The Disappearance of the Social in American Social Psychology

JOHN D. GREENWOOD

City University of New York

Contents

1

The Lost World

The aim of this work is to document and suggest some explanations of the historical neglect and eventual abandonment of the distinctive conception of the social dimensions of cognition, emotion, and behavior, and of the discipline of social psychology itself, held by early American social psychologists. In this chapter I try to explicate and critically develop this distinctive conception of the social psychological in order to provide the reader with a clearer sense of what exactly came to be neglected and eventually abandoned by American social psychology.

According to this conception, social (or "collective" or "group") cognition, emotion, and behavior are forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior engaged by individual persons (and possibly some animals)[1] *because and on condition that they represent other members of a social group as engaging these (or other)[2] forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior in*

---

[1] In this book, I leave it as an entirely open question whether animals have the capacity for social forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior: that is, whether animals as a matter of fact satisfy the conditions for social cognition, emotion, and behavior discussed in this chapter. There is some reason to doubt this (see, e.g., the discussion of the work of Tomasello, Kruger, and Ratner, 1993, at the end of this chapter). However, social psychological states and behaviors ought not to be denied of animals solely on the grounds that they lack language or consciousness, since neither language nor consciousness appears to be necessary for sociality (although they undoubtedly enrich it in myriad ways).

[2] The reference to "other" forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior is designed to cover instances of cooperative, competitive, and combative forms of human psychology and behavior: where I push (only) when you pull, when I return (only) when you serve, when I fight you (only) when you insult me, and so forth. Compare, for example, Bernard (1931), who treats "collective behavior" as a synonym for "social behavior":

similar circumstances.[3] As Katz and Schanck (1938) put it, they are the attitudes and practices "prescribed" by group membership. According to this conception, social groups themselves are populations of individuals who share[4] socially engaged forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior.[5]

> Collective behavior is only individual behavior in its collective aspects. It may consist of the multiplication of identical or similar acts, or it may represent the cooperative adjustment of unlike, but complementary, behaviors. It does not represent the behavior of a new and independent organism, self-functioning as a unit. The behavior of the collectivity centers on the several individual units of the collectivity, although the behavior of each unit may be conditioned or determined by the similar or dissimilar behavior of the other units. (pp. 62–63)

However, not every interpersonal sequence of action and reaction counts as social interaction, as, for example, in the case of two persons embroiled in an escalating dispute over the true boundary between their yards and who each respond to the other's movement of the boundary fence by including more of the other's land. For an interactive sequence to constitute a social interaction, the actions and reactions of the participants must be oriented to the represented actions and reactions of members of a social group, even if this is only the dyad constituted by the two participants. In this example, it is unlikely that the participants to the dispute represent their behaviors as oriented to the behavior of members of the dyad constituted by the pair of them. Contrast this with the case of two friends traveling together on a train who pursue an escalating competition to pay for the food and drink.

[3] The terms "engage," "engaged," and "engaging" are used in a quasi-technical sense throughout this work, to refer to the actualization or instantiation of forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior and thus to describe the different ways in which they may be actualized or instantiated (socially as opposed to individually). The phrases "social dimensions of cognition, emotion, and behavior," "socially engaged cognition, emotion, and behavior," "social psychological states and behavior," "social dimensions of human psychology and behavior," "social psychological phenomena," and "psychological states and behavior oriented to the represented psychology and behavior of members of social groups" are used interchangeably to refer to *forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior engaged by individuals because and on condition that they represent members of a social group as engaging these (or other) forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior in appropriate circumstances*. Also, the phrase "social psychological states and behavior" should be read as including psychological processes and behavioral dispositions.

[4] *Shared* cognition, emotion, and behavior is here understood to include cognition, emotion, or behavior engaged jointly with members of a social group and represented by members of a social group as engaged jointly with other members of a social group.

[5] This characterization of a social group may appear circular, since social forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior are themselves characterized as social by reference to their orientation to the represented psychology and behavior of members of social groups. However, the circularity involved is natural and not vicious: It is merely a reflection of the fact that the social engagement of psychological states and behavior and the constitution of social groups are generally two moments of the same psychological process. As Simmel (1908/1959) aptly described the constitution of social groups, "The consciousness of constituting with the others a unity is actually all there is to that unity" (p. 7). Moreover, the circularity involved (while entirely natural) is not strictly necessary and could be eliminated

On this account of social psychological states and behavior, a belief is a social belief, for example, if and only if an individual holds that belief because and on condition that other members of a social group are represented as holding that (or another) belief. The belief held by a member of a millennium sect that "The Guardians" will descend from space to save the sect on a particular day is a social belief if and only if it is held because and on condition that other members of the sect are represented as holding that belief.[6] On this account, a behavior is a social behavior if and only if an individual behaves in a particular way because and on condition that other members of a social group are represented as behaving in that (or another) way in similar circumstances. Wearing blue jeans is a social behavior if and only if an individual wears blue jeans because and on condition that other members of a social group are represented as wearing blue jeans.[7]

Social psychological states and behaviors are social by virtue of *the manner in which they are engaged by individual persons* (with their unique personalities, spatiotemporal locations, and life histories). They are not social by virtue of their contents or objects or their being engaged by social groups (or "social collectives" or "social communities")[8] as opposed to individuals. A social belief or attitude, for example, is a belief or attitude that is held by an individual (or individuals) *socially*: that is, because and on condition that other members of a social group are represented as holding that belief or attitude.[9] An individual belief or attitude is a belief or

---

(see Greenwood, 2003). I have included strictly unnecessary references to social forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior and social groups in their definitions because I do want to emphasize the generally joint nature of their constitution.

[6] For this example, see Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter (1956).

[7] For this reason, fashion perhaps represents the purest if also the least noble form of socially engaged cognition, emotion, and behavior. Certain fashion items (e.g., rings through the nose) are worn for no reason other than the fact that other members of a social group are represented as wearing them.

[8] Or societies, for that matter. In this book, I reserve the term "society" for referencing the intersecting aggregations of smaller social groupings (such as occupational, religious, and political groupings) that compose the populations of nations: Thus, one talks about British as opposed to French or European society but not (or not usually) about Catholic or professional psychologist society. However, the term "society" is sometimes also used, and was frequently used by early American social psychologists, to reference smaller social groupings, such as the "societies" of Catholics, bankers, and Republicans.

[9] Or another belief or attitude. This qualification, noted in the original definition of social forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior, is left out for the sake of convenience, but it should be understood as holding in all consequent discussion of social forms of cognition, emotion, and behavior.

attitude that is held by an individual (or individuals) *individually*: that is, independently of whether any member of any social group is represented as holding that belief or attitude. For example, an individual Catholic's belief that abortion is wrong is a social belief if and only if it is held socially – if and only if it is held because and on condition that other Catholics are represented as holding this belief. An individual Catholic's belief that abortion is wrong is an individual belief if and only if it is held individually, for reasons or causes independent of whether any other Catholic (or any member of any social group) is represented as holding this belief – if, for example, it is held because the person has accepted rational arguments or evidence in favor of this belief.

Since the difference between social and individual beliefs or attitudes is a difference with respect to how beliefs or attitudes are held, an individual may hold one belief or attitude socially and another belief or attitude individually, or may hold one and the same belief or attitude both socially and individually. An individual may hold one belief or attitude socially, qua member of a social group, and another or different belief or attitude individually, without reference to any social group. For example, some college professors may approve of affirmative action socially, because and on condition that other college professors are represented as approving of it, but disapprove of it individually, because they believe it to be one injustice replacing another.[10] Or an individual may hold one and the same belief or attitude socially, qua member of a social group, and individually, independently of any social group. Some Catholics may disapprove of abortion (at least in part) because and on condition that other Catholics are represented as disapproving of abortion and (at least in part) because they have been convinced by rational arguments and evidence.[11]

---

[10] Compare William James (1890) on contrary social and individual attitudes:

> A judge, a statesman, are in like manner debarred by the honor of their cloth from entering into pecuniary relations perfectly honorable to persons in private life. Nothing is commoner than to hear people discriminate between their different selves of this sort: "As a man I pity you, but as an official I must show you no mercy; as a politician I regard him as an ally, but as a moralist I loathe him"; etc., etc. (p. 295)

[11] This might explain the conservative nature of many beliefs and attitudes, which may be resistant to change because they are held in part socially. In many cases, we might not recognize the social component of our belief or attitude, or find it easy to deny, since we can often cite some individually held reason(s) for maintaining the relevant belief or attitude. Rationalizations may be especially effective when genuine reasons can be offered (even when these reasons are insufficient to warrant a particular belief or attitude).

I

It may be useful to illustrate some of these points by reference to a concrete example drawn from the early American social psychological literature. The distinction between social and individual beliefs and attitudes can be illustrated by reference to a study conducted by Schanck (1932) concerning the preferences for forms of baptism among Methodists and Baptists. Among the Methodists, for example, 90 percent expressed a preference for sprinkling (as opposed to immersion) when asked for a statement of their attitude *as church members*, whereas 16 percent expressed a preference for sprinkling when asked for a statement of their own *private* feelings. Thus, we may say that while most Methodists held this social preference (held this preference socially), only a few held this individual preference (held this preference individually) – a good many held a different individual preference. Given the figures, we may also say that some Methodists held this preference both as a social and an individual preference: that is, both socially and individually.

Two qualifications concerning this example are perhaps in order. In the first place, it has been assumed that *individual* attitudes (attitudes held individually) can be equated with *private* attitudes. In the context of the Schanck questionnaire, this is probably legitimate. It is likely that being asked for one's private attitude would have been interpreted by interviewees as being asked for one's individual attitude, since by answering the question one is in fact making one's attitude public. However, the public/private distinction cannot be generally equated with the social/individual distinction. Private beliefs or attitudes (beliefs or attitudes that one keeps to oneself) that might be unpopular or "politically incorrect," such as the belief that African-Americans are intellectually or morally inferior, might very well be held socially (and much evidence suggests that they are). Conversely, persons may go out of their way to publicly express their individually held attitudes about the injustice of income taxes or the immorality of eating meat.

In the second place, it has also been assumed that the Methodists' verbal reports of their social and individual attitudes were honest and accurate. However, La Piere (1934) noted that verbal reports of beliefs and attitudes may be dishonest and may not be accurate even when they are honest: they may be belied by the behavior of the individuals who sincerely avow them. La Piere demonstrated the gulf between verbally avowed attitudes and behavior in his study of the differences between the verbally avowed attitudes and behaviors of hoteliers and restaurateurs with respect to their service of Chinese customers. Schanck (1932) himself

noted that his Methodists often avowed one attitude but behaved in accord with another. They condemned smoking and card playing as good Methodists but did both in Schanck's company behind closed curtains and doors.

The methodological prescription that La Piere derived from his study remains sound. Whenever possible, beliefs and attitudes should be measured via their behavioral expression instead of, or at least in addition to, measuring them via verbal responses to questionnaires.[12] However, neither the La Piere study nor the Schanck study demonstrated that individuals never act in accord with their social attitudes, and Schanck also stressed that the Methodists did often act in accord with their avowed social attitudes: when and where they did appeared to be a function of the perceived relevance of the particular situations to their social group memberships.

These qualifications aside, the Schanck example can be adapted to illustrate some critical points about social beliefs and attitudes. It is not sufficient for a belief or attitude to be social that it is held by the majority of members of a social group, far less a mere plurality of individuals. Most Methodists, for instance, will maintain a preference for sprinkling qua Methodists if they hold this attitude socially, and the fact that a preference is held socially by Methodists explains its generality among Methodists. However, the members of a congregation of Methodists coming out of church on a Sunday morning may all believe that it is raining by virtue of the liquid evidence falling from the skies, or they may all believe that New York is east of Los Angeles because this is how their positions are represented on all available maps. Yet these beliefs are not social beliefs, for they are (presumably) not held by Methodists because and on condition that they represent other Methodists as holding them.

That is, many common beliefs and attitudes are held individually, even among members of social groups. Conversely, a social belief or attitude need not be restricted to members of a particular social group but may be held socially by members of other social groups. For example, many Baptists as well as many Catholics might hold a negative social attitude toward abortion. As Durkheim (1895/1982a) succinctly put it, social beliefs and attitudes are general because they are social (held socially); they are not social because they are general. For Durkheim, a social fact, including

---

[12] Except, according to La Piere (1934), in the case of purely "symbolic" attitudes such as religious attitudes, where "an honest answer to the question 'Do you believe in God?' reveals all there is to be measured" (p. 235).

any social form of cognition, emotion, or behavior, is general "because it is collective (i.e., more or less obligatory); but it is very far from being collective because it is general. It is a condition of the group repeated in individuals because it imposes itself upon them" (p. 56).[13]

Edward Ross (1908), the author of one of the first social psychology texts in America, was also very clear on this point:

Social psychology pays no attention to the non-psychic parallelisms among human beings (an epidemic of disease or the prevalence of chills and fever among the early settlers of river-bottom lands), or to the psychic parallelisms that result therefrom (melancholia or belief in eternal punishment). It neglects the uniformities among people that are produced by the direct action of a common physical environment (superstitiousness of sailors, gayety of open-air peoples, suggestibility of dwellers on monotonous plains, independent spirit of mountaineers), or by subjection to similar conditions of life (dissipatedness of tramp printers, recklessness of cowboys, preciseness of elderly school teachers, suspiciousness of farmers). (p. 2)

Social psychology deals only with uniformities due to *social* causes, *i.e*, to *mental contacts* or *mental interactions*. In each case we must ask, "Are these human beings aligned by their common instincts and temperament, their common geographical situation, their identical conditions of life, or by *their interpsychology, i.e*., the influences they have received from one another or from a common human source?" The fact that a mental agreement extends through society bringing into a common plane great numbers of men does not make it *social*. It is *social* only in so far as it arises out of the interplay of minds. (p. 3)[14]

Or, as Ellsworth Faris (1925) put it, "social" or "group" attitudes refer to "collective phenomena that are not mere summations" (p. 406).

Early American social psychologists maintained that social (as opposed to merely common) beliefs and attitudes are held *conditionally* in relation to the represented beliefs and attitudes of members of a social group, and

---

[13] This is important to stress, because many contemporary "social representation" theorists (who frequently avow a Durkheimian ancestry) appear to treat the widespread nature of a representation as a sufficient condition of its sociality (see, e.g., Moscovici, 1998b).

[14] Ross (1908) also noted that common but individually engaged uniformities that are a product of biological inheritance are not social:

Social psychology ignores uniformities arising directly or indirectly out of race endowment – negro volubility, gypsy nomadism, Malay vindictiveness, Singhalese treachery, Magyar passion for music, Slavic mysticism, Teutonic venturesomeness, and American restlessness. (p. 3)

He also doubted whether many of these uniformities are in fact genetically determined:

How far such common characters are really racial in origin and how far merely social is a matter yet to be settled. Probably they are much less congenital than we love to imagine. "Race" is the cheap explanation tyros offer for any collective trait that they are too stupid or lazy to trace to its origin in the physical environment, the social environment, or historical conditions. (p. 3)

they regularly stressed the "reciprocity," "interstimulation," and "inter-conditioning" of social beliefs and attitudes. They maintained that beliefs and attitudes are social by virtue of their orientation to the represented beliefs and attitudes of members of particular social groups. Thus Bogardus (1924a), for example, identified "occupational attitudes" as those social attitudes associated with particular occupations or professions:

> Each occupation has its characteristic attitudes, which, taken in the large, may be referred to here as the occupational attitude. . . . each occupation is characterized by social attitudes and values peculiar to itself.
>
> It would seem that two persons might start with about the same inherited predispositions, the same mental equipment, and by choosing different occupations, for example, one, a money-making occupation, and the other, a service occupation, such as missionary work, at the end of twenty years have become "successful," but have drifted so far apart in occupational and social attitudes as to have almost nothing in common. (pp. 172–173)

Bogardus (1924b, p. 3) explicitly employed the term "social attitudes" to mean "socialized attitudes": that is, attitudes held socially, because and on condition that other members of an occupational group are represented as holding these attitudes. Analogously, W. S. Watson and Hartmann (1939) talked of religious attitudes as social attitudes oriented to the represented attitudes of members of religious groups, and Edwards (1941) talked of political attitudes as social attitudes oriented to the represented attitudes of members of political groups.

The types of social groups toward which social beliefs and attitudes might be oriented were recognized as many and various, ranging from simple friendship dyads to whole societies and including families, clubs, professions, religious groups, political parties, and the like. Ellwood (1925), for example, listed "the family, the neighborhood group, kinship groups, cities, states and nations"

This led Giddings to characterize "consciousness of kind" as the primary basis of socially engaged psychological states and behavior, transforming merely homogeneous physical associations into genuine social groups:

When men attained it [consciousness of kind] they began to be *social* as already they had been *gregarious*. Now they not only *consorted* by kind, but also they began to *associate*, picking and choosing companions and confirming their likes and dislikes by talking about them. It was, in short, "the consciousness of kind," or at any rate, the "talked about" distinctions of kind *that converted the animal herd into human society*, a reconditioning of all behavior second in its tremendous importance only to the effects of speech itself. (1924, p. 454, original emphasis)

Analogously, Knight Dunlap (1925) characterized "social consciousness" as "consciousness (in the individual, of course) of *others* in *the group*, and consciousness of them, as *related, in the group*, to oneself; in other words, consciousness of *being a member of the group*" (p. 19). Dunlap, like many other early American social psychologists, maintained that this characteristic feature of humans constitutes the primary rationale for a distinctively social psychology:

One of the outstanding characteristics of the human individual is his associating in groups of various kinds. These groups are not mere collections of people, but possess psychological characteristics binding the individuals together or organizing them in complicated ways. The family, the tribe, the nation, and the religious group are the most important of these organizations, but many other types are found. Industrial groups and secret societies have their important and fundamental psychological characteristics, and the various groups dependent upon local contiguity are also psychologically organized. The numerous special groups, such as athletic teams, festal parties, and welfare agencies are possible only through mental organization. . . .
     Human groups are the manifestation of the social nature of man, that is to say, of his tendency to form societies. Or rather, that "tendency" is merely the abstract fact that he does organize himself in groups. The psychological study of man is therefore not complete until we have investigated his groupings, and analyzed the mental factors involved therein. This study is *social psychology*, or *group psychology*. (1925, p. 11)

W. I. Thomas and Florin Znaniecki (1918) similarly maintained that

psychology is not exclusively individual psychology. We find numerous monographs listed as psychological, but studying conscious phenomena which are not supposed to have their source in "human nature" in general, but in special social conditions, which can vary with the variation of these conditions and still be common to all individuals. . . . To this sphere of psychology belong all investigations that concern conscious phenomena peculiar to races, nationalities, religious, political, professional groups, corresponding to special occupations and interests, provoked by special influences of a social milieu, developed by educational

activities and legal measures, etc. The term "social psychology" has become current for this type of investigation. (p. 27)

Most early American social psychologists were also very clear that social psychological states and behavior are not social just because they are directed to social objects (i.e., other persons and social groups). Social beliefs and attitudes, for example, were not held to be restricted in any way by their contents and objects. Thus, one might have social beliefs and attitudes about nonsocial objects, such as the weather, snakes, the Eiffel Tower, and the orbits of the planets, as well as social beliefs and attitudes about social objects, such as one's fiancée, one's father, Muslims, or the federal government. Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) were particularly clear on this point:

And thus social psychology, when it undertakes to study the conscious phenomena found in a given social group, has no reasons a priori which force it to limit itself to a certain class of such phenomena to the exclusion of others; any manifestation of the conscious life of any member of the group is an attitude when taken in connection with the values which constitute the sphere of experience of this group, and this sphere includes data of the natural environment as well as artistic works or religious beliefs, technical products and economic relations as well as scientific theories. (p. 28)

Of course, as Thomas and Znaniecki also noted, it is entirely legitimate for social psychologists to focus on socially held beliefs and attitudes about social objects (such as other persons or political, racial or religious groups), since these are of special social interest to psychologists and laypersons. Nonetheless, they insisted that social beliefs and attitudes can be directed toward any type of object and that social beliefs and attitudes directed towards nonsocial objects (e.g., colors) are entirely legitimate and appropriate objects of social psychological investigation:

The field of social psychology practically comprises first of all the attitudes which are more or less generally found among the members of a social group, have a real importance in the life-organization of the individuals who have developed them, and manifest themselves in social activities of these individuals. . . . the field of social psychology may be extended to such attitudes as manifest themselves with regard, not to the social, but to the physical, environment of the individual, as soon as they show themselves affected by social culture; for example, the perception of colors would become a socio-psychological problem if it proved to have evolved during the cultural evolution under the influence of the decorative arts. (pp. 30–31)

Furthermore, in the case of those social beliefs and attitudes that are directed toward other persons or social groups, early American social

psychologists insisted that such beliefs and attitudes are social because they are oriented to the represented beliefs and attitudes of members of social groups and not merely because they are directed toward persons or social groups.[15] This is particularly clear in early American social psychological treatments of social prejudice and stereotyping, for example. Ellwood Faris (1925) explained how the "learning" of racial prejudice is conditional upon the social acceptance of group attitudes:

The individual manifestation of race prejudice cannot be understood apart from a consideration of group attitudes. In collecting data it often happens that the investigator finds cases of the acquisition of a prejudice with astonishing suddenness and as the result of a single experience. But this could only happen in a *milieu* where there was a pre-existing group attitude. One who has no negro prejudice can acquire it from a single unpleasant encounter but it is the group attitude that makes it possible for him to acquire it. An exactly similar experience with a red-headed person would not result in the same sort of red-head-prejudice in the absence of any defining group attitude. (p. 406)

Analogously, E. L. Horowitz (1936/1947a) reported that

young children were found to be not devoid of prejudice; contact with a "nice" negro is not a universal panacea; living as neighbors, going to a common school, were found to be insufficient; Northern children were found to differ very, very slightly from Southern children. It seems that attitudes toward Negroes are now chiefly determined not by contact with negroes, but by contact with the prevalent attitude toward negroes. (p. 507)[16]

Many early American social psychologists linked social beliefs and attitudes with personality, effectively equating socially held beliefs and attitudes with the social dimensions of personality: "Defined in this way, social attitudes may be spoken of as the elements of personality. Personality consists of attitudes organized with reference to a group in a system more or less complete" (Faris, 1925, p. 408). Many also recognized that individual persons are normally members of a variety of different groups (such as family, occupational, religious, and political groups) and that the social orientation of much of our psychology and behavior to the represented psychology and behavior of members of a *variety* of different social groups creates a distinctive management problem in our everyday

---

[15] That is, they held that orientation to the represented beliefs and attitudes of members of social groups is necessary and sufficient for social beliefs and attitudes and that direction toward social objects (other persons or social groups) is neither necessary nor sufficient.

[16] Or, as Asch (1952) later put it, "The racial sentiment of Southerners is only in part directed towards Negroes; it is also a function of their most significant ties to family, neighborhood and group" (p. 575).

personal and social lives (Cooley, 1902; Dewey, 1927; Faris, 1925; James, 1890; La Piere, 1938):

It is a commonplace observation that the socialized individual is not one "person" but many "people"; which of these latter he will be depends upon time and circumstance. In his professional relationships, the doctor may be a calm, austere person, capable of operating upon his patients with the impersonality of a mechanic who works on an automobile. At home, putting his youngest child to bed, he may, however, play the nursery game of tweaking toes with abandon and evident relish and may break into a cold sweat while removing an infected toenail from one of these toes. On a fishing trip with male associates, he may be unwashed and unshaved for days; back in his office again, he may be the spotless, reserved physician.

The fact that the person is in part the function of external circumstances may be technically explained as a consequence of the fact that the human personality is a reactive mechanism and that there is no necessary relationship between the various reactions of a given individual. So viewed, the human personality may be described as consisting of a multitude of facets (reaction patterns) which, although never operating independently of the total personality, may have little in common one with the others. (La Piere, 1938, p. 15)

Famously, these sorts of considerations led William James (1890) to talk of the multiplicity of different "social selves" associated with any individual person:

We may practically say that he has as many social selves as there are distinct *groups* of persons about whose opinion he cares. He generally shows a different side of himself to each of these different groups. Many a youth who is demure enough before his parents and teachers, swears and swaggers like a pirate among his "tough" young friends. We do not show ourselves to our children as to our club companions, to our customers as to the laborers we employ, to our own masters and employers as to our intimate friends. From this there results what practically is a division of the man into several selves; and this may be a discordant splitting, as when one is afraid to let one set of his acquaintances know him as he is elsewhere; or it may be a perfectly harmonious division of labor, as where one tender to his children is stern to the soldiers or prisoners under his command. (p. 294)[17]

II

While the discussion so far has focused on social beliefs and attitudes, similar points can be made about social forms of emotion and behavior.

---

[17] Compare Dewey (1927):

An individual as a member of different groups may be divided within himself, and in a true sense have conflicting selves, or be a relatively disintegrated individual. A man may be one thing as a church member and another thing as a member of the business community. The division may be carried in water tight compartments, or it may become such a division as to entail internal conflict. (p. 129)

Social behavior is intentional behavior engaged socially: that is, behavior engaged because and on condition that other members of a social group are represented as behaving in this (or another) way in appropriate circumstances. Individual behavior is intentional behavior engaged individually: that is, behavior engaged for reasons or causes independent of social group membership. For example, an aggressive behavior is a social behavior if and only if an individual behaves aggressively because and on condition that other members of a social group (e.g., a gang) are represented as behaving aggressively in similar circumstances (if, e.g., it is prescribed by "gang law"). An altruistic behavior is an individual behavior if and only if an individual behaves altruistically for reasons and causes independent of whether any member of any social group is represented as behaving altruistically in similar circumstances (e.g., in the hope of personal reward or out of instinctual feelings of sympathy for a victim).

As in the case of social beliefs and attitudes, one type of behavior (or disposition to behave) can be engaged socially (e.g., competitive behavior), and a quite different type of behavior (or disposition to behave) can be engaged individually (e.g., cooperative behavior), and a single behavior (or disposition to behave) can be engaged both socially and individually (e.g., joining a trade union). Both social and individual behaviors are the behaviors of individual persons. Social and individual behaviors are differentiated by reference to how they are engaged (socially as opposed to individually), not by virtue of the fact that one type of behavior is attributable to emergent or supraindividual entities such as social groups and the other attributable to the individual persons that compose them.

J. R. Kantor (1922) stressed this point by characterizing social behaviors as responses to institutional stimuli, that is, as responses to stimuli discriminated according to social group definitions of the situation[18] and associated behavioral prescriptions:

If we are dealing exclusively with concrete responses to stimuli what else can we observe but the responses of individuals? Notice, however, that when we say that all psychological reactions are the responses of persons we are not blinding ourselves to the distinction between individual and social responses, for there is indeed all the difference in the world between the total behavior situation of an individual reaction and that of a social response.

---

[18] It was W. I. Thomas (1904) who introduced the quasi-theoretical term "definition of the situation." Thomas argued that social controls (in the form of conventions and mores) are organized mainly through social group definitions of situations.

Incumbent upon us it is therefore to specify precisely wherein lies the difference between social and individual action. The distinguishing mark we assert lies not in the response factors but in the character of the stimulating situation. What exactly this difference is we may bring out in the following statement, namely that whereas an individual reaction is a response to some natural object or condition, the social or group reaction is a response to an institutional object or situation. Social psychology, therefore, is essentially institutional. (pp. 66–67)

As James (1890) noted, one and the same objective (or "natural") situation calls forth one type of response from members of one social group and a quite different type of response from members of a different social group. What counts as the appropriate social behavior for an individual person in any particular situation depends on the represented social group to which the behavior is oriented: "Thus a layman may abandon a city infected with cholera; but a priest or a doctor would think such an act incompatible with his honor. A soldier's honor requires him to fight or die under circumstances where another man can apologize or run away with no stain on his social self" (p. 295).

Like social beliefs and attitudes, social behaviors are not restricted to any type of purpose or object. So long as they are engaged socially, their purpose may be constructive or destructive, benign or malevolent, generous or miserly, and so forth, and social behaviors may be directed toward social objects, such as other persons and social groups, or toward nonsocial objects, such as animals, rivers, and the sun, moon, and stars.

A behavior is not social just because it is directed toward another person or social group or displayed by a plurality of members of a social group, either at the same time and place or at different times and places. Some interpersonal behaviors – that is, behaviors directed toward another person or persons – are not social behaviors even when they are displayed by a plurality of members of a social group. Acts of aggression and rape are interpersonal behaviors because they are directed toward other persons (the victims), but they are not social behaviors if individuals do not behave in these ways because and on condition that other members of a social group are represented as behaving in these ways in similar circumstances – if, for example, they are products of spontaneous aggression or lust (perhaps grounded in prolonged frustration). Many or most of the trade unionists assembled to elect their local president may rush off to the nearest hardware store to buy candles and salt when they hear word of the impending winter storm, but their action is not social if they do not behave in this way because and on condition that other members of the trade union are represented as doing so (as would seem unlikely).

In contrast, some social behaviors are not directed toward other persons but performed by single individuals in physical isolation from other members of a social group. The practice of solitary genuflection in front of a cross may be performed because and on condition that other members of a religious group are represented as behaving in this fashion in the presence of this religious symbol. A person may accept paper money as a means of exchange from an automatic teller machine in a deserted outlet at dead of night.[19] Solitary golfers may take as much pride in their fairway achievements as those who prefer the proximity of other golfers, and they may adhere to the conventions of the game as closely as the more gregarious types.[20]

Of course, many social behaviors are *also* interpersonal behaviors and are often displayed by a plurality of members of a social group, sometimes at the same time and place and sometimes at different times and places. Thus interpersonal acts of rape or aggression are also social behaviors when they are instances of "gang rape" or "gang warfare": when members of a gang behave in these ways because and on condition that other members of the gang are represented as behaving in these ways. Trade union members also often assemble together outside a workplace to form a picket line because and on condition that other trade unionists are represented as doing so (although some may do so independently of whether others are represented as doing so, in which case their behavior is not socially engaged). Many social behaviors are also displayed by a plurality of members of a social group genuflecting, withdrawing money from banks, attending funerals, and so forth, at the same time and place or at different times and places. However, such social behaviors are not social just because they are displayed by a plurality of members of a social group. Rather, as Durkheim would have said, they tend to be displayed by a plurality of members of a social group because they are social: because these forms of behavior are "imposed" upon members of social groups by virtue of their membership of these groups.

A behavior is not social just because it contributes to a goal that cannot be achieved unless others also behave in the same way (or some other way), as in the case of some cooperative collective enterprise. It may be the case that the citizens of some municipality can only avoid water rationing during a drought if they restrict their own individual use

[19] Accepting paper money as a means of exchange is cited by Weber (1922/1978, p. 22) as a paradigm example of a social action.
[20] The solitary golfer example comes from La Piere (1938, p. 8).

of water from their taps and hoses. However, citizens who restrict their individual use of water because they want to avoid rationing – that is, on rational grounds irrespective of whether others are represented as doing so – are not behaving socially.

The fact that a person recognizes that a behavior serves a collective goal, wants that collective goal to be achieved, and behaves rationally in attempting to achieve it is not sufficient for the behavior to constitute social behavior. Although the goal of the behavior relates to the collective or social good, the behavior may be performed individually. It may be the case (1) that a road cannot get laid unless all the members of a village play their prearranged parts and (2) that the villagers do play their parts. Yet someone who plays his or her part just because he or she thinks the road ought to be built because everyone will benefit – that is, on rational grounds irrespective of whether he or she represents other villagers as playing their parts – is not behaving socially. It is of course true that persons who individually behave in this way might not do so if they believed that others would not behave in the same way. Persons who want to avoid water rationing (or have the road built) might not restrict their own use of water (or play their own part) if they come to believe that others would not. However, if the only reason that they would not engage in the relevant behavior in such circumstances is because it would no longer be rational to do so (in relation to the collective goal), then the behavior – or behavioral restraint[21] – is not socially engaged.

This means that many so-called rational-choice and sociobiological theories of aggregate human behavior and its consequences are not theories of social behavior at all. If a person avoids living in certain neighborhoods because of an individual preference to reside among neighbors at least 40 percent of whom are of his or her own race (Schelling, 1978) irrespective of how the preferences of members of social groups are represented, or if a person avoids incest or helps others because of an innate disposition (Dawkins, 1976; Wilson, 1975) irrespective of how the behavior of other members of social groups is represented, such behavior is not social behavior.

This also has the consequence that many altruistic actions might not be social (if they are rationally motivated or instinctual in nature) and that some selfish actions might be social (if persons sometimes act in their

---

[21] I follow Weber in treating intentionally refraining from behavior (or action) as a form of behavior (or action). See Weber's (1922/1978) description of forms of behavior as "overt or covert, omission or acquiescence" (p. 4).

selfish interest because and on condition that other members of a social group are represented as doing so). Some social behaviors may involve conflict or competition: instances of conflict or competitive behavior will be social if individuals behave in these ways because and on condition that other members of a group are represented as behaving in these (or different) ways in similar circumstances, as in the case of an escalating conflict between committee members or competition for the leadership of a teenage gang. Conversely, some forms of cooperative behavior may be engaged individually and thus not constitute instances of social behavior, as when I vote in favor of your proposal at the department meeting (as everyone has asked me to) only because I reason that I will personally benefit from it.

Analogous points may be made about social emotions. An emotion is a social emotion if and only if it is experienced socially: that is, if and only if it is experienced because and on condition that other members of a social group are represented as experiencing this (or another) emotion in similar circumstances. An emotion is an individual emotion if and only if it is experienced individually: that is, if and only if it is experienced for reasons or causes independent of social group membership. Some emotions may be experienced socially, other contrary emotions may be experienced individually, and one and the same emotion may be experienced both socially and individually.

Both social and individual emotions are the emotions of individual persons. Social and individual emotions are differentiated by reference to how they are experienced (socially as opposed to individually), not by virtue of the fact that one type of emotion is attributable to emergent or supraindividual entities such as social groups and another attributable to the individual persons that compose them. Emotions are not social just because they are experienced by a plurality of members of a social group or because they are directed toward other persons or groups. Most of the trade unionists at an outdoor rally may become individually afraid of the spectacular lighting storm, and the meeting might break up when they individually flee to the safety of their own homes. A woman about to be raped by the gang members may be genuinely afraid of these other persons, but there is nothing social about her fear. Social emotions are not restricted in their contents and may be directed toward nonsocial as well as social objects. Thus persons can be socially ashamed of and angry at their epilepsy, the failure of their crops, and the size of their houses as well as their colleagues, their children, and the fellow members of their congregation. Their shame or anger is socially experienced if it is oriented