

## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

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The year 1920 was exceedingly prolific in works in social psychology and in sociology. Possibly the war has aided somewhat in stimulating attention to these subjects. Social psychology in particular has come to receive so much attention that it is difficult to review even the chief contributions to it during the year.

Early in 1920 Professor Knight Dunlap in his presidential address before the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology (7) bewailed the non-existence of a scientific social psychology, apparently consigning to the scrap heap all that had previously been done by workers in that field. "Where, we ask, is our social psychology? And the answer is that it is yet in the making, and that it is being made not by psychologists, but by politicians, and by independent thinkers like Bertrand Russell and Bernard Shaw." Evidently in Professor Dunlap's opinion Cooley, Ross, Giddings, and possibly McDougall are not as deserving of mention as Bertrand Russell and Bernard Shaw. Yet he concludes optimistically that we can have "a real social psychology" if we will proceed upon the basis of *empiricism* and avoid such delusions as the metaphysical debate between "interactionism" and "psychophysical parallelism." Very sensibly, too, he says: "That which is needed is a social psychology: not physiology. We need to deal with the desires, with the purposes, the emotions, and the conscious tendencies of men and women, and we need to deal with them as they are."

As if in answer to Professor Dunlap's lament a number of texts in social psychology appeared in 1920, each attempting to outline at least a scientific approach to the subject. The most ambitious of these attempts is that of Professor James Mickel Williams (16). He tells us in the preface of his work that it is but the first volume of a six volume treatise on the whole field of social psychology. This first volume is merely introductory to the whole treatise and discusses chiefly the relation of social psychology to the other social sciences. The second volume will deal with the field of literature and art; the third with that of the conflict of interests

in social relations; the fourth with that of the adjustment of interests; the fifth with the control of personality; and the sixth with the processes of social control. If the scheme is carried out the work will be almost monumental. Professor Williams informs us that these six books are already written. Social psychologists and sociologists will eagerly await their publication.

It seems rash to attempt to criticize a work of which we have as yet only the first installment, and the author warns against so doing. Nevertheless some judgment may be tentatively offered on the basis of this first volume. Professor Williams defines social psychology as "the science of the motives of the behavior of men living in social relations." Social psychology, he tells us, does not cover the entire field of social relations, but merely the *motives* of social behavior. "By a motive," he says, "is meant any mental state which either assists or hinders an act." The motives of which he apparently intends to make the most use, however, "the essential assumptions of social psychology," are certain instinctive dispositions—such as acquisition, rivalry, domination, submission, sympathy. These are the elementary processes of social relations, and the author tells us that "these dispositions will be used as assumptions in the analysis of the psychological aspect of the assumptions of the social sciences." In later volumes he proposes to analyze these assumed dispositions and thus reduce them to their lowest terms.

In the present volume he takes up in particular the relations of social psychology to political science, to jurisprudence, to economics, to history, and to sociology, with two concluding chapters on the field and methods of social psychology. Very rightly he says that each of the social sciences is built up on certain fundamental psychological assumptions. Each social science he regards in a large sense as psychological, but the social sciences proper, he holds, are objective in their treatment, while social psychology is the subjective basis for all of them.

As to the relations between social psychology and sociology, Professor Williams holds that sociology concerns itself with social behavior in its external aspects. He accepts Dr. W. I. Thomas' contention that sociology is a theory of social organization, and is thus a special science of culture, like economics, and is in so far opposed to social psychology as the general science of the subjective side of culture. This is true even of psychological sociology, according to Professor Williams, who says that psychological

sociology can mean nothing except a sociology which uses psychological assumptions. Nevertheless, no social process is thoroughly understood without psychological analysis and especially without analysis of the motivation of human behavior. Accordingly social psychology is necessary for sociology, but not a part of it. On the contrary, it is to be sharply distinguished from all sections of sociology and also of social philosophy.

It cannot matter much by what name any body of scientific knowledge is known, provided it is scientific; but it may be doubted whether any sharp distinction between social psychology and the social sciences, especially sociology, can be carried through as Professor Williams argues for. Most American sociologists, at any rate, concern themselves chiefly with the motivation of social occurrences, such as the formation of groups, the changes in institutions, the persistence of groups and their customs, and the like; and they use, furthermore, the very methods of investigation which Professor Williams approves. Professor Giddings, for example, a former teacher of Professor Williams, in two valuable articles on "Pluralistic Behavior" (10) does not hesitate to call sociology "the psychology of society." This may be a somewhat narrow conception of sociology, but it surely more accurately describes the scientific sociology which we find today than does Professor Williams's characterization. Moreover, what will our author do with such a man as Professor Cooley, whose work in social psychology and sociology, as I have said elsewhere, deserves, in some ways, to be ranked with the work of Darwin in biology? Yet Professor Cooley's work owes its scientific character to the accuracy of his psychological analysis of the motivation of social behavior. It is noteworthy that Professor Williams cites Cooley only once in his entire book, and then in a brief reference to Cooley's *Human Nature and the Social Order*. Cooley's *Social Organization* and *Social Process* are nowhere mentioned, not even in the bibliography, though they are his most important works. Is it possible that Professor Williams has overlooked some of the most notable works in psychological sociology, in spite of his very evident erudition? The works of Professor Hobbouse are also not mentioned.

It would seem, despite the author's argument to the contrary, that there is still good ground for clinging to the common sense view that "psychological sociology" and at least that section of social psychology which we call "collective" or "group psychology," are identical. It would follow that social psychology, so far as

it concerns itself with groups, is a part of sociology in any practical division of scientific labor, whereas, so far as it concerns itself with individual behavior, it is equally obviously a part of psychology. This is, at any rate, the condition which the literature of the two sciences seems at present to reflect; and there is nothing necessarily illogical about a science which is really a part of two other general sciences.<sup>1</sup> If this is the fact, we should expect to find both psychologists and sociologists engaged in developing social psychology, and this is exactly what we do find.<sup>2</sup>

While Professor McDougall in his new book (13), which we review elsewhere, holds that group behavior is the subject-matter of collective psychology, Professor Giddings in the articles just referred to (10) holds that pluralistic behavior, or the behavior of groups, is "the subject-matter of sociology," and that the approach to a scientific interpretation of such behavior must be through like-mindedness, that is, like responses, whether instinctive, habistic, or rational, on the part of the individuals of the group, to the same stimuli. Professor Bogardus (3), on the other hand, though writing as a sociologist, holds that the field of social psychology is distinct both from that of sociology and from that of psychology. His text, however, fails to show that this is the case, if we accept the dictum that the field of a science is determined by its problems; for the problems of which Professor Bogardus makes social psychology treat, are chiefly those of the interaction of minds, of social conflicts and change, and of social control and progress. These again are surely the problems with which the sociologist concerns himself. Professor Bogardus' book, regarded as a text, has the advantage that it approaches the subject through the problem-solving method of study; but its weakness is that it approaches its problems too largely from the side of suggestion and imitation, thus following Ross and Tarde rather than Cooley.

Perhaps the nearest approach to a satisfactory text in social psychology, especially on the strictly psychological and individual side, is Dr. Irwin Edman's *Human Traits and Their Social Significance* (8). This, we are told, was written for use in a course entitled "Introduction to Contemporary Civilization," required of all freshmen in Columbia University. It is a good presentation of the psychology of Professors Thorndike and Woodworth in its

<sup>1</sup> Compare physiological psychology, for example.

<sup>2</sup> It is noteworthy that Dr. Charles A. Beard in a letter commending this book of Professor Williams speaks of him as a "sociologist."

social implications. Perhaps rightly, considering that it was written as a text for freshmen, it contains no discussion of the relations of the sciences, but takes up successively the various types of human behavior, such as instinct, habit, and emotion, the social nature of man, the development of the self, and individual differences. However, part two, entitled "The Career of Reason," undertakes to apply psychology to the interpretation of cultural complexes, such as religion, art, science, and morals. This latter part of the book is least satisfactory, partly because anthropological, historical, and strictly sociological data have not been as carefully considered as the psychological. As a general survey of the processes of human nature, as they reveal themselves in social life, the book is worthy of commendation, though there is little original about it.

A book of a very different type is Professor Patrick's *Psychology of Social Reconstruction* (14); a more appropriate title of this book might have been, as he tells us, "Preliminary Notes on the Application of Psychology to the Problem of Social Reconstruction as Represented in Certain Popular Movements of the Day." Very rightly he holds that programs of social reconstruction should be tested by psychology; but as he lays much stress upon the instincts and the original inherited traits of man, his attitude toward social progress and the possibilities of social reconstruction through science and education is somewhat negative. He seems to hold that not only is there a constant tendency to revert to the instinctive level in social life, but that this tendency cannot be overcome through rational social control. He seems to agree with Kidd that some new interpretation of religion is probably about the only thing which will "snatch us out of our devotion to self and our narrow class interests." However, Professor Patrick does find some help in education and the organization of intelligence, and he is undoubtedly right in his contention that emotional, as well as rational control, is needed for social progress. The book is stimulating, but like many books written from the purely psychological point of view, it lacks a sufficient background in anthropology, history, and the concrete study of social conditions.

The sociologists, too, are at sea as regards the relation of their work to psychology and to social psychology. Perhaps these things have no place in elementary texts on sociology and social problems. That, apparently, is what Professor Binder (1) thinks, though Professor Dow (6) is of the opposite view. Professor Binder goes so far in the non-psychological direction that he undertakes

(2) to formulate a new theory of social progress without reference to any troublesome social psychology, namely, that progress is due to the amount of surplus vitality, or health, which a nation possesses. Professor Dealey (5), on the other hand, finds a large place for psychology and social psychology in sociology. He does not clearly state whether he regards social psychology as a part of sociology or not, but apparently he does, as he devotes several of the basic chapters of his book to social psychology. The book is an enlargement and revision of the author's *Sociology*, which was published in 1909, and is intended as an elementary text-book for college purposes.

The most notable text in sociology published during the year 1920, however, is Professor Ross' 700 page work on *The Principles of Sociology* (15). It is well worthy of the attention of social psychologists, not that any parade is made of the use of psychology, for neither the word psychology nor social psychology occurs in the index of the work, but psychological method and analysis are more or less in evidence in every chapter. While no formal psychological doctrines are appealed to, yet there is constant use of psychological principles, usually a sound and careful use. It is notable that Professor Ross has almost completely discarded, in this latest work of his, the use of suggestion and imitation as principles of social interpretation. Indeed, these words also do not occur in his index; and he refers but once to Tarde, and then only in the way of a quotation from Tarde's *Social Logic* as to the effect of festivals on unifying human groups. One cannot but ask whether Professor Ross, who made so much use of Tarde's suggestion-imitation principle in his *Social Psychology*, published in 1908, has outgrown his former views, or whether he merely means that he would consign the suggestion-imitation explanation of social processes to the limbo of social psychology.

Professor Eliot is another sociologist who would apparently make psychology fundamental in sociological interpretation. Of the numerous articles in periodical literature along social psychological lines which appeared during 1920 his paper (9) is especially worthy of attention, because it indicates a way of harmonizing and combining psychological methods with the objective methods of the social survey in the study of social conditions. Whether one criticizes the details of his exposition or not, one is forced to conclude that some such synthesis of subjective and objective methods will characterize more and more the social research of the future.

This conclusion would, of course, not be agreed to by Dr. Lowie who, in his latest study of *Primitive Society* (12), again condemns all psychological interpretation of culture, and rigidly confines himself to a description of the objective aspects of primitive society in the family, the sib, voluntary associations, rank, government, and justice. He is practically forced, therefore, to say nothing about primitive beliefs, primitive religion, and primitive art. This he does, though to the reviewer, a description of primitive society with these things left out seems entirely unsatisfactory, even from a strictly scientific standpoint. Mr. James, on the other hand, in an elementary text on the same subject (11), devotes a considerable part of his book to these subjects. Verily, psychology divides both the anthropologists and the sociologists, even perhaps as sociology may be said to divide the psychologists!

A book which may help possibly in bringing some order into these badly tangled relations in the social sciences is Professor Conklin's latest work (4). Avowedly a popular work, and written strictly from the standpoint of a biologist, the work in its way surveys the whole field of the social sciences. It discusses not only the biological foundations of society, but also the biological bases of democracy, ethics, and religion. It is noteworthy that this biologist finds plenty of room in his scheme of life for the subjective and the psychic, yes, even the "teleological," though this will doubtless make his book anathema to mechanistic determinists. Like most social psychologists, he finds that human society is founded on human instincts, and that in most men instinct is more universal and more powerful than reasoning. However, intelligence and freedom have come in human society to interfere with instinct, and this is the explanation of the incompleteness of its integration, co-operation, and harmony. Moreover, as intelligence rises the proportional strength and power of instinct decreases in controlling the relationships of men. The well-balanced view of the whole social life process which Professor Conklin presents might well be emulated by all workers in social psychology and in the social sciences.

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## SPECIAL REVIEWS

*Mind Energy*. HENRI BERGSON. (Trans. by H. Wildon Carr.) New York: Holt, 1920. Pp. 225.

The lectures and essays which form the content of M. Bergson's latest book have been delivered or published at different times and places from 1901 to 1913. They show clearly his characteristic philosophical attitude, and his empirical method in dealing with philosophical problems, here applied to an important general problem of psychology. In this rather small volume he is less intimately concerned with the nature of "mind energy" than with the nature of the relationship which exists between mind and brain. Most of the lectures and essays are concerned with different phases of this problem. While certain conclusions reached by following various lines of facts are indicated, no attempt is made to formulate a precise theory.