THE SELF IN RECENT PSYCHOLOGY¹

A CRITICAL SUMMARY

BY MARY WHITON CALKINS

Wellesley College

There has been a distinct renaissance of the self in experimental and systematic psychology during the last few years. The following pages present a résumé of some of the recent contributions to the literature of "self psychology."

I. The disclosure of the self through experimental study will be briefly treated, since a detailed summary of much of this experimental work has recently appeared (5). (a) A suggestion of one of the self psychologist's distinctions between perception and imagination is found in Anna Berliner's experimental study of the ability to distinguish perception from imagination (2). She finds that her subjects very often distinguish the "objective" from the "subjective" on the ground that it is forced upon them, is independent of their will (p. 103).

(b) Katzaroff experimented on recognition (13) by showing his subjects drawings which sometimes resembled, and again varied from, a series of drawings previously shown. He reports that, for his subjects, recognition is characterized by a "feeling of familiarity," and this he defines (p. 78) as "connected with the very feeling of our 'self' and . . . enveloped by" it. This result is unconfirmed by the "Experimental Analysis of the Process of Recognizing" made by Dr. Elizabeth L. Woods (23). Miss Woods not only repeated Katzaroff's experiments, in the Clark University psychological laboratory, but "devised a genetic method" of her own, choosing novel materials and teaching them to her subjects, and "taking an introspective cross-section of the recognitive consciousness at numerous levels." She finds that "awareness of self is not a necessary component of recognition" (p. 375) since it is only rarely, though sometimes, present (pp. 338, 374). The writer of this notice none the less believes that the rarity of these reports of self-awareness is perfectly reconcilable with the supposition that Dr. Woods's observers invariably had in their recog-

¹ The first of the 'general reviews' under this heading appeared in the BULLETIN in January 1912. The present article takes note of a few publications of earlier date which were not named in that paper.

nition the consciousness of "same self then as now." For, as has elsewhere been argued (5), the constancy of the experience of self makes for inattention to it; the preoccupation of the introspectors with structural content, *Aufgabe*, and changing experimental process, crowds this consciousness of self still further into the background; and the conventional categories alike of 'structural' and of 'functional' description provide no terms for recording the awareness of self. In truth, the fact that Dr. Woods lists the consciousness of self among the "structural components of recognition" (pp. 370, 373), and as coördinate with "sensory components" and "affective toning," indicates on her part an entire misconception of what the self-psychologist means by consciousness of self. In the opinion of the reviewer, Dr. Woods's analysis of recognition should be studied for its notable contributions to the understanding of the recognitive process; and should be considered as counting neither for nor against the assertion that recognition is awareness of persisting self.

(c) The other experimental studies concern volition. Michotte and Prüm (16), in the laboratory at Louvain, studied decisions to perform one of two indicated (and unexecuted) arithmetical operations. They find that choice includes, in addition to kinæsthetic consciousness, frequent verbal images and affective experience, a "consciousness of activity" radically different from the feeling of muscular activity and "leading directly to the affirmation of the intervention of self." Ach (1) experimented not on choice but on simple volition. His specific problem was to compare the strength of volition with that of habit gained through frequent repetition. After his subject had learned series of rhymed, of reversed, and of "normal" syllables, the odd-numbered syllables were presented and the subject was directed to respond with a syllable of definite type in place of the syllable already learned. Ach's study of the introspection of his subjects leads him to enumerate four phases of volition, of which the most important are the consciousness of the end or purpose which "I" am to perform and the experience of self-activity. The self, according to Ach, is always experienced (*erlebt*) and not merely inferred in volition.

II. "Differential" and "social" and "euthenic" psychology always treat of the self whether implicitly or explicitly. Yerkes and La Rue (24) formulate a detailed questionnaire on "the ancestry, development, and present constitution" of the individual human being under the title "Outline of a Study of the Self." F. Giese (12)

critically summarizes the doctrine (ancient and modern) of the temperaments, as basis for his exposition of the advantage of the "correlation" method of studying individual psychology. He clearly conceives as the aim of psychology "to comprehend man as personality" (p. 121, *et al*). Lévy Bruhl's study of "Mental Functions in Inferior Social Groups" (14) leads him to the conclusion that the primitive consciousness essentially consists in the feeling of being "surrounded by an infinite number of beings . . . a multitude of spirits with more or less well-defined personality" (p. 63); and he finds the key to primitive beliefs and customs in what he calls participation, the unity which the primitive man experiences between himself and the people, animals, and objects which surround him—with the dead no less than with the living.

In his recent book on "The Foundations of Character," a study of individual psychology in its ethical bearings, A. F. Shand (20) throughout presupposes the feeling and willing self and occasionally names it. For the most part, however, as he specifically admits (p. 64), he abstracts and isolates "the systems of the emotions and sentiments . . . from that mind or self to which they belong." This failure to treat the emotions and sentiments as "attitudes of the mind or self" is directly responsible for some of the gravest defects of Shand's discussion, both the close verbal likeness to faculty-psychology which results from personifying the mental attitudes and also those hap-hazard enumerations of forms of emotions on which I shall comment a little later.

III. The experience of self is avowed, during the last few years and months, by many other psychologists in many connections. Yerkes and Pfander (19) treat the self as basal fact of experience. C. S. Myers (17), in a discussion of sense-intensity, asserts that "the self is involved" in "acts of apperception, thinking, willing, imagining, etc." (p. 153). Meumann (15), though he is specifically discussing the will, says that "our whole soul-life is analyzable into a sum of intellectual processes . . . which, however, possess a distinctive character through their immediate relation to the *I*" (*op. cit.*, p. 351).

From these and others, who assert that we experience the self, are to be distinguished those writers who seem to hold that the self is a necessary assumption of the psychologist. E. Dürr's description of the self (8) as "*das die Vorstellung Habende*" (p. 228) and as "*die Dauerbedingung psychischer Geschehnisse*" ranges him with this group though, on the other hand, he seems to treat recognition

as direct experience of self (p. 243). Dunlap (9) also regards the self as "an essential presupposition of psychology." Bloch (3) opposes the doctrine of Lipps according to whom the self is experienced in emotion solely. Bloch rightly holds that "the consciousness that 'I' am sorry" occurs in no radically different way than the consciousness that I am sensorially conscious. Yet he concludes (p. 103) that the self is known not immediately but "in reflection." Natorp's position, also, is ambiguous (18). His teaching that the "I" is the "ground and assumption of all psychological problems" but that the "content," not the "self," is object of psychology (p. 33) indicates that he regards the self as merely inferred to exist; but on the other hand, he unequivocally teaches that the self is immediately experienced (p. 23); he emphasizes the necessity of a "subjectifying" psychology (chap. V., *et al.*); and he vigorously criticizes the conceptions of consciousness as complex of psychic forces (pp. 256, ff) or as series of psychic events (pp. 259, ff.).

It is a far cry from Natorp and Ach to John Stuart Mill, yet it is certainly appropriate to mention in this connection a recent paper by Else Wentscher which contrasts Mill's conception of the external world with his conception of the self. The conclusion of Fräulein Wentscher's analysis of these conceptions (22) as found in the "Logic," the "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," and in the Notes to James Mill's "Analysis of the Human Mind" is best given in her own words: "We must," she says (p. 336), "state the remarkable fact that Mill who is so convinced of the strength of associationist psychology that he seeks to solve the problem of the external world by its aid, abandons it in the case of the most fundamental psychological problems, because he has found it inadequate. His investigation of psychical phenomena, in particular of recognition and expectation, convince him that the psychic facts compel us to conceive (*aufzufassen*) them all as experiences of an *I*, permanent in change, a subject identical in all its phases" (p. 338).

IV. This review of current discussions of the self would be culpably incomplete without reference to two recent criticisms of self psychology. The first occurs in the recently published volume in which Ziehen (25) fits out a rather old-fashioned associationistic Humian psychology with an up-to-date wardrobe of epiphenomenalistic theory, structurally analytic method, and arbitrary mathematical symbolism. The book is full of rewards, in the shape of

good criticism and suggestive illustrations, for readers who will master the difficulty of some parts of it. Chapter IV is devoted to a criticism, in part well-founded, of the concept and of the alleged characters of the "Soul." One significant form of soul-theory, in Ziehen's account of it, asserts that there is a directly experienced soul, thereby virtually identifying soul and self. Ziehen opposes this view, first, by asserting that many agree with him in denying such direct consciousness of self, and by throwing the burden of proof on those whose introspection disagrees with his (p. 120), and second, by attributing either to the brain or to the mental process the experienced characters which are commonly attributed to the self. Thus the 'individuality of the self,' according to Ziehen, is the distinction of one brain from another; self identity reduces to the relative stability of brain phenomena; unity is a given character of series or complexes of mental phenomena. One does not need to be a self-psychologist to remark that Ziehen's argument is based on the unargued and untenable assumption that psychical phenomena are to be defined purely in terms of their passively parallel relation to physiological phenomena.

The paper of Dr. J. N. Curtis (6) is more limited in its reference than Ziehen's chapter. Her very detailed criticism is directed against the work of a single self-psychologist, the writer of this notice. Some of her criticisms apply only to this one particular form of self-psychology, some—as is pointed out by E. A. McC. Gamble in her "Defence of Self-Psychology" (11)—merely elaborate difficulties common to all forms of psychology. In particular, Miss Gamble shows that the self-psychologist can no more reasonably be challenged to produce a definition of self than his critic to produce a definition of consciousness. One, however, of Miss Curtis's criticisms may well be laid to heart: the reproach against self-psychology for discussing "only the topics familiar from structural psychology." It will be noted that the self-psychologist is not, by these words, condemned for treating the topics common to all psychologists—sensations, affections, reactions and the like—but for dealing merely with these topics. And in truth self-psychologists frequently assert a self without using it; they employ exclusively the descriptive categories (essential, but by themselves inadequate) of "selfless" psychology; they fail to distinguish the different attitudes of self—receptive, active, sympathetic, non-sympathetic and the like—to its environment, personal and impersonal; and they ignore the description, ready to their hand, of

perception, thinking, and volition as social experiences. Even when experiences are described in terms of self-psychology, the fundamental character of these principles of distinction may be ignored. So Shand and McDougall, for example, stress the self-regarding and the self-abasing attitudes but seem to be unaware that these are fundamental characters of instincts, emotions and activities and that all forms can be grouped in one of these two great classes.

But while, in the case of most self-psychologists, the justice of this criticism must be admitted, full right of way cannot be given to it. For there certainly exist the beginnings of a systematic self-psychology. Alexander Pfänder (19) has presented a clear outline of self-psychology in his *Einführung in die Psychologie*. (The writer of this notice who has only within a few months become acquainted with Pfänder's work, is greatly impressed by the similarity between his systematization of self-psychology and her own attempt in the same direction (4).) Pfänder unequivocally conceives psychology as science of the psychic individual, or self. "We can not," he says, "conceive even a sensation without thinking in it a sensing, psychic subject." Among the characters of this subject, or I, he enumerates "the identity of the experiencing I" (p. 197), its "ceaseless change" (p. 188), and its uniqueness (*eigentümliche Einheit* (pp. 203 ff.). This 'I,' or subject, he continues (p. 207), stands in a relation to the perceived or imagined object (*Gegenstand*) which is comparable to the relation of center to periphery. Pfänder is at great pains to make clear that no 'epistemological reflections,' are introduced into his conception of 'object.' He refers by the term to something entirely different from the so-called 'content' (p. 208). In fact, he takes 'object' in its most general, every-day sense to include material objects, past and present, relations between things, psychic objects—other men and their experiences, and all objects of imagination. The relation between the self and these objects is a *Wissensbeziehung* and there are several forms of it differing according to the nature of the object and the *Tätigkeit* of the subject. Seeing and hearing, for example, are special kinds of *Wissensbeziehung*. In addition to this consciousness of objects every subject has feelings of like and dislike, in which it is primarily conscious of its own condition (pp. 228, ff.), and also has activities (*Strebungen*, pp. 244, ff.) which are distinguished alike from the merely receptive awarenesses of objects and from the emotional experiences of the self in its inactivity.

Limits of space forbid either a summary, in greater detail, of Pfänder's work or more than a bare mention, in this connection, of G. A. Coe's paper (7) on Mental Functions. But it must expressly be noted that evidences of a working out of self-psychological categories are found not only in the writings of general psychologists but in experimental and pathological studies. Michotte and Prüm (16), already summarized, distinguish admirably not only between will directed to the future and non-temporal will, but between the assertive and the loyal (or, as they call it, the passive) forms of will. And Ach (1) differentiates the consciousness of willing from that of obedience on the one hand and of obligation on the other, according to the varying degrees of the self-activity and consciousness of reality involved.

Similar suggestions toward classification, in terms of self-psychology, may be gained from Frederic L. Wells's "The Systematic Observation of the Personality" (21). Dr. Wells definitely conceives psychology, from the standpoint of the psychiatrist, as study of the 'adjustment of the personality to its environment' (p. 295). The data for a study of personality are to be used statistically and consist in 'comparative judgments' of the quantitative relation of the subject to other individuals (pp. 295-296). Especially significant are Dr. Wells's distinctions between forms of self-assertion (p. 303), between types of adaptability (p. 304), and, finally, his discussion of moods (p. 311) and of the 'attitude' of a self toward himself (p. 313) and toward other selves (p. 314). But the mention of Dr. Wells's contribution opens up a subject so large that it cannot here be considered: the important place of the self in the psychology of abnormal experiences. This paper must close accordingly with the barest mention of Claparède's paper (6) in which the author concludes, from the study of a pathological case and of instances of post-hypnotic suggestions, that the inhibition of 'egocentric associations' checks recognition.

REFERENCES

1. ACH, N. *Ueber den Willensakt und das Temperament*. Leipzig, 1910. Pp. xi + 324.
2. BERLINER, A. Subjectivität und Objektivität von Sinneseindrücken. *Arch. f. d. ges. Psychol.*, 1914, 32, 68-119.
3. BLOCH, W. Das Icherlebniss. *Arch. f. d. syst. Philos.*, 1912, 18, 89-103.
4. CALKINS, M. W. *A First Book in Psychology*. Latest edition, 1914. Pp. xxi + 428.
5. CALKINS, M. W. The Self in Scientific Psychology. *Amer. J. of Psychol.*, 1915, 26, 496-524.

6. CLAPARÈDE, E. Recognition et Moïité. *Arch. de Psychol.*, 1911, 11, 79-90.
7. COE, G. A. A Proposed Classification of Mental Functions. *Psychol. Rev.*, 1915, 22, 87-98.
8. CURTIS, J. N. On Psychology as Science of Selves. *Amer. J. of Psychol.*, 1915, 26, 68-98.
9. DUNLAP, K. "The Self and the Ego." *Psychol. Rev.*, 1914, 21, 62-69.
10. DÜRR, E. In *Grundzüge der Psychologie*, von H. EBBINGHAUS, fortgeführt von E. DÜRR. Bd. II., pp. 224 ff.
11. GAMBLE, E. A. McC. A Defence of Psychology as Science of Selves. *PSYCHOL. BULL.*, 1915, 12, 194-201.
12. GIESE, F. Das Ich als Komplex in der Psychologie. *Arch. f. d. syst. Psychol.*, 1914, 32, 120-162.
13. KATZAROFF, D. Contribution a l'étude de la recognition. *Arch. de Psychol.*, 1911, 11, 1-78.
14. LÉVY-BRUHL, L. *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*. Paris, 1912. Pp. 461.
15. MEUMANN, E. *Intelligenz und Wille*. 2nd edition. 1913.
16. MICHOTTE, A., & PRÜM, E. Étude Experimentale sur La Choix Volontaire. *Arch. de Psychol.*, 1911, 10, 113-320.
17. MYERS, C. S. Are the Intensity Differences of Sensation Quantitative? I., *Brit. J. of Psychol.*, 1913, 6, 137-154.
18. NATORP, P. *Allgemeine Psychologie nach kritischer Methode*. Tübingen, 1912. Pp. xii + 352.
19. PFÄNDER, A. *Einführung in die Psychologie*. Leipzig, 1904. Pp. vii + 423.
20. SHAND, A. F. *The Foundations of Character*. London, 1914. Pp. 532.
21. WELLS, F. L. The Systematic Observation of the Personality in Its Relation to the Hygiene of Mind. *Psychol. Rev.*, 1914, 21, 295-333.
22. WENTSCHER, E. Das Aussenwelts- und das Ich-problem bei J. S. Mill. *Arch. f. d. ges. Psychol.*, 1914, 32, 321-338.
23. WOODS, E. L. An Experimental Analysis of the Process of Recognizing. *Amer. J. of Psychol.*, 1915, 26, 313-387.
24. YERKES, R. M., & LARUE, D. W. *Outline of a Study of the Self*. Harv. Univ. Press, 1914. Rev. ed. Pp. xii + 24.
25. ZIEHEN, T. *Grundlagen der Psychologie*. Leipzig, 1915.

TEXT-BOOKS AND GENERAL TREATISES

BY HERBERT SIDNEY LANGFELD

Harvard University

In his two volumes Ziehen (11) has covered concretely, clearly and in the conventional academic fashion all the important principles involved in psychology. It is what one generally terms the philosophy of psychology. The first volume is concerned with the epistemological, the second with the psychological principles.