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PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

THE SOCIAL STANDPOINT

THE social standpoint is not wholly a recent discovery. Not to refer to ancient thought, Leibniz constructed a universe on the analogy of a 'kingdom.' Kant, by his transfer of the categories from the sphere of pure ontology to that of validity (Royce), made an important step in the direction of a social standpoint, for although his 'universality' was not based on the number of observers and reasoners, he did, in the case of esthetic universality at least, distinctly raise the question how an '*allgemeine Sinn*' could be formed, and sought an answer in the fact of social conversation. We should naturally think also of the British moralists and the German idealists. The 'herding instinct' of Shaftesbury, the 'pliability' assigned by Mandeville as the medium for social influence, the 'sympathy' of Hume and Smith, the 'imitation' of Hartley—all suggest present terminology as well as present problems, although the analytic method of mathematics and physics determined in some cases the mode of approach. The German idealists, starting from the problem of freedom, went on to consider the development of the individual mind and of human institutions as the logical moments in the unfolding of complete freedom—of absolute mind; but the social causes of the process were not studied; psychology had not freed itself sufficiently to be able to take up its own problems, nor had the utilitarian and later ethical movements added their content to the conception of social welfare.

The present prominence of social problems, social categories and social standards is doubtless due, to a considerable extent, to an increasing appreciation of an even more rapidly increasing influence of the social medium, whether of the past through tradition education and the other media of 'social heredity,' or of the present through the greater massing of humanity and through the increased facilities for interchange of persons, goods and ideas. The pressure toward cities is economic as well as gregarious in its motives. But the economic wants themselves which urge toward city life are

largely created by social suggestion, the means for satisfying them exist largely because of the presence of masses of people living together and because of a more democratic diffusion of opportunities for education and amusement, and finally the possibility of satisfying these wants is brought more vividly to general attention through present agencies. The economic, while it *may* be 'egoistic' in its aim, is social in cause and content. Economic standards of value are determined less and less by the organic wants for food, shelter and clothing, more and more by social suggestion and demand. Economic value is given to land by the very residence of large numbers in its vicinity; it is given to certain commodities by the elevation in standard of living due to greater intelligence and other social causes; and the owner of the land or the producer of the other commodities may not have contributed in the slightest toward the value of which he receives the benefit.

The bearing of these facts upon economics and ethics is apparent, although it has by no means received full recognition as yet. The bearing upon the psychology of the self is no less obvious. The increasing social influence, both from past and from present agencies, is not only enlarging and strengthening what James calls the 'social self' (it would have saved us from ambiguities if James had used a different term for this, so that the term social might have been left free for application to certain aspects of all the 'selves'), it is also transforming the content of material and spiritual selves—of the material self along lines already indicated, of the spiritual self along lines to be suggested below. The mode of functioning as well as the content is also affected, as Baldwin and others have shown. Perhaps the present danger is that we take the processes of imitation and social influence too simply, as Locke took his processes of sensation. Is there not to be worked out in detail a theory of apperception in the relation of the individual to the social influences, just as we have gradually worked out such a theory in the case of visual perception?

An ambiguity in the use of the term social calls for notice. In the looser sense social may be applied to relations between individuals. Any interchange of ideas, any influence of one by another, implies some ultimate community of intelligence, interest or sphere, and may, therefore, be loosely termed social, and studied by 'social psychology.' But in a more restricted sense the term may be limited to the activity of a group as such. The group may be a group of two, and but of momentary duration, but there is for the time some unity of interest or sentiment which makes the group as such a force in the life of each member. The psychology of this group influence is highly significant for ethics and the philosophy of law.

For the individual, having developed as a member of a group—clan, family, state, village or religious community—has constant experience of group standards and group authority, and feels the stress of group motives, simply because a large part of his activities are for common or group ends, and are performed in ways prescribed or suggested by the tradition or opinion of the group. From conflicting interests and under highly complex forces emerge the consciously selfish or altruistic purpose, the asserted or recognized rights, the reflective jealousy or sympathy, but in them all is the pressure of a more than individual authority or claim which asserts its power ultimately as moral control.

In applied ethics the influence of the social upon theory as well as upon practice is no less marked. The old virtues of thrift and charity are rudely challenged. Trades-unions form groups which present ethical phases strikingly analogous to political groups at the tribal stage—or, indeed, to our present states in their international relations, which are confessedly only very partially moral. Within the union there is a 'loyalty,' a solidarity, and a genuine self-sacrifice on the part of the naturally capable members, which are entirely comparable to the patriotic devotion of clansman or citizen. The man who seeks to better himself by leaving the union, or who actively or passively interferes with union success, is regarded very much as were the 'tories' and 'copperheads.' The study of group ethics in economic as well as in political groups helps to a juster estimate of the values and limitations in each. The question 'what virtue is of most worth' is brought forcibly to consciousness by present conditions.

The conception of justice is also in a state of flux. When thrift was regarded as an unquestionable if not a supreme virtue, any possible acquisition not involving violence or fraud was accepted as a just reward. By giving a portion in charity the acquirer could experience joyously how much better it is to give than to receive. Now that the social factor in the production of wealth is being dimly recognized, the masses feel the inequality as well as the discomfort; the conscientious man of privilege feels a scruple about accepting education, art, wealth, opportunity of every sort, in such superlative measure. It is not merely that he feels bound to devote them to public service as his own immediate way of paying his debt; he wonders whether, if justice prevailed, some of the others might not have the opportunity for serving the public in such wise, and of enjoying the experience of personal independence in greater degree.¹

¹ On the relation between social and individual ethics, Jane Addams 'Democracy and Social Ethics': Compare chap. v. in Armstrong's 'Transitional Eras in Thought,' New York, 1904.

I have noted in the *American Journal of Sociology* for January an interesting attempt to give the new conception of justice a form capable of legal use. The suggestion is to give the concept 'social debt' a legal as well as an ethical standing.

The philosophy of religion has been similarly affected. If the distinguishing mark of religion as contrasted with magic is found in the social relation between gods and people, we are in a position to interpret ancestor worship and similar facts in a way to show their ethical significance. The religious sanction of morality is seen to be rooted in intrinsic relations. The distinctive religious attitudes and sentiments may be analyzed and interpreted in a manner which supplements the classic interpretations of Kant, Schleiermacher and Hegel.

Of the social standpoint in esthetics I have written elsewhere.² Metaphysics might seem at first blush an unpromising field, but since Kant we have learned that reality, if known at all, must be known through categories; and if certain of these categories which give us a 'world of description' are themselves due to social influence, as Royce has maintained, the theory of knowledge is affected by the social standpoint in a fundamental manner. Accepting as in some sense true Kant's principle that the unity of self-consciousness is the ultimate principle of logic, we have still to ask how that demand for unity has been developed to the height found in the scientific mind. Assuming also with Kant that an irreversible sequence is the cue on the basis of which the mind interprets a connection as objective, we may yet seek additional factors in the consciousness of objectivity. The elements of objectivity in logical, ethical and esthetical judgments have their sources, in part at least, in the pressure of a social environment or the necessity of social communication.

JAMES H. TUFTS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

RECENT LITERATURE ON SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY

FOR the reader who is not interested in the details of mediæval biography, bibliography and textual criticism, the most important articles on scholastic philosophy are those which discuss the scholastic system as a whole, or those which treat of some general phase or problem of scholasticism. The article by Professor Alfred H. Lloyd, of the University of Michigan, in the *International Journal of Ethics*, July, 1902, 'Scholars of the Cloister: a Defence,' is

² *Philosophical Review*, January, 1903.