the case of the individual, too, particular social coördinations become unified into a general life-process of the group, which we term the social process. The origin of group-acts or coördinations among primitive forms may be explained on biological grounds; but the group-act or coördination is none the less the first psychic manifestation of group-life. It is accordingly the fact upon which social psychology must be built up, and from which it must proceed in functionally interpreting the life of society. The fundamental fact in social psychology is, therefore, the social coördination.

While the social coördination may be objectively defined as the acting together of the individual organisms of a group in some particular way, subjectively it doubtless always involves, where consciousness exists, a certain psychical attitude of the individual members of the group toward each other. At least in so far as concerns human society, the social coördination may be subjectively defined as the mental attitude which the individuals of a group maintain toward each other. Thus in a family group the mental attitude of its members toward each other is an expression of their common group-life and group-activities, and may be expected to change as those activities change. It is evident that we have here to do with the beginnings of social organization. The acting together of the individual organisms of a group in some particular way necessitates relationships among the members of the group, varying according to the

¹ Of course, from one point of view, the group-act, or "social coördination," is but a continuation, an extension, a result, of the acts of the individual members of the group. This point of view is in no way inconsistent with that generally maintained in this paper. We can either look at the group as a whole, or regard it as composed of individual elements. Both points of view are necessary for the full understanding of group-life. The former has been generally maintained by the writer, for the sake of simplicity, though the latter has also occasionally been taken. There is no dualism implied here between the individual and the group; nor elsewhere in the paper, if the argument is properly apprehended.

part which each member plays in the functioning of the whole. These varying relationships subjectively involve varying mental attitudes of the members of the group toward each other. Now, the mental attitude of one member of a group toward another is necessarily that of authority, subordination, equality, or some variation of these three primary "forms of association."¹ Hence the social coördination is the beginning of social organization both on its conscious and unconscious sides. The psychical attitude of the members of a group toward each other is the initial stage of social organization on its conscious side; while from the necessity of functional relationship in a common life-process springs social organization in both its aspects. The organization of any group is accordingly an outcome of its group-coördinations, of its life-process as a group. All social organization, then, is but an expression of social coördination; and it is from this point of view that social organization must be studied if it is to be functionally understood.

It may be objected that "social coördination" is but a new name for the phenomenon of coöperation. The very definitions which have been given of social coördination, it may be urged, validate the objection. The reply is that if by "coöperation" is meant all that we mean by "social coördination," then there is no objection to the use of the term "coöperation." But both popularly and by scientific writers the term "coöperation" has been used in a much more restricted sense. It implies just that element of consciousness on the part of the individuals engaged in group-action which the term "social coördination" is especially designed to exclude. Thus Professor Giddings speaks of coöperation as requiring "unity of purpose and of method on the part of two or more individuals," and says: "There can be no coöperation except among those who are, in good degree, like-minded, and who are so far conscious of their agreement that they can intelligently plan their common activity."² In

¹ The valuable work of Dr. Simmel, of the university of Berlin, in making out and classifying these "forms of association," or, as we would prefer to call them, "types of social coördination," deserves here to be referred to. It is the most serious and important study of social organization yet attempted.

² *Elements of Sociology*, p. 77.

another place he says: "There must be . . . a perception by each of the coöperating individuals that . . . all have the same interest, and that all are endeavoring to accomplish the same end."¹ These statements of Professor Giddings involve, we believe, a correct definition of the term "coöperation" in its usual acceptation. But the large amount of consciousness which they imply on the part of coöperating individuals is just what is often noticeably absent in that acting together of the members of a group which we have called the social coördination. So far from being conscious of any purpose or end, the individual is usually in group-activities unconscious of the connection of his act either with his own life-process or with that of the group. He is conscious, if at all, generally only of the gratification or working out of an instinctive impulse. Especially among lower forms the end which controls the activity cannot be supposed to exist for the consciousness of the form. Consciousness of the task to be performed, of the end to be reached, in the acting together of members of a group would seem to be the exception rather than the rule, if we take into view the group-life of the whole organic world; while consciousness of the "acting together" as a definite means to an end is a still rarer phenomenon. The psychical attitude which social coördination involves (where consciousness exists) on the part of the coördinated individuals is not a consciousness of "acting together," or even of a definite task to be performed, but rather a feeling or sense of relationship to one another. The social coördination, in other words, comes into consciousness only at a relatively late period in mental development, and then only when some new condition necessitates the reconstruction of the coördination. It is evident, then, that if the term "coöperation" is used to cover all cases of social coördination, it must be used wholly in an objective sense and must be stripped of its usual implication of consciousness. If used in this sense, there is no objection to saying, as Spencer does, "Social life in its entirety is carried on by coöperation;" and the proposition would be equally true if the limiting adjective were dropped. On account

¹ *Elements of Sociology*, p. 78.

of the narrowed meaning of the word in popular usage, however, it would be better, in our estimation, to borrow a term like "coördination" from a science which in its essentials is one with social psychology, and to retain the word "coöperation" for those cases to which it manifestly applies: namely, the cases of social coördination which have come more or less fully into consciousness.

A social coördination which has once been successfully established, as in the case of the coördination in the individual organism, tends to persist, or becomes a social habit. Social habits are the basis of all activities of group-life. Every new social coördination, every new adaptation in the group-life, is made upon the basis of already existing social habits. Without the fixity or definiteness which social habit gives to the forms of group-activities there could be no group-life, as unity and stability in the group would be lacking. On the other hand, too great fixity of social habit gives rise to many of the abnormal phenomena of societary life. As in the case of the individual, if the social habit does not retain a certain amount of flexibility, enabling the group to adapt its activities to a constantly changing environment, then it becomes of disadvantage to the group in its life-struggle, causing pathologic conditions, and even the disintegration and destruction of the group. Social habits pass insensibly into customs and institutions. The term "custom" is, indeed, almost synonymous with the term "social habit." But customs are usually thought of as peculiar to the group, that is, as the habits which distinguish one group from another. Thus an almost universally prevalent social habit, like the storing up of food products for future consumption, is rarely spoken of as a custom. Institutions are social habits which have received a peculiar social sanction and which have been organized more or less fully into the structure of the group. Forms of marriage, property, government, religion, and the like become such. From the point of view of social psychology, at least, an institution is not an individual invention. It is rather an organized mode of societary activity, a social habit, which has been of such life-saving advantage to the group that the authority and sanction

of the group as a whole have been conferred upon it. Laws are formal expressions of social habits which have come into consciousness. They are established by the group for the sake of greater control over the habit. Nearly the same thing may be said of ethical rules which have been approved by the group. Habit, then, is a category which applies to societary as well as to individual life. It is a fundamental category in interpreting the psychical life of society, if that interpretation proceeds from a functional point of view.

With the idea of transition as applied to social life we are already familiar. In the terminology of social psychology a social transition is obviously a transition from one social habit to another, from one social coördination to another. In the face of new life-conditions social habits, like individual habits, must be readjusted. In other words, the old social coördination breaks down and the phenomenon of adaptation, of building up a new social coördination, arises. It is here that some of the most important of societary phenomena come in. Where processes of discrimination, association, and attention in the individual aid in building up a new coördination, processes of discussion, social suggestion, and social selection in the group come in to construct the new social coördination. The process of discussion, which may be called the societary process of discrimination, represents especially the breakdown of the old social coördination, while the processes of social suggestion and social selection particularly represent the building up of the new coördination. In human society, at least, all these processes may arise in the transition from one coördination to another, that is, in the adaptation of the group life-process to some new condition in either the external or the internal environment. Adaptation,² then, is a fact of group-life as well as of individual life, and next to coördination the most fundamental and important fact.

Thus in theory the categories and principles of a functional psychology of the individual seem to apply in a subjective interpretation of the social life. Let us now see how they fit into the concrete facts of the social process, and whether or not they

² Or accommodation, as Professor Baldwin would prefer to say.

will serve at all to interpret that process in its various phases. The case of political revolutions furnishes us a good illustration with which to begin, both because revolutions are such striking facts in the social process, and because from a sociological point of view no satisfactory theory of revolutions has yet been proposed.

The transition from one habit to another is not always an easy thing either for individuals or social groups. Where the habit has become inflexible, where peculiar conditions in the inner or outer environment prevent the normal break-up of the habit, in short, where power of adaptation has for any reason been lost, violent disturbances of the psychical life are apt to take place in the change from one habit to another. Especially is this the case when the habit to be changed is a general one which affects the whole life-process. From a psychological point of view revolutions are such disturbances in the psychical life of society, produced by the breaking down of a social habit under abnormal conditions. Where social habits have for any reason become inflexible—as is so often the case with institutions, bolstered up and exploited as they frequently are by class interest, even though they are opposed to the interest of the society as a whole—in the face of new life-conditions there is apt to be a revolution. Instead of the gradual and peaceful transformation of one social habit into another which ordinarily goes on in society, in a revolution we witness the sudden and violent breakdown of social habits which have long outlived their usefulness to the social process. The breakdown is sudden because the old habit has been sustained until accumulating opposing tendencies have overwhelmed it; it is violent just in proportion as hindrances stand in its way. Instead of the ordinary period of uncertainty and confusion which normally follows the breakdown of a habit both in the individual and in society, in a revolution we have a period of great confusion, at times amounting even to absolute disorganization or anarchy. The confusion and disorganization are, of course, proportionate to the importance of the habit in the societary life-process and to the completeness and suddenness of the breakdown. The recuperative

vigor of a society may be such that a new social coördination, adapted to the new life-conditions, will speedily be constructed, which will put an end to the reign of confusion and anarchy. Or, where a society has largely lost its power of adaptation, the effort to build up a new coördination, adapted to the new life-conditions, may repeatedly fail, as it did in the case of the French Revolution. Under such circumstances we have a series of unsuccessful experiments, extending over a longer or shorter period of time, in building up new social coördinations; hence there may be a series of revolutions, each of which may add to the confusion and anarchy already existing. For such a society often the only hope of avoiding disintegration is to find or "select" an individual who, when clothed with sovereign authority, shall be capable of reorganizing and readjusting the societary life in accordance with the new conditions; hence the tendency to dictatorship which revolution often breeds. The phenomena of revolutions are thus susceptible of interpretation through the application of the categories and principles of a functional psychology. Such a subjective interpretation needs, of course, to be supplemented by an objective interpretation; but the important thing we wish here to be noted is that a social psychology built up upon the facts of coördination and adaptation in social life has a theory of revolutions to offer. That theory is, in summary, that revolutions are caused by the breakdown of social habits under abnormal conditions, such as we have noted above; that, in other words, the phenomena of revolutions are all susceptible of interpretation as phenomena which in principle may arise in any psychical organism in the transition from one habit to another under like abnormal conditions.

It is recognized that the theory of revolutions here proposed is not wholly new, but is implicit in the writings of many historians and social thinkers. Nevertheless, this is the first explicit statement of the theory that we know of. It is introduced here, in a discussion of the principles upon which a social psychology must be built up, as a theory growing out of our point of view and illustrating the application of that point of view to the concrete problems of social life.

In a similar manner the principles of interpretation furnished by a functional psychology may be applied to other social problems. Though we can but roughly apply our principles in most instances, there is, so far as we have been able to discover, no case of change within a society to which such principles of interpretation will not apply, and upon which they will not throw some light, whether the transition be one occupying a few years or a century. Let us now, for the sake of further illustration, take another concrete case in which the transition has been gradual and unattended by violent disturbance in the social process. The semi-patriarchal type of family which prevailed in Christendom up to the present century has been gradually breaking down. It has been unfitted to meet the new conditions of modern life. The old social habit has been going to pieces, and the usual confusion, uncertainty, and disorganization, attendant upon the breakdown of an important habit, have been manifested. Divorces have increased, and irregular forms of union have been, perhaps, more common. But in the meanwhile a new type of family, a new social habit, has been forming. By discussion, continuous social suggestion, social selection of ideas and ideals—processes familiar in every period of transition in human society—a new social coördination is being built up. We have every reason to believe, therefore, that when the process of social selection has been completed, and ideas adequate to the construction of a new social coördination, adapted to the present life-conditions, have been found, there will be a return to comparative fixity in the form of family life. A new type of family, in other words, will have emerged, a new social habit will have been formed. Present disturbances in family life, then, are to be regarded largely as phenomena attendant upon a transitional stage, when an old social habit has broken down and a new habit has not yet been formed. Thus the principles of a functional social psychology may throw light upon present social phenomena and problems as well as upon those of the past. Hundreds of illustrations of the application of the principles and categories of functional psychology to societal changes

might be drawn from industrial, political, and social history, but space permits only the giving of the above two.

The fact must here be noted that the breakdown of a social habit is not always followed by the building up of a new one in its place. The breakdown may be a sign, not of adaptation, but of social degeneration or dissolution; or a social habit may be simply "weeded out," as it were, because it has become of disadvantage to the society in the life-struggle. With societies not degenerate, however, the breakdown of a social habit of any importance or value in the life-process is always followed by the building up of a new social habit. With societies which, though not degenerate, yet contain a large number of degenerate individuals, the building-up process may occupy a period of centuries, and may involve (as it always does *implicitly* involve) a selection of individuals, as well as of psychical stimuli, ideas, etc.; but the new social habit comes in time, if the society survives. Before the church, for example, succeeded in building up a new type of family life, at the beginning of our era, upon the ruins of the patriarchal Roman type, a process of selection involving both individuals and ideas had to go on for centuries; but the Christian type of family of the Middle Ages was finally evolved. In any such case, where certain individuals in a society are hindrances to the building up of a new social habit necessary to the survival or development of the society, the tendency manifestly is to select those individuals whose beliefs, ideals, and general psychical attitude are favorable to the construction of the new social coördination, and to suppress the others.

A word may here, perhaps, appropriately be said in reference to social selection. Professor James and Professor Baldwin are right in emphasizing the importance of social selection in the societal process. But neither has given any adequate reason why one individual or one idea is "selected," rather than another individual or another idea. Both have failed to show the basis upon which society makes its selection from the variations produced by individuals, utilizing some, rejecting others. Both are practically content to state the fact that *society selects*, without inquiring into the causes of the selection. From our point of

view it is obvious that social selection is exactly analogous to the selection which goes on in the individual through the process of attention in the building up of a new coördination. Society selects ideas and individuals, in other words, upon the basis of their utility in building up or maintaining its coördinations. It is especially in the building up of new social habits that the process of social selection is manifest. A Napoleon could never have been so acceptable to the French people if the nation as a whole had not been striving to build up new and stable institutions after the repeated failures of its revolutionary governments. If a Napoleon had not been found by the French people, some other, inferior individual would have been selected to perform his task. Concerning Cromwell, or any other great historical personage, essentially the same may be said as concerning Napoleon, namely, that he was "called forth," selected, "by the social needs of the hour," the need being the reconstruction of some societary activity. The social selection of ideas is made upon the same basis as that of individuals. Those ideas, beliefs, ideals, philosophies, psychical attitudes, etc., are selected by a society which aid it in building up new coördinations or maintaining old ones. Ideas survive, not because of any inherent fitness to survive, nor yet because of their "fitness for imitative reproduction,"¹ as some would maintain, but because of their utility² in the social life-process. If it be asked why certain ideas arise and permeate entire societies at certain periods, the answer, from the point of view maintained throughout this paper, must be, because such ideas are selected by the social life-process to aid in building up new coördinations. The genesis of the states of the social mind, in other words, is not different from the genesis of the states of the individual mind. Ideas make and unmake the world, not because they are forces outside of the life-process, but because of their connection with that process; because they are, as it were, tools forged by it for its own development and perfecting.

¹ BALDWIN, *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, p. 183.

² "Utility" must here be taken, of course, in its broadest sense, not as used by the pleasure-pain philosophers, but as simply implying that which favors the constructive process of life.

We are tempted to follow farther the application of the principles and categories of functional psychology in the interpretation of the phenomena of the social life, but the scope of this paper does not permit. Criticism of theories which do not seem to accord with the point of view of this article must also be left till a later date. In the meanwhile, if this article succeeds in arousing a candid and careful consideration of its chief proposition, namely, that a social psychology can be constructed upon the fundamental principles and categories of a functional psychology of the individual, its main purpose will be accomplished. What we have said has been in the way of illustrating this proposition. It has been an attempt to demonstrate the possibility of constructing, rather than to construct, such a social psychology.

CHAPTER III.

THE NATURE AND TASK OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY.

THE chief distinction between individual and social psychology is simply one of point of view. The point of view in the one is the individual, in the other the social group. There are other distinctions, but this is the fundamental one. Were it possible to explain everything while maintaining the standpoint of the individual, there would be no demand for and no need of a social psychology. But throughout the organic world group-life is a fact no less tangible and real than individual life. If from one point of view it is possible to see only individuals in the world, from another, and not less objective, point of view it is possible to see only social groups in which the individual appears as an element. Likewise, in the realm of psychical phenomena, we may consider either the psychical life of the individual or the psychical life of the group in which the individual life has its being. Both points of view are necessary for any adequate understanding of human life on its psychical side; they are supplementary to each other, and yield a science which is philosophically a unity. The separation of social from individual psychology is, then, wholly a matter of convenience; merely a division of labor which in no way implies a dualism between the two branches of the science. When the center of interest lies in explaining the psychical life of the group, many facts come into view which in explaining the mental life of the individual are unimportant or not prominent. On this account the existence of social psychology as a separate discipline is justified as a matter of practical convenience, although logically it is but a branch of the general science of psychology.

The individual cannot be isolated from the group in the real world, nor the group from the individual. They are related as the part is to the whole, as the cell is to the organism. Knowledge of the one is necessary to the understanding of the other; and it is only the possibility of two points of view, of two centers

of interest, which makes possible any division of labor between the psychology which considers the individual and the psychology which studies the group-life. So long as the center of interest is in the individual—in explaining his psychical constitution, activities, and development—we are in the field of individual psychology, no matter what the subject-matter that we are dealing with objectively may be. But whenever the center of interest is in the group, in explaining its organization, activities, and development, we are in the field of social psychology. Thus, individual psychology has a perfect right to consider the psychical life of the group in order to throw light upon the individual mind; while social psychology must study the individual, because the whole with which it deals is a complex made up of individual elements. An illustration from the history of biological science may serve to make our meaning clearer. At one time it was thought that in order to understand the organism it was necessary only to study the cell; that from the nature of the cell the development, structure, and activities of the whole organism could be explained. It is now generally admitted, however, that the organism cannot be explained from the point of view of the cell alone, but that the point of view of the organism as a whole must also be taken if we are to understand many things concerning its structure and development. The organism is no longer regarded merely as the sum of cellular activities, but rather as a single process. Thus, modern biology studies the organism as a functional unity as well as an aggregation of cells, using the one point of view to supplement the other. The analogous development in the history of the social sciences need hardly be pointed out. Individualism has assumed to be able fully to explain society from the nature of the individual; but gradually it has been perceived that society itself must be regarded as an organic, functioning unity before the social process can be understood. As to its origin, then, social psychology is simply an expression of the need of considering the social process on its subjective side from the standpoint of the social whole, just as individual psychology is an expression of the need of understanding the subjective nature of the individual.

If the above positions are correct, it is evident that the only social psychology which is possible is a psychology of the activities and development of the social group, a "functional psychology of the collective mind," as we shall see later that it may be termed. The genesis of the social feelings in the individual cannot possibly be made the subject-matter of social psychology, as some recent writers have attempted to do,¹ if it be once admitted that individual psychology has the right to exploit the whole universe in order to explain the psychical nature of the individual. Nor can the psychology of the behavior of an individual in the presence of another of its own species be called social psychology, for the same reason. Both of these important fields of research, belonging as they do to individual psychology, must be carefully distinguished from social or group psychology, if the latter is not to be involved in unnecessary confusion with the former. Nevertheless, in these two provinces of investigation individual psychology approaches closely to the proper territory of social psychology, and there can be little profit in trying to set up a hard and fast boundary between them, since the one science is necessarily dependent upon the other for completeness of view.

While social psychology may be thus comparatively easily differentiated from individual psychology, it would seem less easy to differentiate it from sociology. Is not this psychology of the functioning and development of social groups, it may be

¹ See especially an article on "Social Psychology and Sociology," by GUSTAVO TOSTI, in the *Psychological Review* for July, 1898. Dr. Tosti seems to recognize the weakness of his position, for he says: "Social psychology is to be conceived as a mere name for a chapter of [individual] genetic psychology." It could not, indeed, be otherwise; for a science studying the rise and growth of the "social state of mind" could not be isolated from general genetic psychology. What we have called "social psychology," however — viz., the law of the phenomena dependent upon the interaction of individual minds — Dr. Tosti calls "sociology." He even goes so far as to speak of the work of Lazarus and Steinthal as distinctively sociological rather than psychological. The quarrel can be, therefore, only one about names; for Dr. Tosti evidently means by "sociology" exactly what we mean by "social psychology." But with a recent writer in this JOURNAL (Vol. IV, p. 671, note) we would like to suggest, *à propos* of such attempts to confine sociology to the consideration of purely psychological phenomena, that biological sociology "may one day wreak a poetic vengeance upon those who are so fond of proclaiming its defunct condition."

asked, just what is meant by sociology? Is not a psychological interpretation of the social process the only "sociology" attainable? Many writers are inclined to answer such questions in the affirmative, but from our point of view the answer is plainly negative. Sociology seeks an all-sided interpretation of the social process, while social psychology gives but a one-sided interpretation. Sociology seeks a complete view of the life of society, and, therefore, considers objective quite as much as subjective factors; it turns to biology as much as to psychology for the explanation of societary facts; it is a synthetic, philosophic discipline which seeks to reach the widest generalizations concerning the life of society through a synthesis of the results of special sciences. Sociology, in brief, is social philosophy, and is no more to be identified with the special sciences from which it draws its materials than general philosophy is to be identified with a summation of the results of the special sciences. Social psychology, on the other hand, deals with but one aspect of the social reality, namely, the psychical life of social groups. It is a special science, though fundamental to all the other special social sciences on their subjective side, just as the biological "theory of population," or demography, may be considered fundamental to them on their objective side. As the fundamental subjective science of society, social psychology is one of the most important elements in that final synthesis of subjective and objective societary facts which sociology seeks to effect.

The beginnings of social psychology as a scientific discipline are to be found in the *Völkerpsychologie* of Lazarus and Steinthal. But the ambiguity¹ in the German word, as well as the semi-mystical philosophy associated with it by some, are not to be carried over into the modern science. Social psychology, though not disclaiming or ashamed of its origin, must claim a process of growth; as a conception, at least, it has been constantly

¹ "Völkerpsychologie" is often, *e. g.*, interpreted to mean "race-psychology." But, according to our position, there evidently could be a "race-psychology" only if the race be supposed to form in some sense a single society, a functional whole. Again, if by "Völkerpsychologie" is meant "the comparative psychology of races," it is evidently merely a chapter in genetic psychology, and is not "social psychology," as we have defined the science.

increasing in clearness and definiteness with the development of the general science of which it forms a branch. In the meanwhile, there has grown up also from the *Völkerpsychologie* of Lazarus and Steinthal a science which studies the socio-psychical phenomena of primitive and savage peoples. This is modern folk-psychology. It may be roughly conceived as being related to social psychology in general as child-psychology is to individual psychology. At any rate, it seeks to find among the so-called nature peoples the simplest beginnings of the complex socio-psychological phenomena of modern societies.

The field of social psychology may be thus marked off with sufficient clearness from other fields of psychological investigation; but the question, some may say, remains whether there is any portion or aspect of reality which corresponds to the territory assigned to the science; whether or not social psychology is anything more than an imaginary, fictitious science without a basis of facts. Hitherto in our discussion it has been assumed that the psychical life of society is such an evident aspect of reality as to be hardly needful of any special process of proof; and such we hold it to be. But the question is, of course, a legitimate one, and demands formal consideration. Is there, then, a collective psychical life, in which the psychical life of the individual is but a constitutive element? Or is the psychical life of society but a figment of the speculative imagination of sociologists; a name for the mere sum total of individual psychical phenomena, not itself an organized unity? In answer to such questions the older social psychologists have rightly pointed to such phenomena as public opinion, the *Zeitgeist*, national ideals, customs, and institutions, language, tradition, and mythologies. They have shown that these are organic growths, and in no sense mere summations or averages of the psychical expressions of individuals. They are, that is, products of a common life which is organically unified, though constituted of individual elements. Without group-life, without a general life-process which includes all the individual lives of the group, these socio-psychical products could not possibly have arisen. The *Zeitgeist*, for example, is not merely an expression of individual interests and activities;

it is much more an expression of the interest and activities of the national or cultural group as a whole. If it rested upon purely individual interests, it would be without a principle of organization and could not manifest those uniformities of development which have been so often noted by philosophers and historians. It is inconceivable, indeed, that any of the phenomena we have mentioned should either arise or exist unless there is some general process back of them which includes and organically interrelates the psychical processes of individuals. The conclusion, therefore, is that there could be no such phenomena as public opinion, the *Zeitgeist*, tradition, social ideals, and the like, if the individuals of a social group were psychically autonomous and independent. But if there is a general social psychical process of which these phenomena are the expressions, then there can be no objection to examining the method or technique of that process; and this constitutes the ample field of investigation for social psychology.

Another argument that has been used to prove the reality of the psychical life of social groups, and especially of nations, has been the appeal to direct experience. Every traveler, even under the homogeneous conditions of modern western civilization, has noted the immense difference between the psychical atmosphere of one country and that of another. He has found on crossing national boundaries, not only different institutions, customs, and beliefs, but he has found different ways of thinking, a different philosophy of life, different ideals, motives, and interests, all so fundamentally at variance with his own, and yet so uniformly manifested throughout the national group, as to suggest that nations as well as individuals have a psychical life, distinct from that of all other nations. These facts have been expressed in such sayings as, "Every nation is a state of mind," and in the common attribution of individuality to states. Of course, the appeal to direct experience in this case proves nothing; it is only worthy of note because it indicates some truth lying back of the perceptions. The perception that a nation is an individuality, indeed, may be found to have more than a mere metaphorical basis.

But the real proof of the existence of socio-psychical processes is found in the fact that social groups *act*, that they are functional unities capable of making inner and outer adjustments. The fact that the activities of individuals are constantly coördinated into larger group-acts or activities, and that these group-activities vary and succeed one another according to observed uniformities, like the acts of an individual, necessitates the supposition of some principle of organization. This principle of organization can be no other on the psychological side than a psychical process which extends throughout the group and unifies it—though set up, of course, by the psychical interaction of its individual elements. It may be doubted if any group-act can take place without such a principle of organization. Even the simple impulsive reaction of a nation to an injury by a foreign foe presupposes an organized life; and if organized at all, then necessarily on its psychical side. The fact that societies are functional wholes, then, is the fact upon which all proof of the existence of socio-psychical processes must rest; for upon it depends the whole series of phenomena which social psychology investigates—social organization, social institutions, customs, tradition, language, public opinion, etc. Every recognition of the fact that societies are functional unities carries with it implicitly the recognition of the reality of socio-psychical processes. The effort of all sociological writers, for example, has been to prove the reality of a social process, while of late an increasing number have striven to show that this process is essentially or predominantly a psychical one. Thus the reality of socio-psychical processes has been implicitly recognized; and there can be no more objection to framing a science to investigate their technique or mechanism than there is to a science of the technique of individual psychical processes. Such a science is, indeed, inevitable, call it what we may, sociology or social psychology, although the latter name will seem preferable to those who hold, with the writer, that the science is a part of general psychology.

We have styled social psychology the science of the mechanism or technique of socio-psychical processes. Just as individual

psychology does not investigate directly the psychical elements of individual consciousness, but rather the mechanism of psychical processes, so the task of social psychology is to examine, not public opinion, language, customs, institutions, and the like, as products of the collective psychical life, but the mechanism of the socio-psychical processes through which these products arise and change. This is no arbitrary limitation of the field of social psychology, but a necessity. Just as it has been found in individual psychology that only the mechanism of psychical processes can be reduced to scientific formulation, so it will be found in social psychology. The work of the latter, then, is the formulation of the method of socio-psychical processes. If it be asked with what portion of the psychical nature of the individual social psychology will particularly deal, when the group is regarded as constituted of individual elements rather than as a unity, the answer is, with the instinctive, impulsive, affective side of the individual. The reason for this reply is plain. The intellectual side of the individual represents the choice of means and, therefore, can be, without danger to the group, individual; but the impulsive, affective side represents the choice of ends, and, therefore, must be, and is, organized more fully into the life of the group. The impulsive, habitual, emotional side of the life of the individual, in other words, is normally submerged, as it were, in the life of his group; while the rational, cognitive side is left freer, and so is more peculiarly individual. Social psychology, accordingly, will deal especially with the former, in so far as it considers the individual as an element in the social whole; and while it may not encroach upon the field of individual psychology in its consideration of the impulsive, affective side of the individual, it is just here that an enrichment of the latter science may be expected from the development of a social psychology.

We do not shrink from stating and defending the parallelism between the individual and society which has been freely implied throughout the argument of this series of papers. The parallelism is of course a functional one, not structural. Like any other parallelism observed in nature, it is good only as far as

it goes; it is scientifically useful as a clue in discovery, but it ought not to be converted into a dogma to which all facts are made to conform. The parallelism between the psychical life of the individual and that of society is not a new perception, but has long been made use of by social thinkers. It has recently been restated by Professor Baldwin as a parallelism in functioning and in development¹—the only form, it seems to us, in which it is defensible. Some parallelism between the individual and society is, indeed, almost a necessity of thought. Every attempt to apply psychology in the interpretation of history implies such parallelism. A nation can only be thought of as a functional unity, and so in some sense as an individuality, if thought of as a whole; therefore, any psychological principle which may be used to interpret some movement, some period of development or transformation, in its history will necessarily be a principle which will apply equally to the life of the individual. Hence those who are quickest to deny all parallelism between the individual and society will be found, nevertheless, implying such parallelism in their interpretations of history.

Social psychology, then, in regarding social groups as functional unities, necessarily regards them as individualities or individuals. It does not say that they are individuals; it is not called upon to enter upon the metaphysical question as to what constitutes an individual. It holds to the empirical standpoint, and merely says that *for purposes of interpretation* social groups may be regarded as individuals, because they are found to exhibit the same general laws of function and development. But, while a parallelism in functioning and development may be demonstrable, the social psychologist must ever bear in mind the vast difference between the psychical life of the individual and that of society, especially on the side of structure. The psychical life of the individual is highly unified, both structurally and functionally. In all the higher reaches of organic life individual organisms usually present a unified consciousness; but social groups present no such unified consciousness. In

¹ *Social and Ethical Interpretations of Mental Development*, pp. 512-15, 521-3.

them consciousness is discrete, resident in the individual elements, not in a specially differentiated organ. They are, structurally, then, of a much lower type than their individual elements. A socio-psychical process is possible only through the psychical interaction of the individual elements. The unity of the socio-psychical process, therefore, is almost purely a functional one. The failure to perceive clearly this truth and its implication, that the parallelism between the psychical life of the individual and that of society is almost wholly on the functional side, has been, in our estimation, the cause of much of the unreality and seeming absurdity of many attempted social psychologies in the past.

In all that has just been said the organic nature of society is plainly implied. The psychical parallelism asserted between the individual and the social group may, indeed, from one point of view, be regarded as a corollary of the theory that the social group is an organism. We are evidently, then, under the burden of defending the organic theory of society. Just at present this theory is in disrepute, perhaps justly so, because of the absurd extremes to which it has been carried by some of its supporters. But that society is an organism, in the broad sense of that term, no one who has examined all the facts in the case can reasonably doubt. The organic nature of the societary life is as much a fact as the chemical nature of physiological processes, and is just as demonstrable. Properly understood, the proposition should be indeed self-evident. The arguments in favor of this view have been ably stated by several writers,¹ and need not be repeated here; but one or two points may be noted. One is the well-known biological fact that the tendency of living matter is to assume functional, and so organic, relations with other living matter with which it comes into contact. Probably it was thus that multicellular forms arose from the original unicellular forms. Now, it would seem that this principle would continue to act in the case of multicellular forms coming into more or less functional contact with each other through living together in groups. We should expect the individuals of the group to become organically related among themselves, and the group as

¹ See especially MACKENZIE'S *Introduction to Social Philosophy*, chap. iii.

a whole to become so organized as to constitute in a very real sense a low type of organism; and this is exactly what we find. Again, the organic nature of the life of the species is conceded by all biological thinkers; yet the arguments which are used to support this truth could be used with double their force in defense of the theory of the organic nature of societal life. And it is safe to say that no more is meant in principle in the one case than in the other. The organic nature of society is, indeed, the presupposition upon which all social science rests. A science of societal activities, as distinct from a science of individual activities, is absurd if society does not constitute an organic unity. The opposition to the organic theory of society comes from those who are anxious to emphasize the psychical side of the social process. They fail to see that that process could have no psychical side if it were not fundamentally an organic process; that society as a psychical fact presupposes society as an organic fact. The answer to those who wish to regard society merely as a "psychological organization" is, then, that all psychological organization presupposes biological organization.¹

While social psychology must rest upon the organic nature of society as the presupposition of all its investigations, it must distinguish carefully between the fact of the organic nature of society and analogies with biological organisms which may as often be misleading as helpful. The differences between social groups and biological organisms are obvious, and fundamental. Not only are the latter more highly unified, both structurally and functionally, than the former, but there is also a qualitative difference. In the biological organism consciousness is resident in the organism as a whole, while in the social group consciousness is resident in the individual elements, giving these a large degree of autonomy. The result is that, while in the biological organism the principle of organization is entirely physiological, in social groups the principle of organization tends to become more and more psychological as we pass from lower to higher stages of development. In the lowest societies of the animal

¹ Cf. MARSHALL, *Instinct and Reason*, p. 183.

world only the physiological principle of organization is visible, but when we reach the human plane, artificial groups, as it were, based upon interests, purposes, etc., appear within the natural, genetic groups. Although these "artificial" groups are relatively unstable, compared with the genetic groups within which they appear, yet their persistence for considerable periods shows how largely the organization of human society has become psychological rather than physiological. It would, indeed, be easy to show that in the most advanced human societies the principle of organization is predominantly psychological. Human society may, therefore, with propriety be styled a psychical organism¹ — a term which has the advantage of implying at once the organic nature of its life and the dominance of the psychological over the physiological principle of organization. The social psychologist cannot go far astray with such a picture before the mind's eye to guide him in his investigation and reasoning.

The value of a social psychology worked out from the point of view of society as a functioning whole, as a "psychical organism," may be questioned. But the value of any science lies in what it can do. What such a social psychology can do in the way of explaining the life of society, and ultimately in contributing principles for the guidance of practical social activity, is the only answer to those who question the value of the science. We have tried to show in a former paper what social psychology can do in the way of explaining a few of the phenomena of society; but its full value and justification as a science will be evident only when it can show the technique of the entire socio-psychical process. When it can do this, it will be among the most practical of the sciences, and will win the gratitude of humanity, even as the physical sciences have done. The social psychologist seeks no other justification of his labors than such a practical result; and until it is attained he has faith enough in his science to be willing "to labor and to wait."

¹ The expression "psychological organization," used by Professor Baldwin, seems to us less happy, not only for the reason noted in the text, but because the word "organization" is often used to imply a *voluntarily* formed association, and so smacks of the old contract theory of society.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONCEPT OF THE SOCIAL MIND.

It must be admitted that the concept of a social mind does not appeal to the "plain man." If the "plain man's" judgment were our criterion of science, social psychology, along with the theory of a luminiferous ether in physics and many other notable theories, would have to be consigned to the limbo of speculative fancies of over-erudite philosophers. There are others to whom, while not "plain-minded," the idea of a social mind will seem scarcely less absurd, either on account of some habit of thought or on account of a philosophic bias. Those who have been in the habit of associating with the word "mind" all that is usually implied in the English word "soul" will naturally be horrified on being told that societies have "minds." Again, a thorough-going individualist, fortified with a monadistic, Leibnizian metaphysic, is hardly to be expected to find proof for the existence of socio-psychical processes in the facts of societary life; for, according to his philosophic bias, are not individuals original and indestructible entities "without windows in their souls"? However, the social psychologist would get along very well if he had only to struggle with these two types of the learned and with the "plain man." But there is a third type of the learned whom he may well despair of convincing. These are those persons who, while able to see details, are not able to see the wider facts which connect the details. They cannot see unity in multiplicity, the whole process lying back of the more visible portions, or, as the old adage puts it, "the woods for the trees." They are not to be blamed for this, for their defect is due to their mental constitution rather than to an acquired bias. But because certain minds cannot see the truth in the perceptions which social psychology is trying to enforce is no reason for rejecting them as mere fancies. This is especially true of the conception of a "social mind." The term is undoubtedly

an unhappy one in many ways, as it tends to express too much, but a better one has unfortunately not yet been found. Let us see in the light of our past reasoning what content it can be given, and what the probable facts are which it is meant to cover.

The old-time individualist, as we have already hinted, has an easy way of disposing of the concept of the social mind. According to him, every man stands, as it were, upon a pedestal of his own. The individual is isolated, is unconnected with his fellows, save in a mechanical way. Even communication is regarded, either as quite inexplicable, or as a sort of semi-mechanical process by which ideas are converted into signs and transferred in some mysterious way from one mind to another. The psychical life of the individual is left by individualism, in a word, far more an unconnected fact than his physiological life. To anyone with such a bias the concept of a social mind, whatever content it be given, must appear as nonsense. But philosophical individualism, even in its modified forms, is as much an anachronism in the light of modern science, especially modern anthropology and ethnology, as the theory of special creation is in biology. Not only the form, but also largely the content of the psychical life of the individual has been shown to be due to his membership in his group, to the fact that he is a functioning element in a larger functional whole. The special creationist and the individualist may each persist in his theory, but neither can longer influence the tide of thought.

At the opposite extreme from individualism we find a theory equally unjustified by the facts. This is a curious mixture of mysticism and the mediæval logical realism, according to which the social mind is an entity distinct from and above the minds of individuals. Like the "soul" of mediæval philosophy the social mind is conceived of as a mysterious entity, which has a life of its own, independent of individual lives, yet in some way ruling or overruling the latter. Whether anyone ever seriously held such a theory in recent times may be doubted, but it is practically the theory which has been imputed to many of the pioneers in the field of social psychology. The mere statement of the theory is sufficient to indicate its absurdity, and likewise

the absurdity of assigning to the term "social mind" such a content as it would imply.

Between these two extreme views lie a number of theories which may be considered either as modifications of the one or the other, or as representing independent points of view. We shall notice but two of these, though they are characteristic. The first is Professor Giddings' theory of the social mind. Professor Giddings identifies the social mind with "the simultaneous like action of the minds of like socii."¹ He says: "To the group of facts that may be described as the simultaneous like mental-activity of two or more individuals in communication with one another, or as a concert of the emotion, thought, and will of two or more communicating individuals, we give the name social mind. This name, accordingly, should be regarded as meaning just this group of facts and nothing more."² Again: "*In its simplest form*, the social mind is nothing more or less than the simultaneous like responsiveness of like minds to the same stimulus."³ The social mind, then, according to Professor Giddings, reduces itself to the "like responsiveness of like minds to the same stimulus." There is no reference to a psychological process interrelating individual psychological processes; there is even no reference to a common life-process. Men might as well be so many radiometers exposed to the stimulus of the sun's rays. They would still exhibit the phenomena of the social mind in its simplest form, according to Professor Giddings' definition. The conception is mechanical, it is unorganic; it is, in fact, individualistic in a high degree. The individual is here still conceived as the independent entity which individualism has always asserted him to be. This is probably not due to Professor Giddings' individualistic bias, but rather to the individualistic and mechanical character of the psychology which he has adopted, and which colors all his thought quite as much as his theory of the social mind.⁴ In common with the psychologists from whom he

¹ *Elements of Sociology*, p. 121.

² *Ibid.*, p. 120.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁴ In his earlier work (*Principles of Sociology*) and in places in the work from which we have quoted, it is fair to say, there are implications that the social mind is something more than "like responsiveness of like minds to the same stimulus;" but these are not carried out, and the general impression of his readers is as we have stated it.

borrowed his psychology he has committed the fallacy of mistaking the results of a process for the process itself. Professor Giddings' attempt to fix the content of the term "social mind," then, we cannot accept as satisfactory, for it is not based upon an organic view of the psychical life of society, and, indeed, it makes a social psychology logically impossible.

The other theory of the social mind which we wish to notice is that represented by Tarde, Le Bon, and to some degree by Professor Baldwin. They make the essence of the social mind to consist in the processes of suggestion and imitation. We cannot go into an elaborate criticism of this theory here, but must reserve such for a later chapter. It is sufficient to point out that this theory is also a diluted form of individualism, making men copying machines of one another, as it were, by leaving out of account the reference of suggestion and imitation to a common life-process. It is true that these writers have pointed out a part of the actual socio-psychical process, but they have mistaken this part for the whole. By disregarding the connection of the processes of suggestion and imitation with the common life-process, that is, by disregarding the organic aspect of the societary life, they have left the social process quite unconnected with anything else in the universe, making it seem an arbitrary and almost artificial affair; at the same time they have set the individual upon his old pedestal as the entity from which all things in society proceed. Professor Baldwin has in part perceived these errors. He has perceived the mechanical character of imitation when at its purest, and the lack of a principle of organization in the mere imitative process.¹ More important still, he has perceived that social suggestion is a development in social life. He says: "Social suggestibility could not be the original form of man's [social] life, for then there would be an absolute gulf between him and the animal world, in which instinctive equipment in definite directions is supreme."² But Professor Baldwin does not dwell upon these perceptions, and his theory of the social process is in form, at least, almost as individualistic as

¹ *Social and Ethical Interpretations of Mental Development*, p. 479.

² *Ibid.*, p. 237.

Tarde's. He makes imitation the sole method of that process, although the two passages to which we have just referred argue directly, it seems to us, against so doing. If there is any validity at all, however, in Professor Baldwin's criticisms of Tarde's sociology, one is certainly justified in rejecting as unsatisfactory a definition of the social mind purely in terms of imitation and suggestion.

If the positions taken in criticising the above theories are sound, it is evident that the social mind must be correlated with the societary life-process. The social mind is the psychical process which mediates the new adjustments in the group life-process. It is a *social* process, because it mediates the adjustments of a functional unity which is made up of individuals. The "social mind" is, in brief, a convenient term for the socio-psychical process. Just as in the most recent individual psychology the term "mind" has come to mean, not an entity, but a process, so in social psychology the term "social mind" must mean, not a societary "soul," but a societary process. In both cases the term expresses the unity of the process—the fact that the many visible psychic processes are aspects of but a single unified process. But the individual mind, as we have already pointed out, is highly unified, not only functionally, but structurally; while the unity expressed by the term "social mind" is only a low order of functional unity. This distinction is important; but while it may render the term "social mind" in a certain sense inappropriate, it does not make the fact expressed by the term any the less real. The social mind, then, is an expression of the fact that society is an organic functional unity. The unity of socio-psychical processes which it implies corresponds to the unity of organic processes within the social group. Without the organic unity of society there could be no social mind in any intelligible sense of the term; for a basis for unity of development in the socio-psychical process would be entirely lacking. Moreover, the unity of the socio-psychical process is secured far more through habit and instinct than through suggestion and imitation. Indeed, the latter are but special forms of the former. Now, habit and instinct manifestly presuppose physiological organization, physiological continuity and unity. In

the case of society, therefore, as in that of the individual, there is no psychological organization without biological organization—a truth which has already been pointed out, and which ought hardly to need emphasis in this age of biological science. The social mind, then, is to be conceived as the psychical side of the societary life-process; and its functioning and development have strict reference to the biological side of that process.

The relation which the social mind bears to individual minds, and, in general, the relation which socio-psychical processes bear to individual psychical processes, may be illustrated by the analogy of the organism. The relation is qualitatively exactly that which obtains between cellular processes and the processes of the organism as a whole. In the same sense in which it is right to speak of general organic processes as over and above cellular processes, it is right to speak of socio-psychical processes as over and above individual psychical processes. But in both cases it is probably better to speak of the wider process as immanent in the narrower. If from one point of view the activities of the organism appear only as the activities of its cells, from another point of view the activities of the cells appear only as elements in the activity of the organism. The two points of view are evidently the two aspects of a single reality and cannot be opposed to each other. The case is exactly the same with socio-psychical and individual psychical processes. The socio-psychical processes are simply the individual psychical processes under the aspect of the larger functional whole in whose psychical activity they appear as elements. The social mind, then, is immanent in the individual mind, and both are aspects of a single reality.

We are now prepared to examine the meaning of the phrase "social consciousness." In the widest sense of the term, it is evident that all consciousness is, from one point of view, "social consciousness." If what has been said concerning the relation of the social to the individual mind is true, there is no consciousness that is not social consciousness in one of its aspects. However, there is a narrower use of the term which is quite justifiable. At a certain stage of social and mental development the members

of a social group become conscious of their solidarity as a group. This "group-consciousness," like the consciousness of the individual, manifests itself only when there is an interruption in group-habits—only when it is necessary for the group as a whole to make some new adjustment. This consciousness or feeling of identity on the part of the members of a group may be regarded as the social consciousness *par excellence*, as it is that part of the consciousness of the individual which is particularly concerned in the functioning of the group under difficulty, that is, when some problem confronts the group as a whole. Or, if we choose to consider all consciousness as social consciousness, as we undoubtedly may do from one point of view, then consciousness of social solidarity, of group unity, may be regarded as a sort of social self-consciousness. Such social self-consciousness, like the self-consciousness of the individual, tends to become more continuous and more vivid as the process of development advances, since the nature of that process is to increase the complexity of life-conditions, and thereby the number of problems requiring new adjustments to be made. In a word, it shows the same laws of function and development as individual consciousness in general. This is the "social consciousness" which is referred to by most writers on social psychology; and as it is peculiarly the expression of the socio-psychical process, it may justly be regarded as entitled to the name, although its position in the socio-psychical process, as well as its relation to the individual psychical process, must not be forgotten. Manifestly there is no sense other than the two mentioned in which the term "social consciousness" can be used with reference to reality. The socio-psychical process is not highly unified both structurally and functionally, like the psychical processes of the individual, and so does not form a single unified consciousness, a single center of experience, like the individual mind.

There is no social consciousness, then, which is apart from or more than individual consciousness. The individual, not the social group, is, and from the very nature of the process of development must always remain, the center of experience. These propositions are so self-evident that it seems almost absurd even

to state them. Yet many of the decriers of social psychology have made social psychologists guilty of saying the very opposite. Neither do these propositions affect in any way the truth of the propositions previously advanced concerning the nature of the social mind and social consciousness. What social psychology stands for—and accordingly also the concepts “social mind” and “social consciousness”—is the perception that a single process may go on through several “centers of experience.” The admission of this truth is the admission of all that the terms “social mind” and “social consciousness” essentially imply. Of the three possible meanings of the phrase “social consciousness,” then, the two first mentioned are alone legitimate from the standpoint of reality. The first is perhaps in strictest accord with the definition given of the social mind, while the second has the advantage of both popular and scientific usage, and of standing for a peculiar manifestation of the societary life.

The concept of the social mind, then, is not meaningless, although it does not mean that society presents a unified consciousness, much less that it is ruled over by a mysterious entity resembling the “soul” of theology and metaphysics. The content to be given to the concept is, as we have seen, that of a process which unites the processes of many minds into a functional whole, and which mediates the activities of the group as a whole. It is to be regarded as an expression of the common organic life-process of the group, of the fact that the group constitutes an organic functional unity, not as something imposed upon, or separate from, the life-process. The social mind is a convenient name, therefore, for the psychical side of the societary life-process considered in its unity, and is a well-nigh indispensable term in social psychology for referring to the unity which must be thought of as the subject of psychical changes in the societary life. With this conception of the social mind the meaning of such terms as “social consciousness,” the “popular will,” the “*Zeitgeist*,” “public opinion,” etc., becomes clear, while social psychology is freed from any taint of mysticism and becomes as positivistic in its spirit as modern individual psychology.

CHAPTER V.

THE THEORY OF IMITATION IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY.¹

MOST prominent among the results of the attempt to apply psychology in the interpretation of social phenomena is the theory of imitation, formulated first by M. Gabriel Tarde² in France and later, but independently, by Professor J. Mark Baldwin³ in this country. Among all the theories of the nature and process of human society this "imitation theory" is today most widely accepted and most in the public eye. It enjoys such enviable popularity, indeed, that it is expounded, not only by professors of sociology and psychology in our colleges and universities, but by many of the teachers of psychology and pedagogy in our secondary schools. Such a theory, which has gained so wide an acceptance in a brief time, deserves the careful examination and candid criticism of every social thinker; and such we will endeavor to give it.

Professor Baldwin's statement of the theory diverges slightly, though immaterially, from M. Tarde's statement. For this reason, as well as on account of its priority in time, M. Tarde's formulation of the theory may be advantageously given first. It is worthy of note, however, before consideration of M. Tarde's and Professor Baldwin's views, that they approached their subject from different sides. Professor Baldwin, as is well known, arrived at his conclusions from the side of individual psychology, through study of the mental development of the child; while M. Tarde reached his theories from the sociological side, through study of the phenomena of crowds, crazes, fads, fashions, and crime. He saw that the underlying fact in these social phenomena — namely, the process of suggestion and imitation —

¹ Read at the meeting of the Western Philosophical Association, Lincoln, Neb., January 2, 1901.

² *Les Lois de l'Imitation*, 1890; *La Logique sociale*, 1895; *Les Lois sociales*, 1898.

³ *Mental Development in the Child and the Race*, 1895; *Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental Development*, 1897.

could be generalized and used as the basis of a system of social philosophy. The repetition of the act of one person by another under the influence of suggestion offered, he thought, "the key to the social mystery."¹ The influence of one mind upon another was explained by this suggestion-imitation process, and consequently all changes and movements in society.² "Society is imitation," he says, "and imitation is a species of somnambulism."³ Moreover, imitation is "the elementary social phenomenon,"⁴ "the fundamental social fact;"⁵ it is the criterion of the social and alone constitutes society. "The unvarying characteristic of every social fact whatsoever is that it is imitative. And this characteristic belongs exclusively to social facts."⁶ The unity of society, both on its functional and structural sides, M. Tarde argues, is wholly due to the process of imitation. "This minute interagreement of minds and wills, which forms the basis of social life . . . is not due," he maintains, "to organic heredity . . . ; it is rather the effect of that suggestion-imitation process which, starting from one primitive creature possessed of a single idea or act, passed this copy on to one of its neighbors, then to another, and so on."⁷

Consistently with the above positions, M. Tarde declares that all the activities of men in society, from the satisfying of simple organic needs to the inventions of science and art, are in one way or another outcomes of the process of imitation.⁸

There is not a word that you say which is not the reproduction, now unconscious, but formerly conscious and voluntary, of verbal articulations reaching back to the most distant past, with some special accent due to your immediate surroundings. . . . even your very originality itself is made up of accumulated commonplaces, and aspires to become commonplace in its turn.⁹

Just as all the phenomena of the universe can be reduced to the three forms, repetition, opposition, and adaptation, the last two of which are in reality only outcomes of the first;¹⁰ so all the

¹ *Social Laws*, p. 47.

² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³ *Les Lois de l'Imitation*, p. 95.

⁴ *La Logique sociale*, p. 76.

⁵ *Social Laws*, p. 56.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 39.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-41.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 41.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

phenomena of human society can be reduced to three corresponding forms—imitation, conflict, and invention. But the last two are again merely outcomes of the first; for conflict is but the interference of two dissimilar waves of imitation, and invention but the union of two harmonious imitations.¹ Finally, M. Tarde thinks that the process of imitation going on throughout society may be formulated into two general laws. The first is that all imitations tend to spread throughout society in a geometrical progression, and do so spread if interferences in the form of competing imitations are absent.² The second law, already implied in the conditioning of the first, is that imitations are always refracted by their media.³ These laws of imitation “are to sociology,” M. Tarde thinks, “what the laws of habit and heredity are to biology, the laws of gravitation to astronomy, and the laws of vibration to physics.”⁴

More careful and more scientific, though not essentially different from M. Tarde's, is the formulation of the imitation theory given by Professor Baldwin. As noted above, Professor Baldwin gathered the material for his theory in child-study. His conclusion from the study of mental development in the child is that “the prime and essential method of his [the child's] learning is by imitative absorption of the actions, thoughts, expressions of other persons;”⁵ further, that “all his personal absorption from his immediate associates is through his tendency to imitate;”⁶ and, therefore, that “imitation is the method of his personal progress,”⁷ “the essential method of his growth.” But if this holds of the individual, it must hold also of society; for whether we view society as an aggregation, or as a functional combination, of individuals, it can contain no elements, factors, or forces not discoverable in the individual. The processes of the social life are implied in the processes of individual life. If the principle of imitation will explain fully the method of personal progress, it will also explain fully the method of social

¹ *Social Laws*, pp. 133-5, 202-4.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

² *Les Lois de l'Imitation*, p. 18.

⁴ *Social Laws*, p. 61.

⁵ *Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental Development*, p. 58.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

progress. Professor Baldwin, therefore, quite properly generalizes his theory of personal growth by imitation and applies it to society. "Society," he tells us, "grows by imitative generalization of the thoughts of individuals."² Therefore, "imitation is the method of social organization,"³ and all progress takes place through society's generalizing by imitation the inventions of individuals. Thus we have a circular process: the individual develops intellectually and morally by imitating the mental attitudes and actions of those about him, while society changes through the continued imitation of the thought of some individual, a "leader" or a "genius."

Here we must note the chief points of divergence of Professor Baldwin's theory from M. Tarde's. Baldwin nowhere says that "society is imitation," that imitation is *the criterion of the social*, as Tarde says. On the contrary, Professor Baldwin distinguishes between the matter, or content, of social organization and the method, or process,³ and affirms that imitation has to do exclusively with the latter. Imitation is the method of the social life, but not its content.⁴ This distinction, it may fairly be urged, is implicit in Tarde's writings; but that Professor Baldwin makes it explicit is sufficient testimony to the superior logic and scientific method of his work. Again, Professor Baldwin finds the matter or content of social life in thought,⁵ while M. Tarde *apparently* finds it in beliefs and desires. This, however, is a minor divergence between the two theories, for Professor Baldwin makes beliefs and desires functions of thought.⁶ Finally, we have to note that Professor Baldwin develops a clear and consistent theory of the social process as a whole, which Tarde fails to do, however much he labors, and however much may be implied in what he says. Briefly stated, Professor Baldwin's theory may be thrown into four propositions, namely: (1) the matter of social organization is thoughts; (2) the method of their organization is imitation; (3) these thoughts originate with the individual;⁷ (4) later certain of these thoughts are imitated, and so generalized, by society.⁸

² *Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental Development*, p. 507. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 508.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 476.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 487-506.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 455 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 478, 479, 507-9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 488.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 466-8.

The above, it is believed, is a fair statement of the sociological theories of M. Tarde and Professor Baldwin, stripped of unnecessary details. Without denying or belittling in any way the importance of their contribution to psychological sociology, may we not question the finality of their interpretation of the process of the social life? Is their description of that process a faithful picture of reality? Does it adequately explain the social life, as we know it, on its psychical side? Are there not other elements, other factors, in the process than imitation, which our authors have overlooked? Are there not limitations to the imitation theory, however broadly conceived, which make it profoundly inapplicable in the interpretation of certain phases of the social life? Finally, is not a deeper interpretation of the social life-process possible which shall reconcile imitation with other plainly discernible factors in that process? These are some of the questions which we may legitimately raise without putting ourselves in the light of captious critics; and as our discussion proceeds, answers to some of them may become apparent. We shall confine ourselves mainly to Professor Baldwin's presentation of the theory, inasmuch as it is more fully and more logically developed than M. Tarde's, and rests more upon observed facts.

Passing by the vagueness and "extreme generality" of the term "imitation" as employed by both our authors—though it is well to note that with Tarde it denotes a process at some point of its development "conscious and voluntary," while with Baldwin it is merely the "circular type of reaction,"¹ but still, he seems to think, a "mental" process—the first and most obvious criticism of the theory is the fact that we do not imitate everybody indiscriminately; that we make conscious choice in large measure of the persons whom we shall imitate—imitating usually only those whom we consider our superiors or our equals, and imitating our enemies and inferiors only when we believe that it will be to our advantage to do so. An attempt to explain this fact is, however, made by both our authors. M. Tarde's explanation is that there is always a conflict between different suggestions—"an interference between imitation-rays," to use his own

¹ *Mental Development in the Child and the Race*, pp. 217, 264-8, 282, 283, 350, 487.

phrase—in the brain of each individual, which is decided upon either *logical* or *teleological* grounds.¹ Thus the beliefs and desires of the individual, which have been themselves acquired by imitation, are the basis upon which discrimination is made between different examples for imitation.² Professor Baldwin's explanation is that we imitate those actions, thoughts, and expressions which we can assimilate in the organization of our personal selves.³ The basis of our choice, he says, is their "fitness for imitative reproduction and application."⁴ In other words, the basis of our discrimination is simply the habits of imitation which we have already set up, since we can assimilate, reproduce, and make use of only that which is in part already organized into our personality. We imitate, then, according to Professor Baldwin, simply what we have gotten in the habit of imitating; for it must be remembered that according to him imitation is the method by which the personal self becomes organized. Thus, if we have given the capacity to form habits, the process of imitation itself, when viewed in its entirety, Professor Baldwin implies, is the explanation of the selective character of our imitations. This theory is certainly ingenious and is in accord with some psychological teaching of the present time. That it does not satisfy all inquiring minds, however, is evident from the fact that Professor Giddings, in an able review of Professor Baldwin's work,⁵ suggests that the real basis of our discrimination in selecting models for imitation is the consciousness of similarity or of "kind." We chiefly imitate, he argues, our similars, especially those who are *like-minded* with ourselves; indeed, we do not receive suggestions at all from creatures wholly unlike ourselves. Men imitate other men, but show little or no tendency to imitate sheep. The consciousness of kind, especially of mental and moral resemblance, evidently comes in

¹ *Social Laws*, pp. 64, 65, 135, 136.

² M. TARDE's book, *La Logique sociale*, is largely given up to a discussion of this question why one copy is imitated rather than another. We must refer to it rather than attempt to give his argument in full. He seems to me, however, to arrive at a formulation of the problem rather than at a true *genetic* explanation.

³ *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, pp. 121, 132-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁵ *Science*, January 6, 1899; also chap. iii in *Democracy and Empire*, 1900.

to limit and control the process of imitation; it leads to an instinctive discrimination among possible models for imitation and to an instinctive selection of those models whom we believe to be most nearly like ourselves. Therefore Professor Giddings thinks that the principle of "consciousness of kind" should be recognized as another factor in the social process, a factor which limits and modifies the action of the principle of imitation.

The contention seems to us a good one; but why stop with admitting a single other factor in our interpretation of the social process? There are manifestly cases of imitation which the principle "consciousness of kind" does not help to explain, and this Professor Giddings acknowledges. Why, then, limit the social process to the working of these two factors? Are we not dealing all along in this matter of the discrimination and selection of possible models for imitation *with a series of instinctive impulses*, like "consciousness of kind" or organic sympathy,¹ which condition and form the final basis of the process of discrimination and selection in individual consciousness?

But this brings us to another objection to Professor Baldwin's theory, which it will be well to consider before discussing this last question.

Our second criticism of the imitation theory, as developed by M. Tarde and Professor Baldwin, is that it is impossible to understand how a single instinct, "the instinct to imitate," has come to dominate the whole process of human society, and alone to constitute the method of all personal and social growth,² while many other instincts are plainly discernible determining the associations of animals below man. The theory sets up, in the language of Professor Baldwin himself, "an absolute gulf between man and the animal world in which instinctive equipment in definite directions is supreme,"³ and so violates the "doctrine of development" which since Darwin has been the major premise of all scientific thought about man. How explain the

¹ Which Professor Giddings identifies with "consciousness of kind" in the third edition of his *Principles of Sociology*.

² For Professor Baldwin's argument in this connection see his *Mental Development in the Child and the Race*, chaps. ix-xii.

³ *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, p. 237.

enormous development *in man* of the imitative instinct which the imitation theory implies? This Professor Baldwin does not attempt to do, but he evades the difficulty of his position by denying that the associations of animals constitute true societies. Animal associations he terms "companies;" and the difference between companies and societies, he says, is that, while in the former the individuals *feel and act alike*, in the latter the individuals *also think alike*.¹ How he gets his knowledge that the individuals of animal societies or groups do not *think alike* Professor Baldwin does not tell us; indeed, the fact that they *feel and act alike*, which he admits, would seem to favor the presumption that they in some measure *also think alike*, since thought is acknowledged to be a function of activity. But the historical objection to such a classification, which makes a break between animal and human societies and estops reasoning from the one to the other, is even more cogent. As Professor Giddings says:

From the standpoint of the observer of animal and primitive human societies, it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish a line of demarcation between the more highly organized bands of animals, like troops of monkeys, or herds of elephants, or bands of wild horses, and the simplest hordes of human beings, like Bushmen or Australian Blackfellows.²

Indeed, Professor Baldwin can refuse to consider animal societies only by denying that they are unified at all on the psychical side. If the organization which animal societies reveal is wholly a physiological matter,³ and not also a matter of feeling, intelligence, and impulse, then Professor Baldwin is justified in leaving them out of consideration in his attempt to give a psychological interpretation of the human social process. If, on the contrary, the unity and organization of animal groups is in some measure psychical, and if human society be supposed to have arisen out of some pre-human form of association, then the burden of showing why human society differs from animal societies in its process of organization rests upon the supporters of the imitation theory.

¹ *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, pp. 486, 487. ² *Democracy and Empire*, p. 38.

³ This Professor Baldwin appears to assert, *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, p. 476; but in this case the criticism given at the end of the next paragraph would apply.

Let us consider the case of the social insects—the ants, bees, and wasps—to bring out our point still clearer. As is well known, these animals exhibit a marvelous degree of organization in the groups which they form, the division of labor and the corresponding division of individuals into classes among them often surpassing that found in human societies of considerable development. From an objective point of view these groups of insects seem as truly societies as any human groups. Moreover, we cannot well deny to these creatures some degree of mental life, for they are known to show, both as individuals and as groups, considerable power of adaptation in the presence of danger.¹ Some have even gone so far as to claim that they see among them the beginning of that process of suggestion and imitation² which M. Tarde and Professor Baldwin make the sole factor in the human social process. However, it is usually recognized that the organization which colonies of these insects exhibit is an outcome of certain habits of coöperation which have become *innate* in the species through a process of natural selection in the course of a long period of evolution. In other words, the societies formed by ants, bees, and wasps are organized upon the basis of instinct. Now, if instinct plays such a rôle in the organization of sub-human societies, and if human societies are admittedly genetically related to these, is it not probable that instinctive impulses have much to do with the organization of human society; and not simply one instinctive impulse, the tendency to imitate, but many? If it be objected that, in so far as the organization of society is a matter of instinct, it is physiological and not psychological, the reply is that then all social organization is physiological, for the tendency to imitate is admitted to be an instinct.³

Another objection to the theory that imitation constitutes the sole method of social progress comes to light when we

¹ Cf. LUBBOCK, *Ants, Bees, and Wasps*.

² Cf. GIDDINGS, *Principles of Sociology*, p. 143

³ For Professor Baldwin's argument that the tendency to imitate is a true instinct see his *Mental Development in the Child and the Race*, pp. 261, 290, 356; and also p. v of his preface to GROOS, *Play of Animals*.

consider animal societies. Animal societies are by no means stationary. The changes which take place in them, though not readily observable, cannot be questioned. The high degree of organization of such insect societies as we have just considered is unquestionably to be regarded as the result of a series of gradual adjustments made through a long period of evolution and fixed by natural selection. The organization of sub-human societies would seem, then, to be wholly an outcome of the process of natural selection, and the changes and progress which they exhibit, though perhaps in some measure mediated by the process of suggestion and imitation, seem largely to be due to the working of the same principle. Now, if natural selection be the method of progress in the societies of the animal world, is it not reasonable to suppose that it is also in some measure a factor in the progress of human societies? "Certainly," a defender of the imitation theory might reply; "but natural selection is not a psychical process; it is wholly physical and physiological." This position is, however, not tenable. On the contrary, natural selection is mediated everywhere throughout the higher stages of animal life by certain psychical processes, and in so far is itself a psychical process. Thus sexual selection, now quite generally recognized as a part of the process of natural selection, is largely a conscious process. Even that form of social selection which results from the competition of individuals with one another for place and honor in society is recognized by Professor Baldwin as constituting truly a part of the process of natural selection.¹ There is nothing in Professor Baldwin's position in this regard, therefore, to prevent his recognition of natural selection as a factor in the human social process. Indeed, it is to be feared that it is only his ardor for the recognition of imitation and his desire to make a very complex problem unduly simple which prevent him from recognizing natural selection in its psychical aspect as a part of the method of progress of human society coördinate with imitation.²

¹ *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, p. 181.

² This seems to be plainly implied in Bagehot's pioneer discussion of the social importance of imitation in his *Physics and Politics*, pp. 89-111.

Our third criticism of the imitation theory of social organization and progress is, then, that it makes no allowance for the influence of various forms¹ of natural selection in controlling, guiding, and supplementing the process of imitation. Let us take the organization and evolution of the family to illustrate further our meaning. According to the imitation theory, not only has our present form of the family come down to us solely by imitation, but changes in the form of the family in the past have been accomplished by imitative generalization of some variation, which in turn was an imitative adaptation or combination of forms already existing. Indeed, Professor Baldwin implies that the very process of idealizing the family has been essentially a process of imitation.² On the other hand, Westermarck³ and other ethnologists who have investigated the historical and ethnological material bearing upon the evolution of the family hold that the present monogamic form of the family is largely due to a process of natural selection. Other forms of the family have not persisted, they tell us, because individuals and groups which adopted the inferior forms have constantly been eliminated in competition with the individuals and groups which adopted the superior form. Moreover, the feelings and impulses which led to the formation of monogamic unions, having been found favorable to race survival, have tended more and more to become fixed by heredity, inasmuch as those individuals who did not possess these feelings and impulses would leave no offspring to survive. Thus the picture of the evolution of the family which we obtain from ethnology shows us, not merely the continued imitation of a primitive pattern, but also the constant *elimination* of those who do not conform to the pattern, *plus* the fixing in the race of those instinctive impulses which make conformity to the pattern easy.

Almost any practical social problem would serve for further illustration. Let us take the drink problem. Many social thinkers hold that families which have the appetite for the

¹ *I. e.*, those which manifest themselves psychically.

² *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, pp. 296 ff.

³ *The History of Human Marriage*.

stronger and more harmful alcoholic drinks are being steadily eliminated, and that a state of society will soon result in which there will survive practically no individuals with the "drink-crave." This theory seems to get some inductive support from the fact that those countries which have had the longest experience with alcoholic beverages have little or no drunkenness. In this case, then, as in the evolution of the family, the process of natural selection appears to come in to limit and control the process of imitation. Like the "consciousness of kind," it serves to make the process of imitation definite or within certain limits. Men imitate one act rather than another, and one mental attitude rather than another, because it is of life-saving advantage to do so. Moreover, and most important of all, the individuals who do not select the right models for imitation are constantly eliminated, and thus natural selection fixes in the race a larger and larger number of instinctive impulses which tend to discharge themselves along one line rather than along another.

The whole drift of our argument against the imitation theory of social order and progress must now be apparent. It divorces the social process from the life-process as a whole. It takes no sufficient account of those deeper characteristics of species and race which come to light in the psychical life of the individual and in the psychical processes of society. It matters not whether we name these race characteristics "instincts," "impulses," or what not. The important thing is to recognize that race heredity has fixed in us, and is tending more and more to fix in us, through a process of evolution by natural selection, certain coördinations of nerve cells and muscle fibers which tend to discharge in one way rather than in another, and which make personal and social development tend to take one direction rather than another. But to recognize this truth would be fatal to the imitation theory of individual and social development, even in the moderate form in which it is stated by Professor Baldwin. Accordingly, we find Professor Baldwin, almost alone among eminent modern psychologists, refusing to recognize the importance of the innate or instinctive in mental

development. James,¹ Dewey, Wundt,² and lately H. R. Marshall³ have all elaborated arguments in the spirit of the doctrine of descent to show the importance of "instinct," or of "innate impulses," in the mental life of man as well as in that of the animals beneath him. But Professor Baldwin says: "The human infant has very few instincts, and these are almost all fitted to secure organic satisfaction."⁴ These instincts, *plus* the "magnificent capacity of learning" by imitation, he thinks, are sufficient to account for the growth of the child into the fully equipped *socius*.⁵ And they are, if the imitation theory of personal development is correct.

But it is evident that Professor Baldwin is using the term "instinct" in quite a different sense from that in which it is employed by the writers above mentioned, and in which it has been used in this paper. With him "instincts" are those "ready-made activities" which manifest themselves in the child at birth or soon after, and which are best exemplified among the lower forms of animal life, particularly among the insects.⁶ With the psychologists we have named, however, the "instinctive" is practically identified with the "innate," and "instincts" are simply "innate impulses" which tend to discharge themselves in one way rather than in another; they are "*inborn* capacities to act with reference to biological ends;"⁷ they are that part of our race heredity which manifests itself psychically, and hence they may be viewed as "species" or "race habits" in contrast with the *acquired* habits of individuals. In criticism of

¹ See his famous chapter on "Instinct" (pp. 383-441) in Vol. II of his *Principles of Psychology*.

² See Lecture XXVII in his *Lectures on Human and Animal Psychology*.

³ See chaps. ii and iii in his *Instinct and Reason*. Compare also the chapter on "Play and Instinct" in GROOS, *Play of Animals*, especially pp. 66-76.

⁴ *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, p. 62.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 59.

⁶ *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, pp. 61, 62. Professor Baldwin seems to adopt in the main Professor C. Lloyd Morgan's conception of instinct, which makes instinct the "crystallized form" of innate capacity or impulse. See MORGAN, *Habit and Instinct*.

⁷ A definition formulated by Professor G. H. Mead. Compare Schneider's definition: "By instinct we understand the impulse to an action whose end the individual is unconscious of, but which nevertheless furthers the attainment of that end."

the narrower view of instinct adopted by Professor Baldwin it may well be urged that the "hard and fast" type of instinct is rarely met with among the higher animals.¹ Such animals as the dog, cat, and horse, for example, have almost no instincts which cannot be modified, even utterly changed, by training. Again, "ready-made activities" which are manifest soon after birth are comparatively few among all higher animals; many of their instincts do not ripen until after physical maturity is reached. But, as we said above, *the question is not at all one of terminology*. This cannot be too strongly emphasized with reference to the content of our criticism. It matters not whether we name the psychological aspects of race heredity "instincts" or not. The important thing is whether we recognize or not the part which the "innate," the species or race habit, plays in the mental life of individuals and in the social process. It would be unfair to Professor Baldwin to say that he in no way recognizes the importance of the innate save as has been indicated. Formally he does;² but not in such a manner as to affect his conclusions, so far as we can see. He in no way embodies such recognition, for example, in his conclusions regarding social organization and progress. It must be remembered, too, that this is an impersonal criticism, a criticism of a theory as popularly accepted, not of a man or of a book. If it were the latter, generosity would compel us to observe that important modifications of Professor Baldwin's conclusions might be found implied in his discussion. Indeed, it would not be difficult to construct from implications scattered throughout his work an argument for the very position taken in this paper.³

The truth for which we are contending, then, is that the process of imitation is at every turn limited, controlled, and modified by a series of instinctive impulses which have become

¹ We cannot but remark Professor Baldwin's inconsistency in arguing that so indefinite and variable a thing as the tendency to imitate is a true instinct, while he holds that definiteness and invariability are the marks of all instinctive activity.

² See especially the chapter on the person's instincts and emotions (chap. vi) in *Social and Ethical Interpretations*.

³ The argument which Professor Baldwin uses against Le Bon's "mob theory of society" might very well be turned against the imitation theory itself.

relatively fixed in the individual through a process of evolution by natural selection. Such "instincts" include not only organic sympathy and antipathy (consciousness of resemblance or non-resemblance), the economic instinct, and the like, but a whole series of innate tendencies and mental attitudes, down even to certain innate attitudes toward the universe (instinctive religion) and toward social organization (instinctive morality). If the process of growth by imitation were not limited and modified by innate tendencies, we should expect children of different races, when reared in the same cultural environment, to develop the same general mental and moral characteristics. But the negro child, even when reared in a white family under the most favorable conditions, fails to take on the mental and moral characteristics of the Caucasian race. His mental attitudes toward persons and things, toward organized society, toward life, and toward religion never become quite the same as those of the white. His natural instincts, it is true, may be modified by training, and perhaps indefinitely modified in the course of generations; but the race habit of a thousand generations or more is not lightly set aside by the voluntary or enforced imitation of visible models, and there is always a strong tendency to reversion. The reappearance of voodooism and fetichism among the negroes of the South, though surrounded by Christian influences, is indeed to be regarded as due not so much to the preservation of some primitive copy of such religious practices brought over from Africa as to the innate tendency of the negro mind to take such attitudes toward nature and the universe as tend to develop such religions. But the influence of innate tendencies upon the process of personal and social development is manifest not merely when we consider those broad differences between men which we term racial; it is in evidence also to some extent when we consider national differences, for these are by no means wholly imitative differences. It is even to be seen in family traits; for any group which remains sufficiently isolated long enough to develop by natural selection physiological peculiarities may also develop innate psychological tendencies of its own. Again, it is plainly discernible in the pathological phenomena of the social

life; the "instinctive criminal" and the "hereditary pauper" are such, not because of the contagion of vice, crime, and shiftlessness which certain models in society may furnish, but because inborn tendencies lead them to seek such models for imitation rather than others; because they naturally gravitate to a life of crime or pauperism.² Finally, and most important of all, is the influence upon social organization of those innate tendencies which are common to the whole human species—to human nature. These are especially liable to be overlooked, because they vary so slightly in individuals and races. The instinct to imitate is admittedly one of these. But there are many others. Who can doubt that such universal tendencies as the tendency to store up a food-supply, to cooperate in obtaining a food-supply or in repelling the attacks of enemies, to form enduring family groups, to live in communities, to render obedience to elders and authorities, to judge some kinds of action right and other kinds wrong, to communicate by means of articulate sounds, to worship supernatural beings, etc., have long been innate, instinctive, in our species, and are truly matters of race heredity? And if they are instinctive tendencies of the same sort as the tendency to imitate, are they not equally with imitation factors in the social process?

"Yes," some defender of the imitation theory may possibly say; "but your whole argument misses the point. Imitation, as Professor Baldwin clearly states, is simply the functional *method* of personal development and of social organization. There are other factors, doubtless, in social and individual growth, but the method of development remains the same in any case. The negro child may never take on qualitatively the same mental attitudes as the white; but in so far as he progresses toward the mental status of the white, the *method* of his progress is *imitation*." But this is manifestly the very position against which we have been arguing from the beginning of our criticism; it is just this form of statement of the theory to which we object. Imitation is, to be sure, always, in form at least, to be seen in the

² It is unnecessary to point out that this is practically the unanimous conclusion of all experts engaged in the study of these classes.

method of development ; but it is imitation multiplied into some other factor or factors which is *the method* of development. If it be admitted that the process of imitation is limited, controlled, and guided by numerous instinctive impulses, or instincts, then it must also be admitted that the unfolding of these instincts is a part of the *method* of growth, both personal and social. Imitation, then, is *but one aspect* of the method of personal progress and of social organization. It is an aspect which is in form, perhaps, always present ; but there are other aspects of the method of progress, and these must not be neglected for the construction of sound social theory. The method of progress of the negro child may appear to be a process of imitation ; but deep beneath this outward aspect the currents of race heredity are controlling his progress and determining its outcome.

We have said that imitation is an aspect of the process of development which is, *in form* at least, always present. Yet we have to notice that in many instances it is present *only in form*. A kitten brought up in isolation from its kind, if given a spool or a thimble to play with, goes through all the movements necessary to catch a mouse or a bird. It thus spontaneously develops in its play those faculties which guarantee to it later its food-supply.¹ Manifestly there is no real imitation here ; for there have been no models to copy from. What we have is simply hereditary repetition, the unfolding of a race habit, an instinct. In other words, a coördination of nerve cells and muscle fibers, which has become fixed by heredity through natural selection on account of its importance to the species, simply discharges itself in the presence of the appropriate stimulus. This constantly happens in the development of all animals, and so, it is reasonable to suppose, in the process of human development. Thus, much which seems to us imitation in human society may be imitation in form only. The social philosopher in viewing society objectively sees that nearly all the activities of men are imitative *in their outcome*, and he therefore falls easily into the fallacy of believing that they are imitative *in their process*. That this is a fallacious method of reasoning illustrations

¹ Cf. GROOS, *Play of Animals*, especially pp. 130 ff.

like the above make evident. Apparently, then, Professor Baldwin and M. Tarde have been guilty of committing what Professor James calls "the psychologists' fallacy,"¹ in that they seem to have judged of the nature of a process by the nature of its outcome. Our last objection to the imitation theory may well be, therefore, that it rests upon a foundation of fallacious reasoning, and will probably not be supported by a more accurate and less superficial investigation of the facts.

Before concluding, two points which have become tolerably clear in the course of our discussion may profitably be noticed. The first is in regard to the true function of imitation in individual and social development. If the positions taken have been in any degree correct, it is evident, as Professor Dewey says, that "imitation comes in to *mediate* the natural tendency."² It helps forward, makes easy, development in certain directions wherein society has furnished models; it thus secures social adjustments with greater quickness and ease, and assures greater uniformity of thought and action throughout a society. The function of the imitation instinct is, then, to mediate the development of other natural tendencies with reference to the conditions of social life; and as such a *mediator* in the adjustment of individuals to each other and to society at large imitation plays a great rôle in human affairs.

The second point has reference to the matter or substance of social organization. If the interpretation of the social life implied in this paper is at all true; if the social process is, indeed, any part of the life-process, then, in the words of Professor Dewey,³ "society cannot be adequately conceived as an organization of thoughts." "Thoughts are relevant to the life-process—to functioning activities." Thought functions to control and mediate activities on their universal side, while feeling functions to evaluate activities on their individual side. An organization of thoughts or feelings in the abstract is, therefore, impossible, as it presupposes an organization of activities, just as all psychical organization

¹ *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, p. 196.

² See the valuable review of PROFESSOR BALDWIN'S *Social and Ethical Interpretations* by PROFESSOR DEWEY in the *New World*, September, 1898.

³ *New World*, September, 1898.

presupposes physiological organization. There is no tendency toward the organization of thoughts (or of feelings) save as there is need of the organization of activities in the process of living. Indeed, the organization of thought exists because of the organizing or organization of functional activities which must be controlled. The family, for example, presents an organized life; it is, as has often been said, "society in miniature." But it is impossible to conceive of the family as simply an organization of thoughts—or even of feelings; it is primarily an organization of activities; and just because it is an organization of activities it develops a wonderful organization of thoughts and feelings, making the unity of its life on the psychical side complete. So of society; primarily an organization of activities, a "functional interdependency," it becomes in time an organization of feeling, and finally an organization of thought. Why Professor Baldwin holds that the matter or substance of social organization consists of thoughts¹ is difficult to understand, unless he conceives this position to be more strictly in accord with the abstract requirements of the imitation theory of social organization. Herein we agree with him. But in so far as we recognize that the social process is linked with the whole life-process, we must recognize that the substance of social organization consists of activities as well as of thoughts and feelings; in brief, that *society organized is life organized*.

To sum up: Our criticisms of the theory that imitation is the method of social organization and progress are, in detail: (1) it cannot sufficiently explain the manifest limitations in the process of imitation without introducing other factors in the method of development; (2) it creates a gulf between human society and the societies of the animal world which are organized upon a basis of instinct; (3) it makes no allowance for the process of natural selection to bring about gradual changes in human society; (4) it rests upon no sufficient basis of ascertained facts, but has apparently been built up by a fallacious method of reasoning. In general, our criticism of the imitation theory is that it makes the social process something apart from the

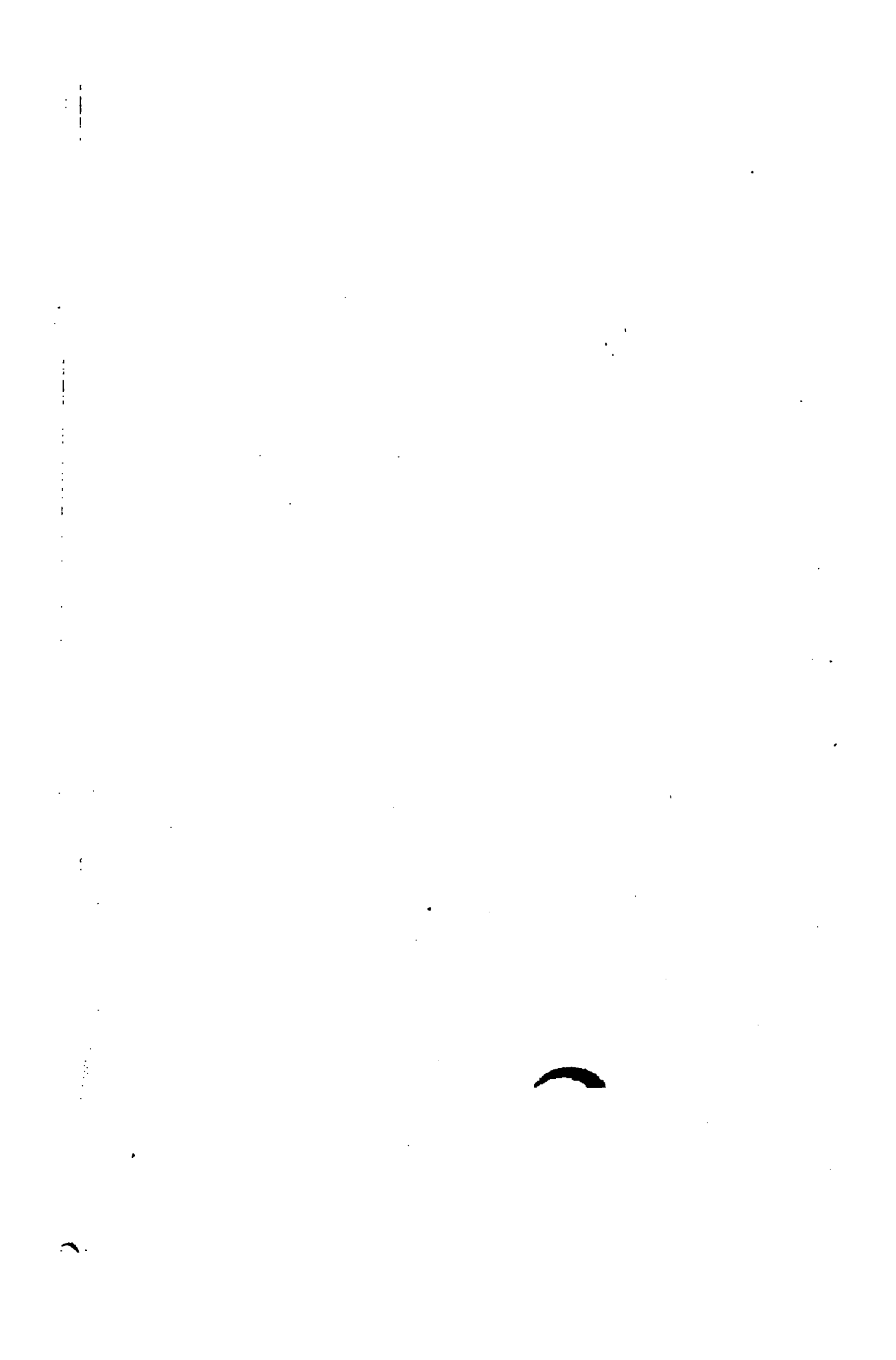
¹ *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, pp. 487-506.

life-process. It does not link, in any definite way, the forces which are molding human society today with the forces which have shaped evolution in the past. Both as M. Tarde and as Professor Baldwin conceive it, the social process is a process which might very well go on in a company of disembodied spirits—in a vacuum! In this sense the imitation theory of the social process is abstract; it makes no sufficient reference to the concrete conditions of human life to give a faithful description of the social reality. In this sense, also, the theory is mechanical; men might be copying machines and still reproduce the social process. For these reasons, finally, the theory is impractical; the economist, the political scientist, and the moralist, on the one hand, can make but little use of the imitation theory in explaining the phases of the social life with which they deal; and, on the other hand, the practical worker, the legislator, the social reformer, and the philanthropist can find but little help in their work from a knowledge of the theory. Only the recognition of the fact that *life* is the subject-matter of social theory, and that human society is an outcome of the entire process of life from its beginning to the present, can create a sound, sane, helpful social philosophy; and to this end social psychology exists.

Social psychology must keep close to life if it is truly to interpret life. Its standpoint must be one of function—that of a developing life-process. The “interdependence of function,” which begins in the biological and ends in the ethical stage of human development, is the fundamental fact of all socio-psychological phenomena. The working unities which organisms formed, at first unconsciously, but finally consciously and purposefully, to sustain and develop the life-process, have alone made possible the development of that *intercerebral* process which in humanity we rightly term, by way of preëminence, the *social* process. The coördination of functioning activities into working unities larger than the individual organism,² then, viewed in the light of evolution, explains all socio-psychical phenomena, including suggestion, imitation, consciousness of kind, and the

² See chap. ii of this thesis.

like. Upon this basis a deeper interpretation of the social process which shall reconcile the conflicting theories of the present seems to us possible; while the recognition of the working unity, "the social coördination," as the fundamental fact with which it deals, should make social psychology at once concrete and practical.







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